

Council Meeting – 30 July 2019

Report of Councillor Christopher Booth – Community

Section 1 – Introduction

- 1.1 It's been an incredibly busy three months. Like a lot of fellow Executive Members, I am new and are still learning but I hope to be as open and honest as possible in everything relating to my portfolio.
- 1.2 My portfolio entails lots of outside bodies from the Health and Wellbeing to the Hinkley Point C Grants Committee but I shall try to give an efficient review of everything I've encountered that is of importance to members and that I hope you will all find useful going forward.
- 1.3 If you'd like to know more about any particular body that I sit on, I am more than happy to discuss.

Section 2 – PSPOs, Rough Sleeping, CCTV & Mental Health

Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs)

- 2.1 Jerry Davis and his team have completed a new draft Public Space Protection Order. The current order you see highlighted on signs across the old Taunton Deane area was simply not fit for purpose and was often not enforceable. This is due to run out in September.
- 2.2 Public Space Protection Orders originally came in as part of the ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014 and allows specific acts to be banned in designated geographical places. The draft is currently being discussed with the police, licensing and localities before it comes to the democratic process.
- 2.3 Particular areas covered include drinking alcohol in non-licensed public spaces, discarding hypodermic needles or syringes, urinating or defecating in a public space, aggressive begging, dog control, etc.
- 2.4 I also hope to organise a members' briefing on this so you can all find out more about what this means for the Council.

Rough Sleeping

- 2.5 We have an excellent Rough Sleeping Team covering Taunton which have made a real difference since the summer of 2018 when rough sleeping and persistent begging were a huge problem in Taunton. The latest figures show that we have 8 known rough sleepers in Taunton and likely 14 across the

district as there are believed to be 6 in Minehead. We shall know more when the Team do their bi-monthly account on the 2nd August.

- 2.6 The Team are now putting into place a plan that can help cover all the new district area to include the likes of Wellington and the former West Somerset area.

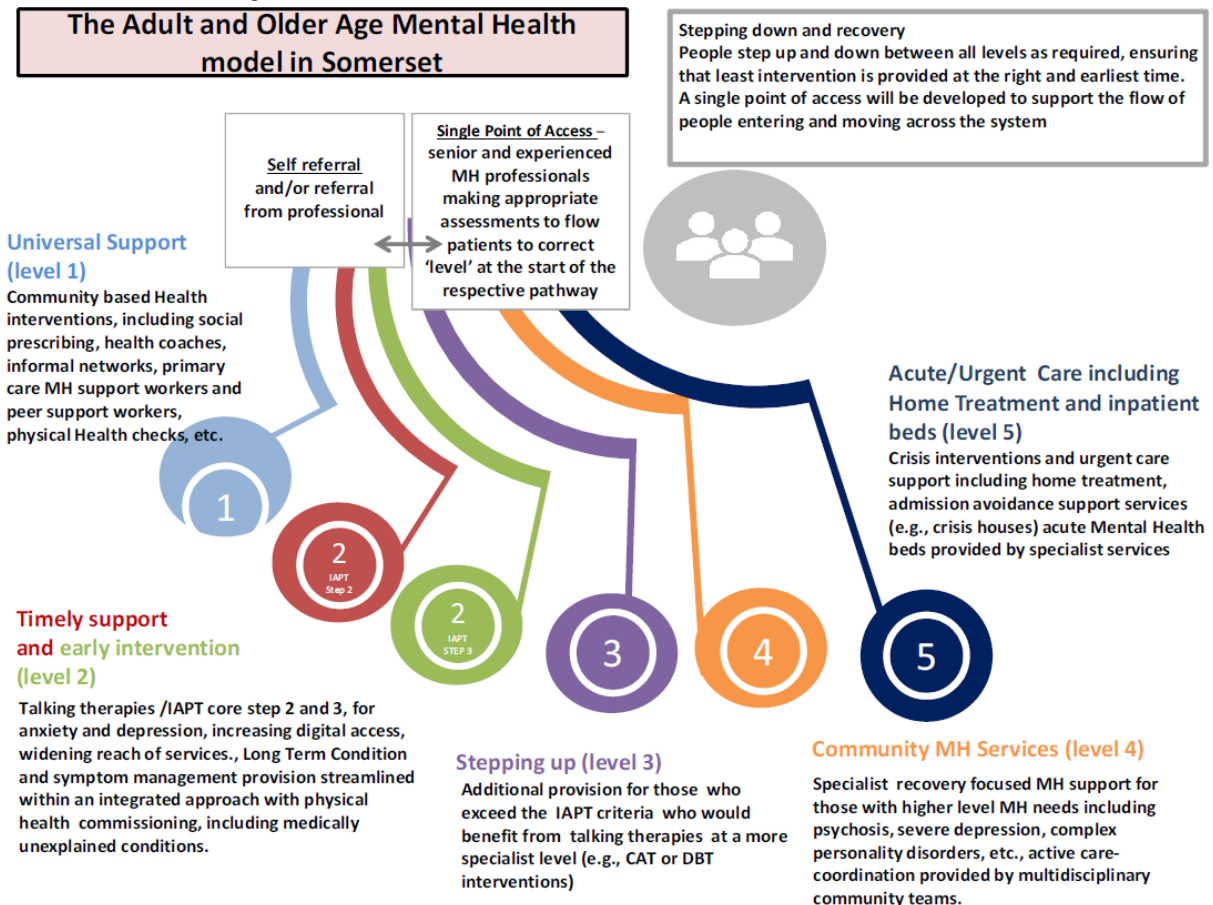
CCTV

- 2.7 The Council currently holds a CCTV Service Level Agreement with Sedgemoor District Council, which runs annually, renewing in August each year if it is appropriate to do so. This covers the CCTV in the towns of Taunton and Wellington. The Council will review this contract in the early autumn of this year.

- 2.8 Before this work can be done, it is essential to consider the CCTV in Watchet and Minehead. At the moment this is not functioning well and is in need of some investment. Bridge Technical Consultants have been engaged to bring forward options for consideration. They are scoping this work, having visited the control room at Minehead Police Station on Friday 12th July. They will also be engaging with Sedgemoor District Council. Once the scope is known, the Council and wider partners will have options to bring this forward.

- 2.9 To better inform options moving forward, South West Audit Partnership have been asked to share their findings from relevant audits, with particular reference to compliance and value for money. As stated, it is intended to bring these ideas forward in the early autumn. Relevant consultation will be undertaken with partners once there are some options on the table.

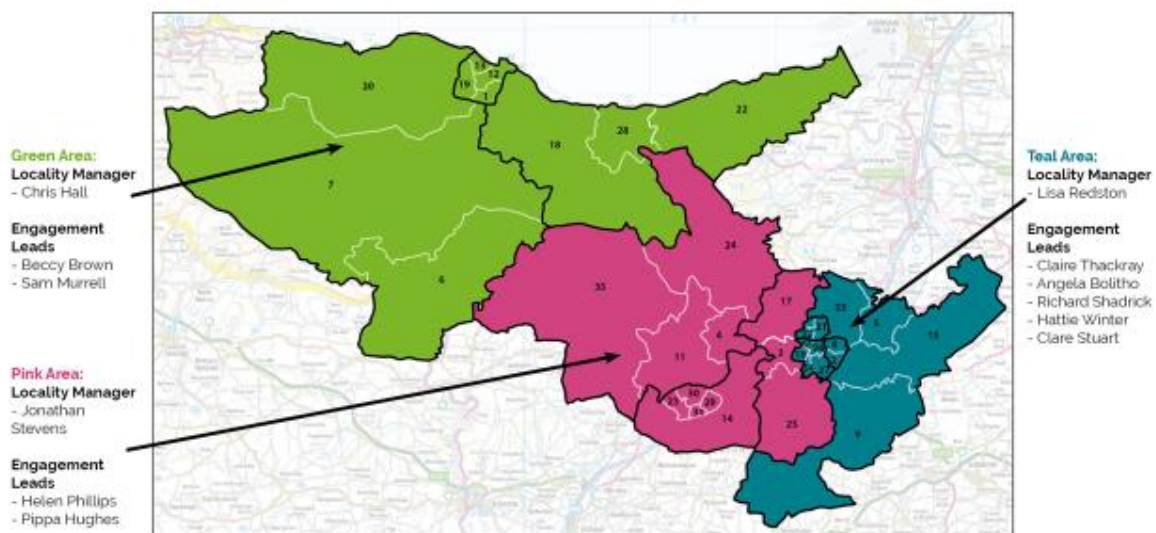
Mental Health Update



- 2.10** There will be a reform of the approach of the mental health pathway for adults and older people in Somerset as part of the 'Fit for my Future', the strategy partnership between Somerset County Council and Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group.
- 2.11** Somerset has the 4th lowest spend in the country according to a report this year from MIND. It would need about £10.7m to bring it up to the national average.
- 2.12** As part of improving access to older people, there has too often been a threshold to access support so many people find they can't get help because they had been deemed not vulnerable enough but with this new approach, anyone can access support. The graph above shows the 'swinging ball' model with a number of levels but they key is there is no threshold for levels 1 and 2. If you need a different kind of support than the one you enter, you can pass along onto another ball, so to speak.
- 2.13** This is being pushed out gradually and is starting in North Sedgemoor, Bridgwater and West Somerset to monitor its progress before going out all across the county. These areas have been identified as being poor in offering mental health support and I look forward to seeing progress made in West Somerset.

Section 3 - Localities and Communities

Locality Areas – Operational Responsibilities



- 3.1** Somerset West and Taunton Council recognises that our district is a very large and diverse area, including Exmoor National Park, the Quantock and Blackdown Hills, an extensive coastline and the Somerset Levels and Moors. The district is made up of sparsely populated rural areas, market and coastal towns and villages and Somerset's County Town.

- 3.2** We understand that different places have different needs, priorities and aspirations. Our commitment to our communities is to understand and respect those differences and to work with communities and partner organisations to improve the wellbeing of our people and places.

Quantock Hills, Wellington and West Deane Cluster (Pink)

- 3.3** The Engagement Leads have been working on a survey to gather insight into how the community views and uses local facilities and what, if anything, they would change.
- 3.4** The survey was currently piloted in Wellington and the Leads are now rolling the survey out across the wider locality with the following objectives;
- To gather information regarding current use and satisfaction with our parks and open spaces, which will feed into a future action plan for the district council and partners;
 - To identify the impact of antisocial behaviour in public places and ways to address this;
 - To identify and provide evidence of ways to support the youth and wider community in Wellington;
- 3.5** Officers within Localities are exploring a range of re-wilding schemes in our Council owned Parks and Open Spaces. These schemes aim to support and preserve wildlife, empower the community to take action and ownership of the open spaces in their areas and to reduce service related costs.

Taunton, Blackdown and East Deane Cluster (Teal)

Town Centre

3.6 Streetwise

The Streetwise team (Taunton Town Centre) are planning to launch a Diverted Giving scheme. The scheme will encourage people to give to charities that support those who are homeless and rough sleeping in Taunton as an alternative to giving directly to those who are begging in the Town Centre.

3.7 Toad Trail

The Toad Trail has been successfully launched, supported by the Taunton Locality Engagement Lead and our Parks and Opens Spaces team. SWT has also donated a small amount of funding to the friends of Victoria Park to refurbish the original toads that were situation in the Orchard Shopping Centre and moved to Victoria Park.

3.8 Victoria Park

The Taunton Locality Engagement leads are working with the police and friends of the park to produce a problem solving plan to tackle the issue of drug use and anti-social behaviour in the park during the evenings.

3.9 Town Centre Post Office

We are working with the Post Office, Royal Mail, Somerset County Council and the new owners of County Stores to secure the Post Office in the town centre. Current proposals include the creation of a parking bay outside of County Stores to support Royal Mail deliveries to the site. Detailed proposals are being worked up. As an interim arrangement the post office continues to run a service from its current location in the store.

Taunton East

3.10 New Link Centre Community evening 30 May

The Taunton East Development Trust put on a barbeque and entertainment for the community. The event was really well attended by the community and new ward members. The chair of the trust articulated his vision for the trust and the new community centre. SWT Communications team publicised the event on social media.

3.11 Oxford Inn – re-development plans

It has been agreed that the pub will now be re-developed into residential. The clearance of the property is being supported by Link Power and the community Arts project have commissioned a local artist to work with local young people to decorate the security boarding once vacant.

3.12 Community Arts Project – Create+Place

East and North Taunton community Arts project has been given the name 'Create+Place' and a logo developed with the help of SWT graphics team. A series of events and projects have now been developed to commence this summer running through until 2021. Work from these events will be showcased at events such as the Youth Festival.

3.13 Link Power – volunteers making a difference

Volunteers completed the re-decoration of benches on Castle Green in time for the first Cricket World cup matches. They have also been taking on a number of urgent grass cutting jobs to support the parks and open spaces team.

3.14 Community Safety and One Teams

Safer Somerset Business Partnership and DISC scheme - Take up of this new scheme to support information sharing between businesses, the council and police to reduce instances of business theft, ASB and other crimes has been fantastic in Taunton. With many businesses now sitting on the new Safer Somerset Business Partnership and several bans and interventions are already in place. The scheme has recently launched in Minehead and has had an extremely positive response with 10s of businesses signing up in the first few weeks.

3.15 Hinkley Point C Community Awards Panel

I will have sat on my first panel after I submitted this report but I have discussed with the officer in a pre-meet that a lot more bids are needed from West Somerset to balance out those coming from Sedgemoor so I strongly urge councillors in the old West Somerset area to look to their local groups and organisations if they need help with funding. The key, of course, is that they can demonstrate an impact or future impact from the development. If you'd like to know more, please contact myself or Lisa Redston in Localities. I suspect the impact will also start to be felt in around Taunton too.

3.16 Watchet Library

Following a successful meeting the representatives of Watchet Town Council, the Leader of SWT and the CEO, the Executive have concluded that it is in the interest of the people of Watchet to ensure that this asset is transferred to secure the continuation of the library. We look forward to finalising this agreement and supporting the continued delivery of the Community Library Partnership.

Section 4 - Finally...

- 4.1** In each of my portfolio reports, I want to end on a big positive from within our district.
- 4.2** For my first, report, I have selected ARC, a charity in Taunton who also run Lindley House at the bottom of East Reach in Taunton, who provide services and accommodation for those without a home. They recently held The Big Sleep Out event in June to raise money for their organisation. This involved people donating to 'sleep rough' in The Crescent Car Park in Taunton to raise money for the invaluable work they do. I attended the event and it was a well organised event with entertainment, food and lots of interesting people.
- 4.3** Amazingly, they raised £8207.85. An incredible effort for a worthy cause!

Councillor Chris Booth