

County Report August 2019.

Emotional and Mental Health Support: Somerset has been granted One Million Pounds over the next three years to deliver Emotional and Mental Health Support for Young People utilising trailblazer mental health support teams across the County. This is part of a national drive to improve emotional support in schools and forms part of the Somerset Wellbeing Framework, 'whole school approach' to wellbeing and mental health. Initially 25 schools will receive support teams to work in the schools, there will also be parent educational programmes provided by the voluntary sector.

Winter Gritting: In the middle of a summer heat wave the Highways gritting policy review has been completed and the first deliveries of salt for the forthcoming winter have started arriving at depots. This winter the County Council will be investing an extra £200,000 into the service and has taken on board feedback to reassess all the criteria used to determine which roads will be gritted. This means an increase in the precautionary gritting network from approximately 720 miles to 900 miles of road, which will be treated every time ice or snow is forecast. A map of the routes can be found at <https://somersetnewsroom.files.wordpress.com/2019/07/winter-service-2019-2020.pdf>

County Finances Update: The 2018/19 Statement of Accounts for the County Council and the Somerset Pension Fund (which the County administers on behalf of all employer bodies) have both been given an 'unqualified' opinion (the best we can get) for these accounts. However, before the auditors can conclude their overall opinion, they are planning a little more work looking at the robustness of budgets for the ever-growing adult and children's social care future demand. Regardless of the outcome of this work however, their feedback fully recognises the considerable progress made during the last 10 months to ensure sustainability in the County Councils finances.

Forecast school places: The new Education Infrastructure Growth Plan is now available at <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/education-and-families/school-place-planning-infrastructure-growth-plan/> This plan outlines the approach to school place planning and expected demand across Somerset, broken down by School Organisation Plan (SOP) areas

Summer Outdoor Activities: Kilve Court and the three other Somerset Support for Education Outdoor Centres have begun delivering an exciting summer programme for young people from across Somerset and beyond, from children's activity days and 5 day residential camps to art, music and science events, there is something available for everyone. Visit www.sseoutdoors.co.uk for further information.

Reducing Flood Risk: SCC have bid for funding for schemes that will help the county adapt to climate change by reducing flood risk through natural flood management rather than engineering. The resulting 'Co-adapt' project will bring £2.53m from the European Regional Development Fund into Somerset over the next three-and-a-half years for the projects. The Somerset Flood Action Plan, drawn-up in the wake of the 2013/14 winter floods, included a commitment to develop long-term land management actions to reduce flood risk in the face of climate change.

Library Outreach Services: The new Somerset Libraries Outreach vehicle was recently launched. The vehicle presents additional opportunities to showcase the diverse range of Somerset Library services, with targeted activities for hard to reach communities throughout the county.

Higher Education courses: A fantastic new “Study Up” website has been launched to offer a one stop shop for students of all ages to find the right Higher Education course for them right here in Somerset <http://www.studyupsomerset.org.uk>

Local Teacher Training: Somerset School Centered Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) will be moving to Dillington over the summer and from September students will be studying on campus. For more information about the training and apprenticeships on offer visit www.somersetscitt.co.uk

Free Business Training: Social enterprises, charities and co-operatives in Somerset can sign up for free bespoke training – plus a grant of £1,200. Somerset County Council is supporting the free training between September 2019 and January 2020. SCC is providing match funding of £250,000 which will enable draw down of England European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funding in recognition of the wider benefits of the programme.