

# End of year Achievement Report

2018 - 2019



Find out about our achievements for South Somerset



**Protecting  
Core Services**



**Economy**



**Environment**



**Housing**



**Healthy, Self-reliant  
Communities**

## Our Vision for South Somerset:

**A place where businesses flourish, communities are safe, vibrant and healthy; where residents enjoy good housing, and cultural, leisure and supporting activities.**



### Priority project:

The Council agrees a small number of priorities each year as part of our Council Plan annual action plan. Priority projects contribute to the achievement of the Council's ambitions for South Somerset. You can read more about the Council's priority projects for [2018-19 here](#).

South Somerset District Council (SSDC) is an ambitious and forward-thinking council that is committed to transforming, improving and adapting to be ready for the future. We place our residents and businesses firmly at the centre of everything we do and we are incredibly proud of the work we have achieved alongside our communities in 2018/19.

A balanced budget was delivered with no cuts to services while launching exciting regeneration projects which will support three of our key towns in South Somerset – Yeovil, Chard and Wincanton.

A 10-year Economic Development Strategy has been launched to ensure we are well-placed to attract new businesses, help start-ups and encourage diversity and innovation.

We are becoming a more commercial organisation, investing in projects that will provide essential income to pay for our highly-valued services. Alongside this we are transforming customer service with new technology, providing dedicated resource to support those who are most vulnerable, continuing our great work to alleviate homelessness and working hard to protect the environment.

This is all in addition to the excellent additional value we provide for residents including free school holiday Playdays, a superb network of parks and open spaces, waste and recycling collections, leisure, arts and entertainment services including swimming facilities at Wincanton and Yeovil, The Octagon Theatre and Westlands.

This achievements report provides you with an overview of just some of the great work being undertaken by SSDC as we continue to commit to our goals of being great to work for, excellent to work with, leading the way and delivering for our communities.



**Protecting  
Core Services**



**Economy**



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# Protecting core services

2018-19

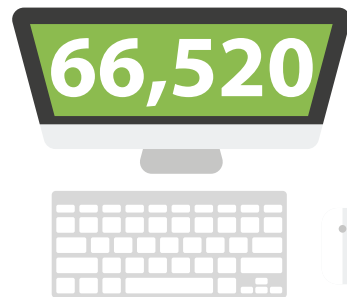
## In order to protect front line services we set out to:

- Transform customer services through technology
- Provide access to services to suit our customers' needs
- Actively manage assets and resources to ensure the best financial or community return
- Seek business opportunities for the council
- Work with partners to achieve economies, resilience and influence

# £2.5m

**saving through Transformation.**  
Our ambitious Transformation Programme has continued to make good progress without cutting services and helping to generate £2.2m in commercial income by 2021.

 **Shortlisted for two national MJ awards**  
for Workforce Transformation and as Best Commercial Council.



**66,520 transactions were completed** through our website using our on-line forms - an increase of 25% from 2017-18

# 71%

**of planning applications were submitted on-line**, saving time and money. We handled 1823 applications for planning consent, **93% within the target time.**



**Customers signed up for our new customer account in just six weeks!** We launched our new website and customer account in February 2019, providing services 24/7 to be convenient for our customers.

**76,474 Council tax bills were issued** to households across South Somerset. **71% of households pay by direct debit.**



# 120,756

**calls to our customer contact centre in 2018/19.** Our Customer Access Points in Yeovil, Chard and Wincanton provided face to face help and advice across the district.



**Enhanced our property portfolio** through prudent, ambitious and exciting investments now providing an annual income of £1.3m



**39,000 people following all SSDC's Facebook accounts** and almost 20,000 twitter followers. There has been a **44% growth in SSDC's Facebook page** since April 2018 and March 2019, with a post reaching an average of 32,000 users a month.



Priority Project



To promote a strong and growing economy with thriving urban, rural and land based businesses and improving productivity we aspired to:

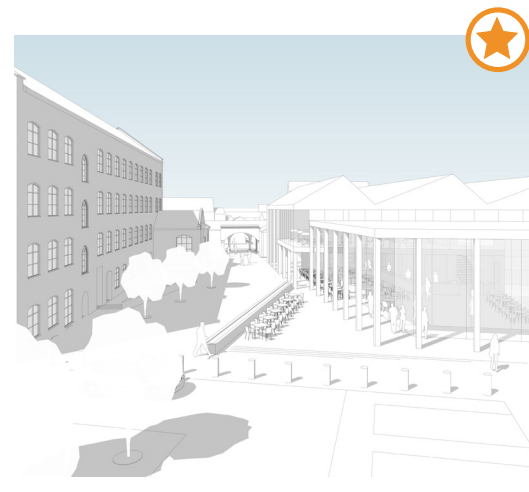
- Work with businesses and use our assets
- Provide advice and support
- Deliver initiatives that ensure worker skills meet the employers' needs
- Lobby for and support infrastructure improvements to enable growth
- Capitalise on our high quality culture, leisure and tourism opportunities to bring people into the district



## Yeovil Refresh

Our ambitious plan for the regeneration of Yeovil town centre has progressed well. New investment by third parties in Glovers Walk and Old Market Site will stimulate development in the town centre.

SSDC has commenced work to produce separate access and public realm improvement strategies.



## Chard Regeneration

Plans for the regeneration of Chard town centre are progressing and the Council is working towards a new community leisure centre, improved services and public space for the residents of Chard. Over 500 residents attended a public consultation event in March 2019, helping to shape detailed plans.



## Wincanton Regeneration

Our priority is to regenerate Wincanton town centre as a key location in the east of the district. We undertook public consultation during January – March 2019 to help shape a new strategy and action plan to regenerate Wincanton Town Centre.



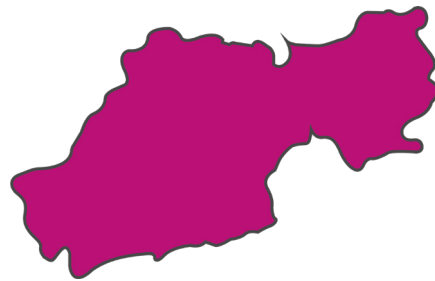
Priority Project

All three of these Priority Projects will continue into 2019-20. You can read more about our plans for 2019-20 in the updated [Council Plan](#).



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## Local Plan

Completed the first stage of our revised Local Plan for South Somerset 2016-2021 – including public consultation on the Issues and Options.

**A303** The Public Examination of the A303 Sparkford to Ilchester dualling project opened in December. We are helping to examine and address the impacts on our local highways and heritage, while gaining economic benefits for the district.

## £10,000 of grants

awarded to 29 local initiatives promoting a 'Digital High Street' and training provided to over 200 businesses through 24 events arranged in partnership with the South Somerset Market Towns Investment Group.



We provided support and advice to food businesses who may be affected by Brexit in particular relation to export certification.



## 9000 sq ft of new business space

opened at the Yeovil Innovation Centre in August, accommodating around 80 new work spaces. **92.5%** of all the buildings materials and construction waste was recycled.

## Supporting SMEs

(Small to Medium Enterprises)

In 2018 we supported a programme of networking events and digital marketing training sessions for local businesses - 15 different digital events were offered including cyber security, cloud computing and basic web design.



## 10 year strategy

We created a new ten year strategy for economic prosperity and growth in South Somerset covering rural and urban economies, transport, communications, skills, workspace, innovation and investment – making South Somerset a great place to do business.



The Council is sponsoring a HNC/HND in **Business course for 16 students** from local employers in partnership with **Yeovil College.**



Priority Project





To keep South Somerset clean, green and attractive we worked in partnership to:

- Promote recycling and minimise waste
- Promote the use of 'green' technology
- Maintain and promote access to our Country Parks and open spaces to promote good mental and physical health
- Keep streets and neighbourhoods clean and attractive
- Continue to support long term flood resilience
- Promote a high quality built environment in line with Local Plan policies
- Support communities to develop and implement local, parish & neighbourhood plans



## £233,000 awarded

to the Council by the National Heritage Memorial Fund enabling the purchase of 73 acres of "at risk" heritage land at Ham Hill.

### Secured Green heritage award for Ham Hill



**Investigated 443 abandoned vehicles** and removed 29 to help keep streets and neighbourhoods clean and attractive.



## £11,000

raised by our supporters and dedicated community groups through local fundraising providing investment back into our Country Parks and Local Nature Reserves.

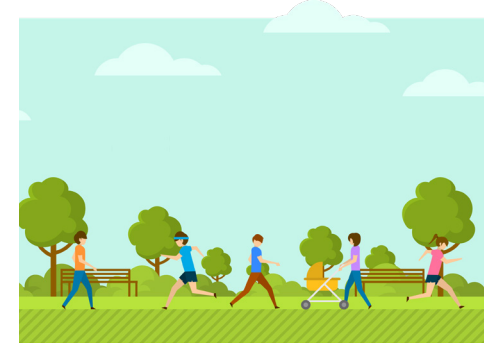
## 2894



**Volunteering days** at our countryside sites at Yeovil, Chard and Ham Hill

### Green Flag Awards

retained at Ham Hill and Yeovil Country parks and Chard Reservoir Local Nature Reserve.



Awarded a South West in Bloom, **five star Best Park Award** for Yeovil Country Park



### Yeovil won Gold

for South West In Bloom for the second year running. SSDC also received the Abiss Memorial Trophy for the best municipal display in the region, and as a result was selected to represent the South-West nationally in the 'large town category' later in 2019.





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Investment into one of the largest battery energy (25MW) storage sites in the UK – a potential to generate c.7.5% return.

## 96%

amount of fly tips were cleared within

## 5 days

Highly commended by the Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG) for the quality of maintenance at Yeovil Recreation Centre



Reduced our use of single use plastics, and commenced a review of our own approach to recycling and reuse.

## 230

trees planted



## 1647

litter and dog bins emptied.



### Flood resilience

Supported the work of the Somerset Rivers Authority




## 13,468



households subscribed to a garden waste collection service through the Somerset Waste Partnership.

## 2894

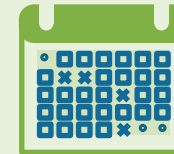
days



countryside volunteer days donated to help manage natural green spaces, enhancing them for people and for nature

## 353 pupils

from schools participated in educational sessions at the country parks to learn about the natural world and Somerset's heritage



## 38 public events

were delivered by countryside rangers

## 7037 adults and children

enjoyed events at at the country parks and local nature reserves, from bat walks to pond dipping.

### Restoration of the Valley gardens of Ninesprings

was completed and a new boardwalk was installed at Riverside Walk to help improve access.



## £106,000 awarded

by the Heritage Lottery Fund for project works at Yeovil Country Park.



To enable the provision of housing that meets the future and existing needs of residents and employers we worked with partners to:

- Minimise homelessness and rough sleeping
- Work with the private rented sector to improve the standard and availability of rented accommodation
- Tackle fuel poverty
- Work to minimise the impact of personal or household debt
- Enable people to live independently for as long as they are able



Priority Project

## 82

**disabled facilities grants** (DFGs) allowed residents to continue to live independently in their homes.



**86 Houses in Multiple Occupation** (HMOs) were licensed to ensure standards for tenants are maintained in rented accommodation.

Operated the Severe Weather Emergency Provision for 16 nights and as a result **helped 28 people with emergency accommodation and follow up support.**

Working with our partner, the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE), **we have supported 283 households** (of which 53 had reported health conditions) to improve the energy efficiency of their homes, improving quality of life, reducing risk associated with excess cold and with an average annual financial saving of £119.



**New homes completed** in South Somerset including **122 affordable homes**

delivered by partnership working with housing associations and developers.



**Provided 11-unit temporary accommodation property for homeless families** with self-contained bedsits and shared communal facilities, and commenced work to bring our property in Sherborne Road, Yeovil back into use for six more units of temporary housing.

**Commended by the housing team** at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for our approach to increasing the availability of temporary accommodation.



## 254

**households received timely advice and support which prevented homelessness**



Worked in partnership with the fire service to install

## 142

**smoke detectors in homes of vulnerable people.**

Worked in partnership with Citizens Advice South Somerset (CASS) to provide

## 57

people with specialist debt advice to prevent them from becoming homeless



## careline

[www.carelinesouthsomerset.co.uk](http://www.carelinesouthsomerset.co.uk)

## 2,034

**customers** supported by Careline to help them stay safe at home.





# Healthy, Self-reliant Communities

## 2018-19

To build healthy, self-reliant, active communities we committed to:

- Support communities so that they can identify their needs and develop local solutions
- Target support to areas of need
- Help people to live well by enabling quality cultural, leisure, play, sport & healthy lifestyle facilities & activities
- Work with partners to tackle health issues such as diabetes and hypertension, and mental health
- Work with partners to keep our communities safe



### 1161

food inspections to help ensure safe places for communities to eat and buy food.



**96% of 1613 registered food premises in the FHRs have a food rating of 3 or above.**

(FHRs) Food Hygiene Ratings Scheme

### 359

investigations of noise complaints, helping to address causes or factors of poor mental health and wellbeing.



### 370

rat treatments and provided advice for 412 rat calls to help keep neighbourhoods clean and safe.

**98** stray dogs collected, reunited or rehomed.



Our newly refurbished Westlands Entertainment Venu achieved excellent growth last year – the number of meetings and conferences is up 41% and income from food and drink sales up 73%.

The Octagon Theatre and Westlands Entertainment Venue set a new box office record selling over

### 152,000 tickets!

(63% on-line) across both venues, and supported by 2,107 days donated by our magnificent volunteers.

Westlands has received a 'Certificate of Excellence' from Trip Advisor for achieving consistently excellent reviews on the website. The Octagon Theatre has qualified for 'Certificate of Excellence Hall of Fame' after achieving a 'Certificate of Excellence' for the past five years.

### TAXI

To help keep our communities thriving, connected, healthy and safe we licensed more than 963 premises and taxis and issued over 786 temporary permissions for local events and festivals.



### 7 new play and youth facilities

We cared for play and youth facilities across the district carrying out 3,300 safety inspections and creating new play and youth facilities at 7 locations with a total of £264,000 invested, £249,000 through the council.



### 12,500+

people attended children's play days across the district with support from SSDC including 6000 visitors to the National Play Day event at Yeovil Country Park.

### Construction of a woodland Play Zone at Ham Hill Country Park.





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### **i** 10

Local Information Centres helped with running costs, providing help and information to thousands of visitors

### 170 volunteer days

donated to help support local access to heritage

**Created a First World War commemorative walks guide for Yeovil**, funded by the South West Museums development fund and launched with a series of locally led events.

### £9,000

awarded to **Access for All** who work to promote accessibility and to increase the social inclusion of people with disabilities to enjoy equality of opportunity.

### £26,500

awarded to five community organisations promoting the arts and activities for young people in South Somerset including Somerset Rural Youth project, Action Track, Take Art, Somerset Art Works and Somerset Film.

### £205,000

of financial support was awarded to Citizens Advice South Somerset (CASS). **Last year CASS helped 5362 residents gain help and advice.** Advice on benefits led to £223,091 of additional household income and overall the **CASS volunteers provided nearly 1000 hours per month** of time to help others in their community. In addition **we provided £74,000 to SPARK, who assist, promote and train volunteers** across the district.

### £167,000

**of grants to 47 community led projects**, which helped to create investment of over £560,000 into supporting improved local quality of life. Here are just some examples...

- 1 Outdoor Gym at Barrington
- 2 Refurbishment of the kitchen at Chard Rugby Club
- 3 Activity and adventure hub, Stoke-Sub-Hamdon
- 4 Crewkerne Food Festival
- 5 Somerton Local Information Centre
- 6 Purchase of land for allotments, Ilchester
- 7 Radio Ninesprings
- 8 Celebration of local heritage in Barwick and Stoford
- 9 South Cadbury defibrillator project
- 10 Wincanton Christmas Extravaganza
- 11 Templecombe in Bloom

# Looking ahead - Our future plans for 2019-20



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Looking ahead to 2019-20 we are set for another year full of ambition for South Somerset – while still facing many of the challenges arising from reduced Government funding and rising demand for services. We are committed to protecting vital front line services, while increasing our digital services to provide 24/7 access to customers.

Our Council Plan for 2016-21, agreed by Full Council in 2016, shows our ambitions to make major changes in the way that we operate and deliver services over the next few years whilst continuing to deliver services and priority projects that meet the needs of our residents, visitors and businesses.

Our Annual Action Plan for 2019-20 includes 32 areas of focus across our five Council Plan themes: Protecting Core Services, Economy, Environment, Housing and Healthy, Self-Reliant Communities. We have also identified six priority projects for the coming year, with dedicated resources and detailed plans to support their progress and long term contribution to the well-being of South Somerset. This year's Annual Action Plan also includes a series of local priorities for each of our four areas – North, South, East and West.

## Council Plan 2016-21

You can read about our Council Plan annual action plan for 2019-20 [here](#).

