



## EXECUTIVE

YOU ARE REQUESTED TO ATTEND A MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE TO BE HELD IN THE PRINCIPAL COMMITTEE ROOM, THE DEANE HOUSE, BELVEDERE ROAD, TAUNTON ON WEDNESDAY 6TH APRIL 2005 AT 18:15.

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### **AGENDA**

1. Apologies
2. Minutes
3. Public Question Time
4. Budget Monitoring 2004/05 - Use of expected underspend.  
Report of Financial Services Manager (enclosed)
5. Old Municipal Buildings, Taunton - Proposed Lease to Somerset County Council  
Report of Chief Valuer (enclosed)

The following item is likely to be considered after the exclusion of the press and public because of the likelihood that exempt information would otherwise be disclosed relating to the Clause set out below of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

6. Old Municipal Buildings, Taunton - Appendix

G P DYKE  
Member Services Manager

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TAUNTON  
Somerset

TA1 1HE

30 March 2005





Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting and listen to the discussion. Lift access to the main committee room on the first floor of the building is available from the main ground floor entrance. Toilet facilities, with wheelchair access, are also available. There is a time set aside at the beginning of the meeting to allow the public to ask questions



An induction loop operates to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter. If you require any further information, please contact Greg Dyke on:



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Website: [www.tauntondeane.gov.uk](http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk) (Council, Executive, Review Board & Review Panel Agenda, Reports and Minutes are available on the Website)

## **Executive – 22 March 2005**

Present: Councillor Williams (Chairman)  
Councillors Bishop, Mrs Bradley, Cavill, Edwards, Hall, Leighton and  
Mrs Lewin-Harris

Officers: Mrs P James (Chief Executive), Ms J Wishlade (Strategic Director –  
Operations), Mr N T Noall (Head of Development), Mr R Willoughby-  
Foster (Forward Plan Manager), Mrs R James (Communications  
Manager) and Mr G P Dyke (Member Services Manager)

Also Present: Councillors Croad, Denington, Hayward, Hindley, House, Meikle, Paul,  
Ms Peppard and Phillips

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm.)

### 25. Apologies

Councillor Garner.

### 26. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 9 March 2005 were  
taken as read and were signed.

### 27. Public Question Time

(a) At the request of Miss D Robins, Councillor Williams explained fully the  
reason why he was not prepared to receive questions from her during  
Public Question Time.

(b) Mr Harris made statements and asked a number of questions in  
connection with the Council's dealings with Mr S Robins.

Councillor Williams replied that Councillors and Officers had been  
working together for many years to resolve these problems.

(c) Mr Mike Marshall referred to the Taunton Sub Area Study and drew  
attention to the fact that no mention had been made in the Baker  
Report of large scale developments east of the M5 and protecting rural  
settlements. He also asked how the Council viewed the success of the  
consultation given the short period of time in which it took place.

Councillor Williams replied that in the Council's recommendations it  
was suggested that development east of the motorway should be  
divorced and should be near RPG 10 and follow economic growth. He  
had previously expressed his views on the consultation process  
involved in the Sub Area Study.

- (d) Mr Alan Debenham stated that he was pleased that RPG 10 plus 50% was something that everybody appeared to want to discount. He felt the development could happen without the green wedge being sacrificed. He did not agree with the inevitability of constant growth and felt that climate change, global warming, ozone layer depletion and oil shortages must be considered as part of the planning process.

Councillor Williams replied that the County Council's Executive meeting would be meeting the following day and Mr Debenham was welcome to make his points at their meeting.

## 28. Taunton Sub Area Study

(Councillor N Cavill declared a personal and prejudicial interest in certain sites within Monkton Heathfield which had been referred to in the report. He advised the Chairman that he would leave the meeting if and when any of these sites were specifically discussed.)

Considered report previously circulated regarding the Council's proposed response to the Taunton Sub Area Study final report. The summary and report of the County Council's consultants, Baker Associates, had also been circulated to all members of the Council. This matter had also been considered by the Strategic Planning Transport and Economic Development Review Panel at its meeting on 3 March at St Andrews Hall, Taunton when over 100 members of the public had attended.

The report explained the background to the Study and highlighted Taunton's role and function together with the role of Bridgwater and Wellington. The report went on to explain the economic potential, demand for housing, maximising urban potential and housing delivery requirements together with the environmental and transport implications. It also covered waste management, culture, health and education and a strategic sustainability appraisal.

RESOLVED that Somerset County Council be informed that the future regional strategy for the Taunton area should be sustainable and based on:

- The continued role of Taunton within the region as a PUA or other equivalent designation as a regional centre in accordance with the Vision for Taunton.
- It is considered that there was inadequate time for the extensive public consultation that such an important matter deserves.
- To implement in full the regeneration proposals of the UDF to expand the Town Centre to embrace the River Tone providing new commercial, retail and cultural opportunities and supporting new educational and health facilities.
- The level of growth should be based on the employment prospects with housing provision in balance, reflecting a continuation of the RPG 10 level of growth to maintain the existing high level of self containment.
- Higher growth scenarios are not desirable, achievable or sustainable.

- The roles of Bridgwater and Wellington are complimentary to Taunton.
- It is essential that Bridgwater and Wellington maintain their role and function with balanced growth of homes and jobs maximising the opportunities for regeneration, development to fund necessary infrastructure and economic diversification.
- A mixed use scheme at Longforth Farm including a northern relief road would support the complimentary role of Wellington.
- Both Monkton Heathfield and Comeytrowe are suitable locations for urban extensions in the longer term but development at Comeytrowe should not be considered until around 2020 and then only if absolutely necessary.
- The alternative option 1b set out in paragraph 11.27 of the report for later phasing for Staplegrove should be considered.
- To integrate enhanced transport infrastructure and services with development in order to achieve and maintain high accessibility, high quality public transport and greater reliance on walking and cycling.
- Smaller developments around the edge of the town will be sustainable and help deliver outer distributor roads and meet local needs.
- Development to the east of the motorway would be divorced from the town and should be resisted.

(The meeting ended at 7.55pm).

## TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE 6 APRIL 2005**

### **REPORT OF THE FINANCIAL SERVICES MANAGER**

**This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Williams (Leader of the Council)**

### **BUDGET MONITORING 2004/05 – USE OF EXPECTED UNDERSPEND**

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

At the end of December 2004 the expected outturn position for the General Fund is an underspend against the original approved budget of £51,580. Executive Councillors wish to use this underspend within the following services:

- Residents Parking - £5k
- Brewhouse - One Off Grant £25k
- BIDs scheme - £5k
- Crisp & Clean - £17k

#### **1 Purpose**

- 1.1 To formally consider the use of the expected underspend arising in 2004/05

#### **2 Background**

- 2.1 The Q3 Performance Report to the Review Board on 24 February identified an underspend within the General Fund of £51,580. The report also indicated the service areas where the Executive wished to use this underspend. This is set out below:

<b>Service</b>	<b>Amount £</b>	<b>Comments</b>
On Street Car Parking	5,000	To progress further locations where the residents parking scheme is in operation
Brewhouse Grant	25,000	A one off grant to assist the Brewhouse manage an agreed phased reduction in ongoing funding over the next 3 years
Economic Development	5,000	To assist with the development of a Business Improvement District
Various	16,580	To assist services with the “Crisp & Clean” agenda
<b>Total</b>	<b>51,580</b>	

- 2.2 At the Review Board meetings on both 24 February and on 23 March there was considerable debate concerning the use of the underspend, in particular the £25,000 allocated to the Brewhouse.

- 2.3 Financial Regulations allow virements of up to £25,000 to be dealt with as an Executive Councillor decision. However in the interests of openness, and to

further the debate, Councillor Williams has requested that the use of the underspend is formally considered by the Executive at this meeting. If the Executive agree the recommendation, due to the amounts involved, there will be no need for Full Council to consider this item further.

### **3 Further Information – Residents Parking**

- 3.1 It is expected that the £5,000 identified above for residents parking will be used to create a zone within the Haines Hill area of Taunton.

### **4 Further Information – Brewhouse**

- 4.1 As Members will be aware, through the budget process the annual grant to the Brewhouse for 2005/06 has been reduced from £180,000 to £168,000. The Chief Executive has been negotiating with the Brewhouse a phased reduction of the Council's annual grant over the medium term. This work is now complete and the proposed level of grant for the next three years is as follows:

2005/06	£168,000
2006/07	£152,000
2007/08	£137,000

- 4.2 As part of the negotiations mentioned above, the Executive wish to provide the Brewhouse with a one off grant, from the 2004/05 underspend, of £25,000. This will be used to enable the Brewhouse to both build up working capital and to finance a re-structure.
- 4.3 Agreement of the Brewhouse towards both the £25,000 one off grant and the reduction in annual funding has recently been received. Payment of the £25,000 will not be made until this item has been agreed by the Executive.

### **5 Impact on Corporate Priorities**

- 5.1 The proposed use of the underspend cuts across all corporate priorities.

### **6 Recommendation**

- 6.1 The Executive is asked to approve the use of the 2004/05 expected General Fund underspend in the following ways:

1. Residents Parking - £5,000
2. Brewhouse - One Off Grant £25,000
3. BIDs scheme - £5,000
4. Crisp & Clean - £16,580

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## **TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **REPORT OF THE CHIEF VALUER TO THE EXECUTIVE TO BE HELD ON 6 APRIL 2005**

#### **THE OLD MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, CORPORATION STREET, TAUNTON – PROPOSED LEASE TO SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL FOR USE BY THE REGISTRAR This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor N Cavill (Portfolio Holder for Property)**

#### **1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The report sets out the recent history in respect of the use of the Old Municipal Buildings.
- 1.2 In particular the Borough Council incurs considerable expense in terms of the current usage.
- 1.3 The County Council has identified this building as being suitable for the Registrar and it is now considered that this would be a much better use of the building in future on a partnership arrangement between the Borough Council and the County Council, subject to detailed terms and conditions being agreed for a suitable lease.

#### **2. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to seek a decision from The Executive for granting a lease of the Old Municipal Buildings to the County Council, subject to detailed terms and conditions being agreed by the Chief Valuer

#### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The OMB is a grade 2\* listed building of historical and architectural importance, situated in Corporation Street in an area identified for cultural development within the Vision for Taunton proposals.
- 3.2 The property is owned by TDBC and currently approximately half of the building is let as office accommodation, largely to voluntary sector organisations, with the remainder comprising the main hall, committee room, mayor's parlour and allied accommodation.
- 3.3 The building features in the Borough Council's Asset Management Plan as a poor performing building in respect of its suitability for purpose, eg extent of use, problems relating to access and general running and maintenance costs.
- 3.4 Nevertheless, the building is of course very important in respect of Taunton's history in relation to civic use and civic functions still continue today. The building has the old mayor's parlour that is used as a base for a small number of functions during the year, eg Remembrance Sunday and St George's Day. The Mayor also uses the building to provide refreshments on occasions, eg following the Taunton Carnival. The committee room houses many items of Taunton's history and paintings owned by the Borough Council are hung on the main staircase and in the hall. The ability to hire out the committee room and hall is significantly reduced by the facilities available, particularly catering. Nevertheless, the committee room and hall have been available for hire for a mix of social and business functions including weddings. However, due to the prospective future changes, the licence for marriage ceremonies has not been renewed by the Borough Council.

#### 4. PROPOSAL FOR USE OF THIS BUILDING BY THE REGISTRAR

- 4.1 The County Council has identified the ground floor and first floor of the Old Municipal Buildings as a suitable location for the Registrar's Offices as greater accommodation is now required by this service than can currently be offered at Flook House. The ground floor of Flook House is, of course, currently let to the County Council for this purpose by the Borough Council. Furthermore, both the hall and the first floor committee room of the Old Municipal Buildings have been identified by the Registrar as particularly good venues for marriage ceremonies.
- 4.2 The County Council's Architects are currently in discussions with the Borough Council's Chief Architect regarding suitable adaptations to the premises, in particular to satisfy the provision of suitable disabled access, together with satisfactory means of escape in case of fire for large numbers of people. It is considered that it should be possible to satisfy the requirements of the County Council in respect of these issues.
- 4.3 If the Registrar's service were to relocate to the Old Municipal Buildings, the County Council has indicated that it would require the majority of the ground floor and first floor space. This would therefore mean that the Borough Council would need to relocate the CVS and other voluntary sector tenants, together with the Town Centre Manager and the office currently used for housing purposes. Some car parking spaces adjacent to the building would also be required.
- 4.4 Limited second floor office accommodation could, however, still be available and might provide suitable offices for people connected with delivering the cultural part of the Vision for Taunton. An application by Somerset County Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council has been made to Rural Renaissance and provision of offices in the Old Municipal Buildings feature.
- 4.5 In addition, it is intended that the Borough Council would retain the use of the mayor's parlour and the building (including the hall and committee room) could still be used for certain civic functions by arrangement with the County Council.
- 4.6 It is proposed that the Borough Council would grant the County Council an internal repairing lease of the building for a term of probably 21 years or thereabouts, retaining a sublease of the mayor's parlour, on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Borough Council's Chief Valuer. It is intended to commence the lease on 1 April 2006, if possible.

#### 5. IMPLICATIONS REGARDING COST AND IMPACT ON THE BOROUGH COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 5.1 It is considered that considerable cost savings should arise as a result of this proposal, although it must be appreciated that expenses will arise not only in respect of future maintenance of the main structure but also in respect of the relocation of the CVS and voluntary sector tenants.
- 5.2 Income is presently derived from rental payments by CVS and other tenants and from hiring out the committee room and hall. These would be expected to bring in approximately £19,000 and £21,000 respectively in a full year. There is an anticipated shortfall in hiring out income this year as the level of bookings has been lower than normal. This results partly from the protracted discussions with various parties as to the future of the building and a serious limit on the numbers of persons allowed on the premises as a result of the Fire Risk Assessment.
- 5.3 The building is expensive to maintain and operate. As mentioned in 3.3 above it is identified as a poor performer in the AMP. The annual budget for normal maintenance and running costs is £30,000. Direct employee costs are approximately £20,000 with considerable internal recharges on top of this.

- 5.4 A full Fire Risk Assessment last summer identified a number of serious defects. These have been put right at a cost of some £16,700. At the same time it has been recognised that to bring the building in practical compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act a further £83,000 will need to be spent. To meet all legislative and licensing requirements as a publicly hireable building, as well as meeting the Council's obligations to tenants, further additional expenditure on an annual basis will be required.
- 5.5 The age and structure of the building means that its facilities are naturally limited in terms of competition with other more modern venues. Considerable investment would be needed to update it in line with these and, it is felt, would be unlikely to result in acceptable increase in income.
- 5.6 Backlog maintenance is estimated at approximately £50,000. Possible future maintenance over the next 20 years could be £300,000, including the DDA figure mentioned above of £83,000.
- 5.7 Staffing implications are dealt with in the confidential appendix attached.
- 5.8 Nevertheless, it is felt that the proposal will help to enhance the development of the cultural quarter in relation to the Vision for Taunton proposals and therefore should make a significant contribution to the Borough Council's corporate priorities.

## 6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 It is considered that the above proposals provide a partnership opportunity, which is of significant benefit to both the County Council and the Borough Council.

## 7. RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 The Executive is recommended to agree that the Borough Council grants the County Council an internal repairing lease of the Old Municipal Buildings as proposed in this report, subject to the provision of additional financial information, on terms to be agreed by the Chief Valuer in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Strategic Director.

David Thompson  
Chief Valuer

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