



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 5TH MARCH 2008 AT 18:15.

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 6 February 2008 (attached)
3. Public Question Time
4. Declaration of Interests. To receive declarations of personal or prejudicial interests, in accordance with the Code of Conduct
5. Planning Delivery Grant - allocation of funding
Report of Strategic Directors (attached)
6. Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for 2008/09
Report of Principal Accountant (attached)
7. Q3 Budget Monitoring Issues
Report of Financial Services Manager (attached)
8. Disposal of land at Enmore Road, Taunton
Report of Housing Enabling manager (attached)
9. Brewhouse Theatre Feasibility Study
Report of Strategis Director (attached)

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.

10. Flood Alleviation Works at Longrun Farm
Report of Strategic Director (attached)

G P DYKE
Democratic Services Manager
27 February 2008



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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Executive – 6 February 2008

Present: Councillor Henley (Chairman)
Councillors Brooks, Coles, Horsley, Mullins, Prior-Sankey, Mrs Smith
and A Wedderkopp.

Officers: Shirlene Adam (Strategic Director) Joy Wishlade (Strategic Director),
Paul Carter (Financial Services Manager), Phil Webb (Housing
Manager – Property Services), John Williams (Chief Housing Officer),
Lydia Baker (Housing Accountant), Tim Burton (Development Control
Manager) and Greg Dyke (Democratic Services Manager)

Also present: Councillors Ms Brockwell, Cavill, Critchard, Mrs Lewin-Harris, Meikle,
Morrell and Stuart-Thorn.

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm.)

127. Apologies

Councillor R Lees

128. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2008, copies of which had
been circulated, were taken as read and were signed.

129. Public Question Time

Councillor Stuart-Thorn, as a member of the public, asked that an end be
brought to what he felt was discrimination by the Tenants Forum. Their Constitution
stated that neither elected members or employees of the Council were eligible for
membership. He felt that Councillor/tenants should be permitted to become
members of the Forum providing they were careful to declare the necessary interests
at the appropriate time.

Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey replied that having checked the position there was no
legal reason why a councillor should not be a member of the Tenants Forum.
However, the view had always been taken that the Forum should be independent of
the Council and that a separation of roles should be encouraged. The Constitution
was formulated by the Forum itself, at a time when Councillor Stuart-Thorn was
himself a member (before he became a councillor) and it was entirely up to them if
they wanted to change their Constitution.

Paul Partington stated that last year approval was given for the redevelopment of the
redundant Cider Factory at Norton Fitzwarren, planning application no: 25/2006/020.

In accordance with the Government and Taunton Deane Policies a comprehensive flood scheme is required to ensure no adverse flood risk arises to the development and third parties. As a consequence the flood scheme it will reduce the incidence of flooding in the locality, and this was one of the reasons to grant planning permission. Whilst I have no doubt about the purpose and safety of the Norton Fitzwarren Dam, the recent press release by the developers Barratt Homes about the success of the dam does not mention the other works of the comprehensive flood scheme which have not been started.

A 'Decision Certificate' was issued on 23 August 2007 by Taunton Deane Borough Council to Hammond Yates Ltd had a number of conditions relating to ensuring no adverse flood risks arising to the development and third parties.

There is a park home site, Beauford Park, Norton Fitzwarren. The southern end of this site has had the ground level raised significantly and park homes erected.

He then asked the following questions.

1. In relation to the flood prevention planning conditions of the development of the redundant cider factory, has there been any changes to these conditions?
2. What monitoring has been done by Taunton Deane Borough Council of compliance with planning conditions of the development of the redundant cider factory?
3. In relation to the flood prevention conditions of the redundant cider factory, have there been any breaches in planning conditions?
4. If there have been breaches of the planning conditions of the development of the redundant cider factory, has the developers had any form of notices served on them by Taunton Deane Borough Council?
5. At Beauford Park are all the park homes on the area covered by the site licence for Beauford Park?
6. At Beauford Park was/is planning permission required for the rise in ground level?

Councillor Henley replied that Mr Partington would have an opportunity to ask these questions at a forthcoming public meeting but in the meantime he would be provided with a written answer

130. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Brooks, Henley and Prior-Sankey declared general personal interests as members of Somerset County Council. Councillor Prior-Sankey also declared a personal interest as the tenant of a Council owned garage Councillor Fran Smith declared a personal interest as an employee of Somerset County Council, Councillor Horsley as a representative on the CAB and Councillor Mrs Lewin-Harris as the Council's representative on CAB.

131. **Concessionary Travel**

Submitted report, previously circulated, which provided information on the operation of the Council's Concessionary Travel Scheme. Also received a presentation from Mark Pedlar, Group Manager, Transporting Somerset. Since 1974 the Council had run two Concessionary Travel Schemes. The first was between 1974 and 1984 using Travel Tokens. The second was from 1990 to the present day, where there was now a statutory concessionary bus pass scheme or, in certain circumstances, a choice of travel vouchers.

The concessionary pass scheme for 2006-2008 established free passes across the County and also to a number of locations outside the county that were able to be reached by direct bus service and/or had a through fare available from a point in Somerset.

In April 2008 the bus pass scheme would change. The Concessionary Bus Travel Act 2007 provided that everyone aged 60 and over in England, and disabled people in England, would get free off peak travel on all local buses anywhere in England.

The authority responsible for the issuing of passes and the management of the scheme was the District or Unitary authorities. These authorities were known as TCAs (Travel Concession Authorities). Currently a TCA was responsible for reimbursing bus operators for concessionary trips made by its residents. The new legislation meant that from 1 April 2008 a TCA would be responsible for reimbursing operators for eligible journeys starting within its boundary, regardless of where the eligible person was resident.

In Somerset the district councils acted in a consortium with the County Council match funding administration costs and taking the role of overall scheme management.

Individual Districts retained responsibility for issuing passes although Mendip and Taunton Deane outsourced this responsibility to the County Council. The County Council had carried out this role for us since 2004.

The Council received partial funding of the scheme through the Revenue Support Grant system although many districts had complained that the additional amounts made available as a result of the 2006 scheme, and expected to be allocated for the 2008 scheme, were insufficient.

Bus companies were reimbursed for actual bus usage based on the number of times a pass was presented against an average fare travelled e.g. if 1000 passes were seen and the average fare (based on adult fare payers) was £2.30 then the company was reimbursed £2,300.00. This figure was modified to take into account the number of passholders who would not have travelled if no scheme existed (generated travel). In Somerset this figure was currently

72%, however, the County Council had negotiated a further reduction down to 70% for 2008/09. In the example above therefore the partnership would actually pay the operator £1,656.00.

In order to make their claim large operators must submit a claim based on a monthly return of pass-holders using the service and the monthly average fare on a route-by-route basis. By this method trends could be checked and unusual or outlandish claims monitored.

Resolved that the report be noted

132. Asset Management Plan 2008

The Asset Management Plan (AMP) was a key corporate planning document, and as such was refreshed on an annual basis.

The 2008 refresh had now been completed and details of the key points were submitted.

Over the next year, the format and content of the AMP would be thoroughly reviewed to ensure it continued to reflect best practice, was focused on the Council's priorities and enabled the Council's property assets to optimise their contribution to corporate goals and improved service delivery.

Resolved that the 2008 AMP be agreed and the intention to carry out a best practice review over the coming months be noted.

133. Planning – revised charges and potential impact of changes to the Householder Consents Scheme

Reported that the Overview and Scrutiny Board had previously considered a report on pre-application planning advice (i.e. requests for advice on the likelihood of planning permission being granted) at its meeting on 1 November 2007. The principle of increasing charges for this service and reinvesting additional receipts to improve the service provided were supported by the Board. It was also considered that the charge should apply to all requests.

Forthcoming changes to legislation in respect of householder development would inevitably have a significant negative impact on fee income and it was therefore important that the Council considered ways of mitigating this.

These issues were further considered by the Overview and Scrutiny board on 24 January 2008. Following that meeting, increased charges had been proposed, which it was estimated would raise an additional £15,000 income per annum. Potential to increase charges was limited by government guidance which indicated that such charges must reasonably relate to the service being provided and should not be used to subsidise other work. It was felt, therefore, that the additional income generated would be reinvested in the

Planning Service to increase resources both in terms of Planning Officer time as well as admin support to administer the pre-application service. This would form part of a wider restructure of the Development Management service aimed at increasing the resources available to respond to major applications as well as reducing response times generally. Full details of existing and proposed charges were submitted.

With the increase in charges, customers would rightly expect an improved service. It was therefore proposed to also introduce service standards where, if targets were not met, charges, or a percentage of charges, would be refunded.

Increased income was dependent upon having adequate staff available to meet these targets. At present there were three vacant planning officer posts and it would be impractical to introduce the charges until these were filled.

The Barker Review identified a major issue in terms of the ability of local planning authorities to meet the growth agenda. The report concluded that too much planning officer time was spent dealing with minor proposals and that in future resources should be redirected towards those proposals that delivered housing growth.

Following on from this, the Government had embarked on a review of Householder Consents. This was to reassess the General Permitted Development Order with a view to increasing permitted development rights for householder proposals such as domestic extensions. Such a proposal was likely to result in a reduction of planning applications received by up to 30% (i.e. 225 applications per year).

It was inevitable that an associated impact of the introduction of this legislation would be a significant increase in requests as to whether planning permission was required. Whilst there was provision within the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to seek a formal determination (s192 of the Act) Taunton Deane Borough Council had traditionally dealt with such requests on an informal basis.

The Householder Consents Review would therefore result in a shift away from application based work, which generated a planning fee (currently normally £135 per application) to work that did not generate any income. In order to continue support the resource necessary to provide a reasonable level of service to the public, ways had to be found to mitigate this potential loss of income.

It was increasingly common practice for local planning authorities to deal with all requests as to whether planning permission was required formally under s192. This not only had the advantage to the Council of a statutory fee (50% of the planning application fee for that category of development) but the certificate could also be of significant benefit to the householder as it provided them with a legal document that could often prove invaluable should they come to sell the property.

Resolved that:

- (i) subject to the vacant posts referred to above being filled, the revised charges set out in the report for pre application advice be agreed and introduced with effect from 1 April 2008; and
- (ii) the Council deals with all requests as to whether planning permission was required in accordance with s192 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

134. Capital Strategy 2008-11

Although there was no statutory requirement for the Council to prepare a Capital Strategy, in terms of setting direction for the use of the Council's capital resources the strategy was seen as a "must have" document.

The Capital Strategy was a summary of the Council's approach to capital investment including:-

- Our Vision,
- The identification of needs and our needs gap,
- The management and monitoring of the capital programme,
- The capital programme and the level of resources available,
- Our approach to procurement and partnership working,
- Linkages to other corporate plans.

The revised draft Strategy for 2008-11 was submitted. It had been updated from last year's version by incorporating new developments being undertaken by the Council and refreshing the financial data included within the document.

The Strategy and Performance Panel had considered the draft document at its meeting on 5 February and details of the comments made at that meeting were submitted.

Resolved that Council be recommended that the draft Capital Strategy for 2008-11 be agreed.

135. General Fund Revenue Estimates 2008/09

Considered report, previously circulated, regarding the Executive's final 2008/09 budget proposals, prior to submission to Full Council on 19 February 2008 for approval. The report contained details on:

- (i) The General Fund Revenue Budget proposals for 2008/09, including the proposed Council Tax increase and the Prudential Indicators.
- (ii) Draft figures on the predicted financial position of the Council for the following four years.

A detailed consultation had been undertaken on the priorities of the Council with the public. A summary of the findings of "Your Council, Your Views" was included in the Councillors Consultation Pack. Further consultation sessions on the budget had also been arranged with the Taunton Chamber of Commerce, Wellington Chamber and Taunton Town Centre Company.

Details were submitted of the new initiatives proposed by the Executive, some further information on the budget gap projection, and a summary of the overall budget proposal. The proposals would result in a total Council Tax increase of 3.0%.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board had considered the Executive's draft budget proposals at its meeting on 24 January 2008. The Board made comments on some of the savings and new initiatives but made no formal request for changes to the budget proposals.

The Council Tax calculation and formal tax setting resolution was to be considered separately. The proposed budget for Taunton Deane would result in a Band D Council Tax of £131.89, an increase of £3.84 (3.0%) on 2007/08. This represented an increase of 7.4p pence per week. The Band D taxpayer would receive all the services provided by the Council in 2008/09 at a cost of £2.54 per week.

It was a requirement for the Council to prepare not only budgets for the following financial year but to also provide indicative figures for the two years after that. The Medium Term Financial Plan provided an indication of the expected budget gap going forward into 2009/10 and a summary of this position was submitted.

It was noted that these figures had been prepared on the assumption of a 4.5% increase in Council Tax each year, including 2009/10. Government support was based on the draft figures. The figures took into account the ongoing impact of all of the Executive's budget proposals and the 2008/09 proposed Council Tax level.

The estimated expenses chargeable to the non-parished area of Taunton in 2008/09 amounted to £29,190, an increase of 4.75%, and this formed part of the total net expenditure of the Council. The precept in 2007/08 was £27,870.

As part of the Prudential Code for Capital Finance there was a requirement for Council to approve the indicators as set out in the report. These included the expected spend on the capital programme and the expected borrowing requirement for both the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account. They also set the operational boundaries for both borrowing/investment levels and interest rate exposures for the Council.

The Council's S151 Officer had a duty to comment, as part of the budget setting process on the robustness of the budget and the adequacy of reserves,

Shirlene Adam (Strategic Director), the Council's S151 Officer had thoroughly reviewed the procedures, outputs and outcomes of the budget setting process and felt that the Council's reserves were adequate and the budget estimates used in preparing the 2008/09 budget were sufficiently robust.

Resolved that the Council be recommended that the budget for General Fund services for 2008/09 as outlined in the report be agreed and that

- a) the transfer for any potential underspend in 2007/08 back to General Fund reserves be agreed;
- b) the proposed 2008/09 budget, being Authority expenditure of £13,614,270 and Special Expenses of £29,190 be agreed in accordance with the Local Government Act 1992;
- c) the predicted General Fund Reserve balance at 31 March 2008 of £844,203 be agreed;
- d) the Prudential Indicators for 2008/09 as set out in the report be agreed;
- e) the forecast budget position for 2009/10 onwards as outlined in the report be noted.

136. Housing Revenue Account, Revenue Estimates and Rent Levels, Deane Helpline and Deane Building DLO Account 2008/2009

Submitted report, previously circulated, which outlined the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the 2008/09 Financial Year. It also included details relating to the new rent level, service charges and other housing related charges such as garage rents. Finally it provided information on the Deane Helpline Trading Account and Deane Building DLO Trading Account.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board had considered the 2008/09 draft budget at its meeting on 24 January 2008. The Board discussed in detail the increase in negative subsidy payable and some other aspects of the service but made no formal suggestions for amendments to the draft budget.

The Tenants Forum had also consider the report at its meeting on 4 February 2008 and details of their comments were submitted.

Resolved that Council be recommended that the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2008/09 be agreed.

137. Capital Programme 2008/09 Onwards

Submitted report which detailed the proposed General Fund (GF) and Housing Account (HRA) capital programmes for the period 2008/09 and beyond.

For the General Fund the existing unallocated resources available were £43k. It was proposed to direct these resources entirely towards the replacement desktop hardware programme.

For all Housing schemes, both GF and HRA, the estimated resources available for 2008/09 amounted to £7,280k. The proposed capital programme for 2008/09 amounted to £6,576k. The unallocated resources of £704k were proposed to be carried forward to support the Housing Capital Programme in future years.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board had considered the draft programme at its meeting on 24 January and made no formal suggestions for any changes to the programme. The Housing Tenants Forum considered the draft Housing capital programme at its meeting on 4 February 2008 and details of their comments were submitted.

For both the GF and HRA any new schemes, which emerged during the lifespan of the programmes, would be funded through existing unallocated resources or through new resources, such as new capital receipts.

Resolved that Council be recommended that the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account capital programmes be agreed.

138. **Council Tax Setting 2008/09**

Submitted report which made recommendations to Council on the level of Council Tax for 2008/09.

The Council was required to make an annual determination, which set its gross expenditure (including the Housing Revenue Account and balances brought forward), and gross income (also including the Housing revenue Account and balances brought forward), with the difference as its budget requirement. This determination is set out in the resolution.

The estimated expenses chargeable to the non-parished area of Taunton in 2008/09 amounted to £29,190 and this formed part of the total net expenditure of the Council. Details were also submitted of the parish precepts levied and the appropriate Council Tax at Band D.

The estimated balance on the Council Tax Collection Fund was a deficit of £480,797. Taunton Deane's share of this amounts to £50,486 and this was reflected in the revenue estimates.

The Council's budget requirement was £14,014,469 including draft Parish Precepts and non-parished Special Expenses. This amount was then reduced by the amount notified in respect of the Borough's Revenue Support Grant (RSG) amounting to £1,022,665 and the Non Domestic Rates Distribution (NDR) from the pool, amounting to £7,346,300.

The net amount, having taken the collection fund position into account, of £5,695,990 was used to calculate the Council Tax at Band D, reflecting the Parish Precepts by dividing it by the total of the Council Tax base as approved by the Executive in January 2008.

The Council Tax for the borough (excluding Parish Precepts and Special Expenses for the non-parished area) was £131.89, an increase of £3.84 (3.0%) compared to the 2007/08 Council Tax. The total Council Tax, including the County Council, Police and Fire Authorities precepts was still subject to confirmation

Resolved that Council be recommended that subject to final determination including the Council Tax for Somerset County Council, Police and Fire Authorities, which was to be advised.

(i) That it be noted that at its meeting on 14 January 2008 the Executive calculated the following amounts for the year 2008/09 in accordance with the regulations made under Section 33(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended):-

(1) 40,153.07 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as its Council Tax base for the year.

(2)

Ash Priors	78.82	Neroche	248.78
Ashbrittle	90.22	North Curry	724.80
Bathealton	81.22	Norton Fitzwarren	737.28
Bishops Hull	1,075.04	Nynehead	168.96
Bishops Lydeard/ Cothelstone	1,915.67	Oake	330.56
Bradford on Tone	277.60	Otterford	168.23
Burrowbridge	203.67	Pitminster	449.53
Cheddon Fitzpaine	636.76	Ruishton/ Thornfalcon	621.22
Chipstable	120.07	Sampford Arundel	128.69
Churchstanton	313.19	Staplegrove	719.37
Combe Florey	123.09	Stawley	123.05
Comeytrowe	2,088.46	Stoke St Gregory	381.60
Corfe	137.97	Stoke St Mary	212.07
Creech St Michael	940.01	Taunton	16,083.61
Durston	58.99	Trull	1,008.61
Fitzhead	124.85	Wellington	4,646.65
Halse	146.71	Wellington (Without)	297.29

Hatch Beauchamp	265.32	West Bagborough	159.39
Kingston St Mary	460.34	West Buckland	439.50
Langford Budville	220.32	West Hatch	140.64
Lydeard St Lawrence/Tolland	199.61	West Monkton	1,104.87
Milverton	596.15	Wiveliscombe	1,104.32

being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amounts of its Council Tax Base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

- (ii) That the following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2008/09 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:-
- (a) £72,268,826 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2)(a) of the Act.
(Gross Expenditure including amount required for working balance.)
 - (b) £58,254,357 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(3)(a) to (c) of the Act.
(Gross Income including reserves to be used to meet Gross Expenditure.)
 - (c) £14,014,469 being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, as its **budget requirement** for the year.
 - (d) £8,318,479 being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its general fund in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates, revenue support grant, additional grant or SSA reduction grant (increased by the amount of the sums which the Council estimates will be transferred in the year from its Collection Fund to its General Fund in accordance with Section 97(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (Council Tax Surplus) and increased by the amount of any sum which the Council estimates will be transferred from its Collection Fund to its General Fund pursuant to the

Collection Fund (Community Charge) directions under Sec. 98(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 made on 7 February 1994 (Community Charge Surplus).

$$(e) \quad \pounds 141.86 \quad \frac{(c) - (d)}{1(i)} = \frac{14,014,469 - 8,318,479}{40,153.07}$$

being the amount calculated at (c) above less the amount at (d) above, all divided by the amount at 1(i) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year. (Average Council Tax at Band D for Borough Including Parish Precepts and Special Expenses.)

$$(f) \quad \pounds 400,199 \quad \text{being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act. (Parish Precepts and Special Expenses.)}$$

$$(g) \quad \pounds 131.89 \quad \frac{(e) - (f)}{1(i)} = \frac{141.86 - 400,199}{40,153.07}$$

being the amount at (e) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (f) above by the amount at 9.2.1(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special items relate.

(Council Tax at Band D for Borough Excluding Parish Precepts and Special Expenses.)

(h)

Ash Priors	135.06	Neroche	145.56
Ashbrittle	148.52	North Curry	152.59
Bathealton	139.28	Norton Fitzwarren	155.48
Bishops Hull	150.49	Nynehead	151.42
Bishops Lydeard/ Cothelstone	147.03	Oake	143.99
Bradford on Tone	150.80	Otterford	131.89
Burrowbridge	154.06	Pitminster	147.13
Cheddon Fitzpaine	141.31	Ruishton/ Thornfalcon	150.00
Chipstable	145.22	Sampford Arundel	166.39
Churchstanton	155.84	Staplegrove	145.79
Combe Florey	144.89	Stawley	148.14

Comeytrowe	141.95	Stoke St Gregory	147.61
Corfe	139.86	Stoke St Mary	149.41
Creech St Michael	147.54	Taunton	133.70
Durstun	132.57	Trull	145.77
Fitzhead	153.28	Wellington	148.39
Halse	146.20	Wellington (Without)	147.53
Hatch Beauchamp	145.27	West Bagborough	138.16
Kingston St Mary	147.10	West Buckland	150.09
Langford Budville	155.13	West Hatch	147.04
Lydeard St Lawrence/Tolland	146.42	West Monkton	143.29
Milverton	146.99	Wiveliscombe	147.83

being the amounts given by adding to the amount at (g) above, the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 1(ii) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate. (Council Taxes at Band D for Borough, Parish and Special Expenses).

- (i) See overleaf:

Valuation Band

[illegible]

That it be noted that for the year 2008/09 the Somerset County Council, the Avon and Somerset Police Authority and the Somerset and Devon Fire and Rescue Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwelling shown below:

[illegible]

139. **Growth Point Funding**

Reported that in partnership with Somerset County Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council had applied to Government for Growth Point funding. This money was to be used for infrastructure that supported the growth of housing and the subsequent growth in the population. The agreed approvals for the spending programme would be ascertained from the Project Taunton Executive and the Project Taunton Advisory Board. However, as Taunton Deane Borough Council had an integral interest as a key land owner it was important that the Steering Group supported the planned projects.

Taunton Deane Borough Council/Somerset County Council had applied for £70m in their Growth Point funding bid. Notification had now been received that we would receive £2.740m capital and £2.87k revenue in 2008/09 and had been allocated an indicative allocation of £5.128m capital and £401.6k revenue for the following two years. However we had been told that CLG would hold a consultation exercise in the Spring to test out this new way of funding and following that we would be invited to reapply for the next two years' funding. The funding was not ring-fenced, but must be used to support growth. Our bid was accepted on the basis of the types of projects that were evidenced in it.

As we did not receive the total amount that we bid for, the projects that we plan to use this money on had to be prioritised. As this was partnership money the Project Taunton Executive and Advisory Board had agreed that they were the most appropriate bodies to give that partnership approval. However, as many of the projects also concerned Taunton Deane assets these projects must also be approved by Taunton Deane.

The South West Regional Development Agency were also promoting an additional fund – the Regional Infrastructure Fund – which offered forward funding of pieces of infrastructure that were required for development to take place, but which could be financed retrospectively by developer contributions. An initial bid had been submitted into this fund for the flood alleviation works at Longrun Farm and for the extension to the Park and Ride at Silk Mills. Details were submitted of the proposed priorities that had been agreed between the Somerset County Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council and Delivery Team.

Resolved that the schemes set out in the report be agreed as the ones that should be prioritised for delivery using the 08/09 Growth Point funding allocation. The Castle Green project should be subject to a plan for displaced car parking and the re-routing of buses from Castle Green.

(The meeting ended at 7.50p.m. .)



Executive

March 5th 2008

Planning Delivery Grant – allocation of funding

Report of Strategic Directors: Joy Wishlade and Kevin Toller

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor S Coles)

Executive Summary

Taunton Deane has been in receipt of an annual Planning Delivery Grant based on overall planning performance. In 08/09 PDG is changing to Housing and Planning Delivery Grant and will be based not just on planning performance but also on the delivery of new housing. We have not yet received notification of what the 08/09 figure is likely to be. However, we have some PDG funding unallocated from the previous year and this report seeks approval for these funds to be used.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Taunton Deane has been in receipt of Planning Delivery Grant 75% of which is revenue funding and 25% of which is capital funding. There is currently £111,771 of capital funding and £89,330 of revenue funding in 07/08 which is currently unallocated. The purpose of PDG is to improve our ability to deliver planning and development services. Some capital funding has been spent on officer time working on capital programmes but there is now a pot built up of £111,771 capital funding.

2. Proposed Revenue Allocation

- 2.1 Up until now the revenue PDG funding has been spent on additional officers in both the Development Control and the Forward Plan departments, on further studies required in the forward plan making process and on part of the TDBC contribution to the Project Taunton partnership.
- 2.2 The cost of retaining all the staff supported by PDG funding in Development Control and Forward Plan for 08/09 is £127,000. The funds required for further studies within the Forward Plan Unit will be funded from Growth Point revenue funding. The three year partnership funding agreement for Project Taunton has now finished and the partners have successfully gained Growth Point funding to cover 08/09. There is also sufficient money left unspent in the partnership fund to cover a further year (09/10) of the delivery team should

other funding not be forthcoming. Further Housing and Planning Delivery Grant is expected to be announced for 08/09 in the early summer.

- 2.3 It is recommended that the remaining £89,330 revenue funding be allocated towards the cost of retaining the development control and forward plan staff, the remainder (£37,670) being paid from H&PDG later in the year.

3 Proposed Capital Allocation

- 3.1 Upgrade for Limehouse system. Limehouse is the software used for consultations in the Forward Plan and Policy and Performance units.

The Version 3 upgrade is for Uengage (new consultation software) and Ucreate (new publisher software). Version 3 gives major improvements in table design, version comparison, user-level publishing, intuitive workflow, full page maps and graphics. New functions include a powerful consultation portal, customisable questionnaires and surveys, and public chamber meetings.

The upgrade is simpler to use, but more flexible and powerful. The cost of the upgrade is £8,000

- 3.2 Development Control – improved working arrangements. Members are aware that under the Health and Safety Executive guidelines, audits on stress levels have been carried out within the organisation. The DC report showed stress levels to be higher than normal and staff identified this as partly to do with their workloads and partly with their working environment. A working group has been set up to look at how the environment and the DC working practices can be made more efficient as well as the environment more pleasant. This work shows that staff require mobile technology (laptops) so they can work out of the office and gain access to their systems. This will also allow them to rearrange their office area with hot desks and thus make better use of the space. The total cost of laptops, the associated software to allow access to the planning system remotely and for the required cabling etc within the office is £14,000

- 3.3 Planning system and virtual server. Members approved £80k of funding from General Fund reserves for a new planning system. This was prior to tendering. The recommended system from the tendering process that meets our requirements was Plantech which also happened to be the cheapest. However £8,000 is required for the supplier (Plantech) - for additional professional services over the original estimate (mostly training & interfacing work required)

£10,000 is also required for hardware as the pricing from the supplier excludes hardware. The hardware required includes a new virtual server & associated licences, as upgrade to the existing SQL Server 2005 database server and some extra disk for the SAN.

The total further cost is therefore £18,000.

3.4 New system for Land Charges.

The current system is becoming increasingly out of date and difficult to support and integrate with the new service delivery models we are developing. It will need significant investment to bring it up to date. The current system also hinders our ability to manage the workloads created by the Personal Search industry. The purchase of the Plantech Acolaid Land Charges module would enable us to meet the needs of the service through:

- Recording and processing of land searches, compliant with all relevant legislation
- User friendly simple to use interface
- Support of mobile / home working
- Close integration with GIS, Development Management and Building Control systems
- Integration with NLIS system
- Support of web-based service delivery channels, including the facilitation of efficient personal searches.

The capital cost of this module is £35,000. The ongoing revenue costs of £5,550 will be met through fee income. Members may recall that the new land charge fees for 2008/09 were recently published in the weekly bulletin, these fees take into account the additional revenue costs mentioned above.

A project approval report is attached.

3.5 New system for Building Control

As with the Land Charges, the current system is becoming increasingly out of date and difficult to support and integrate with the new service delivery models we are developing. It will need significant investment to bring it up to date. The current system also hinders our ability to manage the workloads created by the Personal Search industry. The purchase of the Plantech Acolaid Building Control module would enable us to meet the needs of the service through:

- Recording and processing of building control applications, compliant with all relevant legislation
- User friendly simple to use interface
- Support of mobile / home working
- Close integration with GIS, Development Management and Land Charges systems
- Support of web-based service delivery channels

The capital cost of the module is £51,000. It is proposed to meet this through a contribution of £30,000 from Building Control reserves and £21,000 from PDG Capital. The ongoing revenue costs of £7,500 will be met through fee

income. Members will note that there is a report on this agenda requesting approval of the 08/09 building control fees; these take into account the additional revenue costs mentioned above.

A project approval report is attached.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 There is sufficient funding available for all the above requirements subject to sufficient Housing and Planning Delivery Grant being available. However, on what Government has informed us will be the basis of the grant we are confident that we will receive more than the remaining £37,670 shortfall. The remaining unallocated capital will be £15,771.

Revenue available	£89,330
Contribution towards staff costs	£89,330
Remaining unallocated	Nil
Capital available	£111,771
Limehouse upgrade	£8,000
DC – improved working arrangements	£14,000
Planning system and virtual server	£18,000
Land charges system	£35,000
Building control system	£51,000
Less contribution from building control reserves	(£30,000)
Remaining unallocated	£15,771

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Executive:
- a) Approve the use of PDG revenue and capital funding outlined above,
 - b) Approve the use of £30k of building control reserves to part fund the new building control IT system.
 - c) Note the unallocated amount of PDG capital funding of £15,771.

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EXECUTIVE
CAPITAL PROJECT APPROVAL REPORT

PROJECT TITLE: Plantech Acolaid Building Control module

Lead Officer: Brian Yates, Building Control Manager

Executive Member: Councillor Simon Coles

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

To replace the existing Building Control software and paper based systems to enable:

- Recording and processing of building control applications, compliant with all relevant legislation
- User friendly simple to use interface
- Support of mobile / home working
- Close integration with GIS, Development Management and Land Charges systems
- Support of web-based service delivery channels

CATEGORY:

Service necessity.

ESTABLISHMENT OF NEED:

The Building Control service operates in a competitive marketplace. There are significant pressures on the service to deliver faster and more effectively and electronically in order to remain competitive in this market place.

Software which is capable of meeting these demands is necessary to enable the Council to continue to provide the service required and meet the increasing demands on that service. A key part of this is to ensure that the building control software is able to easily communicate with the main planning software and land charges systems.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES:

The improvement in service which will follow implementation of the new software will directly impact on the following Corporate Priorities:

Economy – in particular support building development across the Borough

Delivery – in providing a more effective, competitive and value for money service.

SERVICE OBJECTIVES/OUTPUTS:

- Responding effectively to customer demands and needs;
- Accurate statistical returns to maximise income, forecasting and Best Value Performance Indicators;
- Automation of tasks currently needing manual intervention;
- Performance within top quartile of relevant BVPIs
- Pro-active approach to IT development to ensure software changes are in place and tested before legislation implementation;
- Close links with Planning and Land Charges systems.

SUSTAINABILITY:

The Council has a duty to promote the economic, social and environmental well being of an area. This project contributes to this duty through:

- Supporting building development within the Borough.

OPTION APPRAISAL:

Outputs

There are a number of software systems available for building control work. It is vital that the system procured integrates well with the planning system used within the Council. The Council has recently procured the Plantech system for planning purposes following a thorough procurement process. This system has an appropriate Building Control module.

Benefits

Benefits of the software include:

- Allow ease of change with new legislation;
- Allow joint working with other Local Authorities as required by Gershon;
- Deliver flexible working in line with the modernising agenda;
- Deploy staff resources in a more efficient way;
- Ease recruitment and training of staff who are familiar with commonly used software packages;
- Give the ability to meet Best Value Performance Standards requirements;
- Improved links with Planning and Building Control
- Meet E-government initiatives.
- Respond to the needs of our customers

Costs

The software is estimated to cost £51,000. This can be met from a combination of Building Control reserves and the PDG capital allocation.

There are additional ongoing revenue costs of £7,500pa. These costs can be met through the fee charging structure for the service.

Risk Identification

- Procurement of new IT and migration of data presents notable risks as well as opportunities for improvement. It is essential we manage the project effectively, as both the continuity and timing are critical to success.
- There may be a dip in service and a backlog of searches develop as staff resources are used to implement the software.
- Suppliers fail to deliver any of the procured systems on time. The strength of the contract between all parties should lessen this particular risk. Any contract developed would have financial penalties for non-delivery;

Monitoring

The project will be closely monitored by the lead officer, and any key issues reported to the Portfolio Holder.

Project Evaluation and Preferred Course of Action

The Plantech Acolaid Building Control module meets the needs of the service and in particular clearly links well with the Plantech system being installed as the main planning system.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

The software is estimated to cost £51,000. It is proposed to meet this through a contribution of £30,000 from the Building Control reserve and £21,000 from PDG Capital.

There are additional ongoing revenue costs of £7,500pa. These costs can be met through the fee charging structure for the service.

TIMESCALE:

A detailed project plan and timescale will be developed with a target period of 4 to 6 months from purchase to full installation of system and staff trained.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That approval is given for the procurement and implementation of the Plantech Acolaid Building Control module.

EXECUTIVE
CAPITAL PROJECT APPROVAL REPORT

PROJECT TITLE: Plantech Acolaid Land Charges module

Lead Officer: Tonya Meers, Democratic and Legal Services Manager

Executive Member: Councillor Fran Smith

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

To replace the existing Land Charges software and paper based systems to enable:

- Recording and processing of land searches, compliant with all relevant legislation
- User friendly simple to use interface
- Support of mobile / home working
- Close integration with GIS, Development Management and Building Control systems
- Integration with NLIS system
- Support of web-based service delivery channels, including the facilitation of efficient personal searches.

CATEGORY:

Service necessity.

ESTABLISHMENT OF NEED:

The last few years have seen significant changes in public, and government expectations for the delivery of land search information aimed at providing faster electronic deliver and opening up greater competition. Personal Land Searchers now account for a significant part of this business.

We have seen a decline in the overall performance of the service, largely founded on our difficulties with present systems (some of which remain paper based) in responding to the demands placed on us.

Software which is capable of meetings these demands is necessary to enable the Council to continue to provide the service required and meet the increasing demands on that service. A key part of this is to ensure that the land charges software is able to easily communicate with the main planning software and building control systems.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES:

The improvement is service which will follow implementation of the new software will directly impact on the following Corporate Priorities:

Economy – in particular for supporting the flow of the housing market

Delivery – in providing a more effective, value for money service.

SERVICE OBJECTIVES/OUTPUTS:

- Responding effectively to customer demands and needs;
- Accurate statistical returns to maximise income, forecasting and Best Value Performance Indicators;
- Automation of tasks currently needing manual intervention;
- Performance within top quartile of relevant BVPIs
- Pro-active approach to IT development to ensure software changes are in place and tested before legislation implementation;
- Close links with Building Control and Planning systems.

SUSTAINABILITY:

The Council has a duty to promote the economic, social and environmental well being of an area. This project contributes to this duty through:

- Supporting the smooth flow of the housing market.

OPTION APPRAISAL:

Outputs

There are a number of software systems available for land charges work. It is vital that the system procured integrates well with the planning system used within the Council. The Council has recently procured the Plantech system for planning purposes following a thorough procurement process. This system has an appropriate Land Charges module.

Benefits

Benefits of the software include:

- Allow ease of change with new legislation;
- Allow joint working with other Local Authorities as required by Gershon;
- Deliver flexible working in line with the modernising agenda;
- Deploy staff resources in a more efficient way;
- Ease recruitment and training of staff who are familiar with commonly used software packages;
- Give the ability to meet Best Value Performance Standards requirements;
- Improved links with Planning and Building Control
- Meet E-government initiatives.
- Respond to the needs of our customers

Costs

The software is estimated to cost £35,000. This can be met from the PDG capital allocation.

There are additional ongoing revenue costs of £5,550pa. These costs can be met through the fee charging structure for the service.

Risk Identification

- Procurement of new IT and migration of data presents notable risks as well as opportunities for improvement. It is essential we manage the project effectively, as both the continuity and timing are critical to success.
- There may be a dip in service and a backlog of searches develop as staff resources are used to implement the software.
- Suppliers fail to deliver any of the procured systems on time.
The strength of the contract between all parties should lessen this particular risk. Any contract developed would have financial penalties for non-delivery;

Monitoring

The project will be closely monitored by the lead officer, and any key issues reported to the Portfolio Holder.

Project Evaluation and Preferred Course of Action

The Plantech Acolaid Land Charges module meets the needs of the service and in particular clearly links well with the Plantech system being installed as the main planning system.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

The software is estimated to cost £35,000. This can be met from the PDG capital allocation.

There are additional ongoing revenue costs of £5,550pa. These costs can be met through the fee charging structure for the service.

TIMESCALE:

A detailed project plan and timescale will be developed with a target period of 4 to 6 months from purchase to full installation of system and staff trained.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That approval is given for the procurement and implementation of the Plantech Acolaid Land Charges module.

TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE 5 MARCH 2008

REPORT OF THE PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTANT

(This matter is the responsibility of Councillor Henley, Leader of the Council)

TREASURY MANAGEMENT & INVESTMENTS STRATEGY FOR 2008/2009

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Council debt at time of issue of report £21m, outstanding investments £16.6m.
- Short-term interest rates look to fall to 4.75% by end of financial year but possibility of maintaining current levels or smaller decreases if inflation becomes problematic
- Long-term rates more stable at 4.45-4.50% (50yrs) for this financial year.
- World and UK economies and impact of inflation, fuelling concern and caution regarding future interest rate movement.
- Borrowing and debt restructuring, if undertaken, to take advantage of lower rates and match our debt to capital needs.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the treasury management and investment strategies for the financial year 2008/09.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Local Government Act 2003 and supporting regulations require that local authorities have 'regard to' the Prudential Code and set Prudential Indicators for a three year period to ensure that capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable. Full Council approved these at their meeting on 19 February 2008.
- 2.2 It is also a statutory requirement under Section 33 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for authorities to produce a balanced budget. In particular, Section 32 requires a local authority to calculate, in its budget requirement for each financial year, the revenue costs that flow from capital financing decisions. This, therefore, means that increases in capital expenditure must be limited to a level whereby increases in charges to revenue, such as:
- Increases in interest charges due to borrowing to finance additional capital expenditure. or

- Increases in running costs, derived from the capital projects...

...are limited to a level which is affordable within the projected income of the Council for the foreseeable future.

- 2.3 Therefore, in the context of the above, authorities are obliged to set out a treasury strategy for borrowing and to prepare an Annual Investment Strategy (section 10) (as required by Investment Guidance issued subsequent to the above Acts); this sets out the policies for managing investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments.
- 2.4 The proposed strategy at this Council for 2008/09 is set out below and based on the opinion of Council treasury officers, supplemented by data, forecasts and opinions of the Councils treasury advisors, Sector Treasury Services Ltd. The strategy covers:
- treasury limits in force which will limit the treasury risk and activities of the Council;
 - Prudential Indicators;
 - the current treasury position;
 - the borrowing requirement;
 - prospects for interest rates;
 - the borrowing strategy;
 - debt rescheduling;
 - the investment strategy;
 - any extraordinary treasury issues

3. TREASURY LIMITS FOR 2008/09 TO 2010/11

- 3.1 It is a statutory duty under S.3 of the Local Government Act 2003 and supporting regulations, for the Council to determine and keep under review how much it can afford to borrow. The amount so determined is termed the "Affordable Borrowing Limit". In England and Wales the Authorised Limit represents the legislative limit specified in section 3 of the Local Government Act 2003.
- 3.2 The Council must have regard to the Prudential Code when setting the Authorised Limit, which essentially requires it to ensure that total capital investment remains within sustainable limits and, in particular, that the impact upon its future council tax and council rent levels is 'acceptable'.
- 3.3 Whilst termed an "Affordable Borrowing Limit", the capital plans to be considered for inclusion incorporate financing by both external borrowing and other forms of liability, such as credit arrangements ie leasing. The Authorised Limit is to be set, on a rolling basis, for the forthcoming financial year and two successive financial years.

3.4 Limits in place for 2008/09 and the following two financial years are:

- Authorised Limit of £40,000,000
- Operational Boundary of £30,000,000

The Operational Boundary reflects both current debt levels and the need to provide operational “elbow room” for short-term borrowing as the need arises. The Authorised Limit is the upper limit of external debt deemed necessary by the Authority.

4. PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS FOR 2008/09 – 2010/11

- 4.1 As identified in section 2.1 above, authorities are required to calculate and incorporate Prudential Indicators to assist in its decision making in determining the affordability, prudence and sustainability of its capital investment decisions. The indicators for 2008/09 – 2010/11 have been incorporated into a table found in Appendix A and are for information only following Council approval on February 19th 2008.

5. CURRENT PORTFOLIO POSITION

- 5.1 The Council’s treasury portfolio position at 21/02/08 comprised:

		Principal £'m	£'m	Avg. rate %
Fixed Rate Funding	PWLB	18.008		5.55
	Other	<u>3.079</u>		4.25
TOTAL DEBT			21.087	5.36
TOTAL INVESTMENTS			16.571	5.61

6. BORROWING REQUIREMENT

	2007/08 £'000 probable	2008/09 £'000 estimate	2009/10 £'000 estimate	2010/11 £'000 estimate
New Borrowing	210	2,821	821	821
Replacement	6	6	0	0
Borrowing				
TOTAL	216	2,827	821	821

- 6.1 This table reflects the expected need for ongoing long-term borrowing to fund capital expenditure, primarily for General Fund Housing Services such as Private Sector Renovation Grants. Central Government provide revenue support for this borrowing via the Revenue Support Grant formula.

- 6.2 However, for 2008/09 some £2m of borrowing is intended to finance transformation projects associated with Southwest One. The latter borrowing is only temporary and will be repaid on receipt of released cash savings arising out of the Southwest One contract. If this borrowing is not taken out then the Authority funds it by drawing down on the level of cash investments it holds.

7. PROSPECTS FOR INTEREST RATES

- 7.1 Forecasting interest rates is a highly specialised activity, requiring constant analysis of the market and economic data, as it arises across the world. Consequently, this is an area officers are reliant upon specialist consultants to provide analysis and the table below summarises the current expectations of the Councils advisors.

	Q/E1 2008	Q/E2 2008	Q/E3 2008	Q/E4 2008	Q/E1 2009	Q/E2 2009	Q/E3 2009	Q/E4 2009	Q/E1 2010	Q/E2 2010	Q/E3 2010	Q/E4 2010	Q/E1 2011	Q/E2 2011
Bank Rate	5.25%	5.00%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
5yr PWLB rate	4.55%	4.55%	4.50%	4.50%	4.55%	4.65%	4.70%	4.75%	4.80%	4.85%	4.85%	4.85%	4.85%	4.85%
10yr PWLB rate	4.60%	4.55%	4.50%	4.50%	4.55%	4.55%	4.65%	4.70%	4.75%	4.80%	4.85%	4.85%	4.85%	4.80%
25yr PWLB rate	4.55%	4.50%	4.50%	4.50%	4.50%	4.55%	4.60%	4.65%	4.70%	4.70%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%
50yr PWLB rate	4.50%	4.45%	4.45%	4.45%	4.45%	4.50%	4.55%	4.60%	4.60%	4.65%	4.65%	4.65%	4.65%	4.60%

- 7.2 As ever the the forecast above has been developed over time as the economic data across the world arises and consequential opinion and sentiment on impact is voiced, usually first of all coming from the US. Indeed the latest 'crisis' in sub prime lending there and significant downturn in the housing market has lead to 'a sharp downturn in economic sentiment' which lead to the US Federal Bank making drastic rate cuts in response.
- 7.3 Due to the ever increasing mutual dependency of world markets, the negative sentiment in the US, and actual downturn in economic growth, is eventually felt across the world, which has lead to similar pressures on the Bank of England to reduce interest rates. However, there has been no clamour to make such drastic a reduction in rates and in the UK the expectation is of a much softer fall.

- 7.4 In addition, despite economic downturn, inflation would seem to persist and in the UK there will be a reluctance to reduce rates further if inflation remains relevant in the background. Indeed our advisers warn that the risk to the forecast above is that rates will rise, should inflation worsen and this should be borne in mind setting any strategies.

8. BORROWING STRATEGY

- 8.1 The chart presented in 7.1 above, incorporated the rates for borrowing from 5-50 years and therefore is central to the Councils strategy for borrowing to finance its capital programme.
- 8.2 Although the least expensive borrowing is in the 50 yr bracket, officers will seek to establish a maturity profile that best matches out capital needs, cash flows and with an eye on the consequences of PWLB new borrowing terms and conditions (see 9.1 below). In addition, given the forecast of increasing rates, officers are engaged in establishing future borrowing requirements to consider bringing forward any borrowing at a time of lower rates. This is consistent with prudential treasury management and a permitted strategy from a regulatory point of view.
- 8.3 As an alternative to PWLB borrowing the Council has and will continue to consider other lenders and types of debt structure. The approach was demonstrated during 2007 when the Council externalised £3m of its debt with Barclays bank at a cost of 4.25% per annum, a rate at the time well below that of the PWLB.

9. DEBT RESTRUCTURING

- 9.1 The Council will always seek to restructure its debt when advantageous to do so and undertook such and exercise in December of 2006. However, since November 8th 2007, the PWLB changed their lending arrangements, which had the impact of significantly increasing the penalties this Council would have to pay on early redemption of debt. The result means that significant savings would have to be evident before restructure takes place but officers and advisors will continue to seek out those opportunities.

10. ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

10.1 Investment Policy

- 10.1.1 The Council applies Central Government and CIPFA guidance in its approach to managing investments with priority given over to the security of capital and liquidity of its cash flows, whilst seeking to optimise returns commensurate with these 'limitations'.

- 10.2 Achievement of target returns are made through investment instruments identified for use in the financial year and is listed in Appendix B, under 'Specified' and 'Non-Specified' Investments categories.
- 10.3 Counterparties used for these investments and the limits set to mitigate risk with each, will be as set through the Council's Treasury Management Practices document.
- 10.4 Investment Strategy**
- 10.4.1 The Councils cash funds are managed internally and derive entirely from the flux in cash coming in and out of the Council across the financial year. Consequently, liquidity is key to effective management of these funds and no investment will be made without consideration as to the timing of its return.
- 10.5 Keeping the above in mind and the forecast of a decrease in investment rates (see Bank Rate in chart in 6.1), officers will seek to lengthen the period of investment where possible and lock into more attractive rates now, with the expectation that they will diminish in the future.
- 10.6 The average return expected for the forecast rate in 2008/09 is 4.81%; therefore, officers will use this as a trigger point to determine the decision to invest and / or the period of investment. This rate will be kept under review and revised in light of any alteration to forecast rates.
- 10.7 In 2008/09 we have budgeted to receive £750k in investment income within the General Fund, Members may be interested to note that this is the equivalent of a 14.2% increase in Council Tax.

11. OTHER ISSUES

- 11.1 The treasury management and investment strategies, outlined above, have assumed the largely neutral impact of Project Taunton, as per all option appraisals undertaken to date. However, projects of this scale can have both a positive or negative impact on the timing of capital expenditure and thus cash flow. As the project stages are developed and approved any impact on the Treasury function will be assessed and strategies may have to be altered. Any impact on strategy will be reviewed as options are considered and reported to members throughout.

12. IMPACT ON CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 12.1 Treasury Management supports the entire range of services within the Council and thus has an impact on all Corporate Priorities.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 13.1 The Executive are requested to approve the proposed Treasury Management Strategies outlined in this report.

Background Papers

Executive 20/06/07 – Treasury Management Outturn 2006/07 & 2007/08 Update.

Executive 06/02/08 – General Fund Revenue Estimates 2008/09

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Appendix A

PRUDENTIAL INDICATOR	2006/07 £'000	2007/08 £'000	2008/09 £'000	2009/10 £'000	2010/11 £'000
	Outturn	estimate	estimate	estimate	estimate
Capital Expenditure					
General Fund	£3,279,910	£4,655,110	£3,946,000	£1,566,520	£3,176,740
HRA	£4,115,000	£5,655,700	£5,082,390	£5,265,400	£5,450,030
TOTAL	£7,394,910	£10,310,810	£9,028,390	£6,831,920	£8,626,770
Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream					
General Fund	-1.91%	-5.48%	0%	0.5%	0.5%
HRA	4.00%	3.93%	3.35%	3.19%	3.05%
Net borrowing requirement					
brought forward 1 April	£5,897,121	£6,633,630	£10,000,000	£12,000,000	£12,000,000
Carried forward 31 March	£6,633,630	£10,000,000	£12,000,000	£12,000,000	£12,000,000
in year borrowing requirement	£736,509	£3,310,623	£2,000,000	£0	£0
Capital Financing Requirement as at 31 March					
General Fund	£7,137,288	£9,394,827	£10,014,827	£10,634,827	£11,254,827
HRA	£14,451,342	£14,451,342	£14,451,342	£14,451,342	£14,451,342
TOTAL	£21,588,630	£23,846,169	£24,466,169	£25,086,169	£25,706,169
Incremental impact of capital investment decisions	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p
Increase in council tax (band D)	0.50	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65
Authorised limit for external debt -					
TOTAL	£40,000,000	£40,000,000	£40,000,000	£40,000,000	£40,000,000
Operational boundary for external debt -					
TOTAL	£30,000,000	£30,000,000	£30,000,000	£30,000,000	£30,000,000
Upper limit for fixed interest rate exposure					
Net interest re fixed rate borrowing/ investments	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Upper limit for variable rate exposure					
Net interest re variable rate borrowing/ investments	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Upper limit for total principal sums invested for over 364 days (per maturity date)					
	£2m or 20%	£2m or 20%	£2m or 20%	£2m or 20%	£2m or 20%

Appendix B

<u>Specified Investments</u>	<u>Credit Criteria</u>	<u>Maximum Maturity</u>
Debt Management Account Deposit Facility (DMADF)	Not applicable	1 year
Term Deposits – Local Authorities	Not applicable	1 year
Term Deposits – Banks and Building Societies	Fitch: AA - Long Term F2 – Short Term C – Individual 3 – Support	1 year
Callable Deposits – Banks and Building Societies	Fitch: AA - Long Term F2 – Short Term C – Individual 3 – Support	1 year
Money Market Funds	AAA only	Not applicable, instant access available to all of deposit.
<u>Non-Specified Investments</u>		
Term Deposits with unrated counterparties	Top 20 Building Societies Only	2 years
Term Deposits – Local Authorities	Not applicable	2 years
Term Deposits – Banks and Building Societies	Fitch: AA - Long Term F2 – Short Term C – Individual 3 – Support	2 years

NB – all Investments are limited to a maximum amount of, the lesser of £2m or 20%, of investment portfolio, per Counterparty.

TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 5 MARCH 2008

REPORT OF THE FINANCIAL SERVICES MANAGER

This Matter Is The Responsibility of Executive Cllr Henley (Leader of the Council)

Q3 BUDGET MONITORING ISSUES

Executive Summary

The Q3 budget monitoring exercise has highlighted the need for supplementary estimates from reserves for the following overspends:

- Job evaluation appeals £140k
- O2 Mast planning compensation £40k

The Executive are requested to seek approval from Full Council for supplementary estimates to fund these items.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Q3 budget monitoring exercise was reported to the Strategy & Performance panel on 4 March. This highlighted two areas of unavoidable cost, which the authority does not have approval for. This report highlights these issues and requests supplementary estimates from reserves to fund these items. Supplementary estimates require final approval from Full Council. Each item is detailed below.

2 Job Evaluation Appeals

- 2.1 The Council has almost completed the appeals process arising from the recent job evaluation exercise. It is expected that some of the appeals will be successful and therefore this will increase the overall salary cost of the council. Members may recall that in the 2008/09 budget setting exercise the Executive agreed to set aside £200k for this purpose.
- 2.2 Any member of staff whose grade increases under the new job evaluation scheme is entitled to have this backdated to 1 April 2007. Therefore the financial effect of appeals will be felt in 2007/08 as well as 2008/09 onwards. No monies have been set aside for increases in salary costs arising from the appeals process.
- 2.3 The final results of the appeals process is not yet known – however based on the experience of other similar sized councils who have already undergone this exercise we estimate that the cost of successful appeals will be in the region of £140k. This will be split between the General Fund (£110k) and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) (£30k). The Executive is requested to seek Full Council approval for supplementary estimates for these amounts.

3 O2 Mast Planning Appeal

- 3.1 In 2005 O2 obtained deemed consent for the erection of a telecommunication mast at Shoreditch Road Taunton, following the failure of O2 to receive the refusal notification within the required period. This was as a consequence of a failure to follow established administrative procedures. Attempts to negotiate with O2 to re-locate the mast to an alternative site were unsuccessful and a mast was erected. It was however not the mast for which deemed consent had been granted and the Council therefore resolved to take enforcement action.
- 3.2 This led to a Public Inquiry in September 2007 as a consequence of which a Planning Inspector found the mast as erected unacceptable and upheld the Enforcement Notice requiring its removal. He however confirmed that there was a valid deemed permission, which could be implemented. O2 have again been invited to consider re-locating the mast with assistance from the Council, but have refused to consider this.
- 3.3 At its meeting on the 27 February the Planning Committee were advised of the position but further recommended not to take steps to revoke the deemed permission because of the potential financial liabilities such action would incur. Any compensation would need to be based on the future business losses of O2 arising from the revocation of the permission.
- 3.4 However, even the erection of the deemed mast is likely to have a detrimental impact on the immediately adjacent residential property and the Council is likely to face compensation claims which will probably be based on diminution in value of the property in question, from both that property and possibly from other residential properties in the neighbourhood. The sum of £40k sought as likely compensation reflects the valuation by the Assets Holdings Manager.
- 3.5 The Executive is requested to seek Full Council approval for a supplementary estimate of £40k to fund the compensation payment.

4 Overall impact on reserves

- 4.1 If the Executive is minded to request Full Council approval of these supplementary estimates the impact on reserves would be as follows:

	General Fund Reserve £000	Housing Revenue Account £000
Forecast balance at 31 March 2008 per Budget Setting reports	844	3,143
Job Evaluation	(110)	(30)

appeal costs		
O2 Mast Compensation costs	(40)	-
Revised forecast balance at 31 March 2008	694	3,113

- 4.2 Clearly the above supplementary estimates bring the Councils General Fund Reserve position down to a very low level. This is outside the recommended limits of the reserve as set out in the Financial Strategy of the authority. In order to correct this position, the Chief Finance Officer has commissioned a full and thorough review of **all earmarked reserves** of the authority with a view to returning as many as possible to the General Fund Reserve. A full report on this will be presented to the next meeting of the Executive.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 The Executive is requested to seek Full Council approval for supplementary estimates from the General Fund and HRA reserves as outlined in paragraph 4.1 above.

Background Papers:

Strategy & Performance Panel 4 March 2008 – Q3 Performance Report 2007/08

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TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE – WEDNESDAY 5 MARCH 2008

REPORT OF THE HOUSING ENABLING MANAGER

PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF A PIECE OF COUNCIL OWNED LEISURE LAND AT WELLSPRINGS BETWEEN ENMORE ROAD AND WELLSPRINGS ROAD. FOR THE PROPOSED MIXED DEVELOPMENT OF 20 SOCIAL RENTED AND SHARED OWNERSHIP AFFORDABLE HOMES THROUGH HOUSING INNOVATION LTD at no cost to the public purse.

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillors Cllr. Hazel Prior Sankey And Cllr. Richard Lees).

SUMMARY

The shortage of affordable housing in Taunton Deane is serious. Coupled with an acute shortage of building land in the Council's land banks this makes the provision of Affordable Housing almost impossible through the Council's own resources. Brownfield sites in Taunton suitable for significant development are in short supply. It is therefore essential that the Council consider every development opportunity to produce Affordable Housing.

Taunton Deane has one of the highest ratios of house prices to average joint incomes in the West Country. Home ownership is becoming impossible for most low income people and the lack of affordability is getting worse all the time. 2006 figures published in Home Truths by the National Housing Federation (south west) 'The real cost of housing' 2007-2012 illustrates the difficulties for people to buy in this area, average house price £199,533, average income £17,077 house price affordability ratio 11.7. As a result the Housing Waiting List continues to grow.

For many years now the Council has been unable to provide the numbers of affordable housing that are required to meet demand. Affordable Housing delivery through RSLs has fallen short of the required figures. ARK Consultancy carried out a Housing Need Survey in 2006 and this demonstrated a need for 564 social/affordable homes per year. This figure is increasing. Fordhams have been asked to carry out a County Strategic Housing Market Assessment and officers fear a significant increase in the demand for Affordable Housing.

With the demand for housing growing rapidly it is necessary for the Council to look for innovative ways of providing the housing needed and to consider the difficult issue and assess the viability of building on open green areas such as part of Wellsprings open space. This piece of land was offered for Affordable Housing and will be able to accommodate 20 three bed family homes with a mix

of 10 for social rent and 10 for affordable shared ownership. These three bedroom houses will be available for applicants and transfers on our Housing Waiting List. Three bedrooms homes are in short supply and will be greatly welcomed by people living in small or cramped conditions.

Housing Innovation Ltd, a company based in the South West and London, is in a position to be able to purchase this land for £200,000 which equates to £10,000 per plot. There will be no public funding with delivery of the homes at the end of this year (subject to planning). This scheme will work if this Council and Housing Innovation Ltd work in partnership. It is necessary that the money raised from the sale of this land should be ring fenced for Leisure and Open Space.

Hard copies of the site location plan and scheme design will be handed out at the meeting.

Appendix 1 Report from the Leisure Development Manager.

Background

Currently there are approximately 4553 on the Council's Housing Waiting List. Over 3432 are applicants, 1121 want to transfer. It is likely that those applicants on the waiting list will wait for up to 8 years.

Completions of new build over the past four years have been disappointing

02/03	106
03/04	43
04/05	48
05/06	93
06/07	53

There are currently six major Section 106 sites in the pipeline. These sites have brought forward problems that are delaying the delivery of all housing on these sites. It is quite likely that it will be 2010 before we see any significant delivery of Affordable Housing on these sites. We currently rely on small windfall sites, exception sites, and small developments on Housing owned land.

Councillors and Officers will recall that Housing Innovation Ltd, came to Taunton Deane Council to present their unique funding and delivery model and this was greatly accepted and considered to be a good way forward. It was agreed that this Council would work in partnership with Housing Innovation in delivering Affordable Housing.

Current Situation

At our request the architect for Housing Innovation Ltd drew up three different site plans (appendix 2) that is indicative of what could be produced on a limited amount of open space. It was felt as much choice should be offered to the residents as possible.

After identifying the land at Wellsprings Road (site location plan attached appendix 3) a consultation exercise was carried out with 120 local residents. A pack containing a detailed letter, site plans of the three schemes and a questionnaire was distributed with a 47% return. There were obviously concerns over the loss of space and varying concerns over each scheme. The area identified for consideration as Scheme three was considered to be the least intrusive development and this is the area put forward today for consideration. The design will include a green corridor along the Kingston Stream with careful sympathetic design to fit in with the surrounding area.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are recommended to approve the disposal of the land to provide much needed three bedroom Affordable Housing for families on our Housing Waiting List in the light that

- This particular site will be able to provide 20 three bedroom houses with no cost to the public purse.
- These new homes can be delivered during the next financial year (subject to planning)
- Taking account of concerns raised regarding the loss of open space, the full £200,000 raised from sale of this site will go towards improving open space amenities in the area, which is on the priority list for improving play opportunities.

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Housing Enabling Manager***

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Appendix 1

COMMENTS OF LEISURE DEVELOPMENT MANAGER ON THE PROPOSAL

THE SITE

The site proposed for development is in North Taunton and forms part of the Wellsprings Linear Open Space which links the Taunton Green playing fields in the north with the Rowbarton Allotments site in the south, forming a pleasant informal open space along the Kingston Stream. It passes through the wards of Pyrland and Rowbarton and Lyngford.

The area proposed for development is part of the informal open space south of Wellsprings Road in the ward of Lyngford. It provides a visual amenity for adjacent houses, is used for informal recreation and activity, provides pedestrian access into the wider open space network and has a vehicle access across it to Rowbarton allotments. The proposed development would take one fifth of this area of open space.

THE SUPPLY OF OPEN SPACE

This part of Taunton has less open space in relation to the amount of open space available across the town. In Taunton there is an average of 2.5 hectares of open space per thousand people and in the Lyngford ward in which the site is located there is just 1.73 hectares per thousand people. This would suggest that disposal of this area of land is not advisable as it will leave an even greater shortfall. (The very closely adjacent wards of Pyrland and Rowbarton and Fairwater also have shortfalls at 1.4 hectares and 1.23 hectares per thousand people respectively)

Indeed the disposal of open space in an area not identified as having an over supply could provide evidence for developers that the Council has no basis for requiring off-site contributions for public open space in the future from developers in this vicinity. It will also set a precedent for the future showing that the Council is not averse to considering the disposal of open space for development. For these reasons I cannot support this proposal.

MITIGATION OF THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL

Should Members be minded to approve this disposal it is vital that it takes steps to guard against the risk of developers challenging future and recently negotiated Section 106 requirements for open space contributions.

In order to do this the entire receipt of £200,000 from the sale of this site should be reinvested into improving local public open space and its accessibility. This would create more user facilities and generate greater active use of the open spaces by a wider range of people in the community.

In particular this ward is ranked 5th in the Taunton Deane Play Strategy priority list for improving play opportunities and there is room to create a modern play space on the remaining land. The provision of facilities for parents, dog walkers and to enhance the wildlife habitats would also add to the quality of the remaining open space. It is understood that the developer concerned has agreed to retain a green corridor along the stream and the vehicle access into the allotments. The walk along the stream needs to be as wide as possible in order to safeguard the wildlife habitat value of the stream and its banks.



Executive – 5th March 2008

Brewhouse Theatre Feasibility Study

Report of Strategic Director – Joy Wishlade

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor R Lees

Executive Summary

A feasibility exercise looking at the future for the Brewhouse was commissioned by Project Taunton in October 2007. The brief was written and agreed by the relevant stakeholders of the Brewhouse i.e. TDBC, SCC, Project Taunton, the Arts Council England SW and the Brewhouse itself. The final report and its recommendations were received in February 2008 and all the stakeholders now seek their organisation's endorsement to these recommendations.

1. Background

1.1 Since the publication of the Terence O'Rourke Taunton Vision masterplan there have been many questions about the future location and size of a theatre in Taunton. Also, since that time, the Brewhouse has not only undergone a change of management and trustees and with this, a change of direction but also seen its annual grant income reduced. It was therefore felt by all of the relevant stakeholders, as well as the Brewhouse itself, that it was timely to commission a piece of work to answer a number of questions and to agree a way forward that all stakeholders could sign up to. The brief identified the questions as:

- What are the requirements that will enable this new theatre to thrive in the 21st century within a growing Taunton and within the context of Somerset and the South West?
- What are the Provisional requirements for a new venue?
- What are the financial constraints? (to include financial forecasts on the options to establish core costs and potential income streams).
- What would be the most effective physical model that generates maximum income through the box office and other services for the minimum core overhead and staff costs?
- Where should the theatre be located?

- 1.2 The outcome of the study was to make recommendations on the location, size, technical requirements and physical specifications of a new theatre in Taunton and to identify capital and revenue costs, funding partners and income streams which might enable the construction and sustainable operation of such a venue in the long term.

Following a competitive process, Artservice where the consultants appointed to undertake the research.

2. Executive summary of key findings

- 2.1 The study concludes that Taunton does require a flagship 21st century arts and entertainment facility: capable of presenting high quality professional theatre, dance and music for Taunton and its surrounding areas; accommodating local amateur and community performances and exhibitions; presenting film and professional exhibitions; with artists support facilities and workspace for the creation and production of new work in the performing and visual arts; and as a centre for participatory and educational activities. This range of functions (based on the existing Brewhouse multi-purpose model) addresses the priorities of its key stakeholders, and will reach out to engage a wide variety of people.
- 2.2 That the current Brewhouse site is the ideal location for such a facility with its excellent riverside location and proximity and relationship to the Town Centre and cultural quarter. There is considerable potential for developing new facilities on this site, and for maximising its attractive location for commercial purposes, with riverside restaurants and bars integrated into the theatre complex. This would also respond to the County Cricket Ground re-development and open up new opportunities for partnership, in conferencing for instance.
- 2.3 The study confirms that there is a large potential catchment audience for theatre in Taunton and scope for expanding the scale of theatre facilities, particularly in view of the planned growth in population. A theatre seating between 600 and 750 should be able to attract sufficient audiences to support a programme of professional and amateur work across the range of art forms.

A larger theatre, possibly seating in excess of 1,000, would need a different kind of operational model with a more commercial focus, and would still require substantial revenue funding. It would not meet the all of the aspirations of the stakeholders.

- 2.4 Taking into account the current lack of major capital funding sufficient to build a new theatre (which would be likely to cost in excess of £25m), the preferred option is for a phased re-development of the Brewhouse site, possibly retaining some existing facilities, but with the aim of creating, through phased developments, a larger main auditorium; enhanced exhibition and studio facilities; additional production and participatory facilities; more flexible spaces to support arts activity and accommodate meetings and other hired activities; and improved bar and catering facilities.

- 2.5 A masterplan would be created for the site through a design study, identifying the possible development phases. A key element of the proposed re-development is the maximisation of the commercial potential of the Brewhouse location. It is proposed that a new glazed atrium is added to the front of the Brewhouse, linking to a new riverside restaurant development and enveloping the existing Georgian building and also, possibly, the existing auditorium facade.
- This would create a spacious, light internal street and foyer area providing the Brewhouse with a greatly improved façade and circulation areas and Taunton with an iconic riverside destination which would become the town's natural meeting place and cultural destination. Leasing out commercial restaurant and catering units could generate between £100,000 and £175,000 per annum.
- 2.6 Other possible phases (to be examined in detail through the design study) are: the new 600 seat flexible auditorium with sizeable stage, orchestra pit, fly tower and backstage facilities; a new block on several storeys to accommodate the studio theatre and associated facilities, media centre and film theatre, rehearsal and production facilities, meeting rooms and improved administration, education and workshop facilities; and a new gallery with supporting facilities.
- 2.7 As Somerset's premier arts facility, the Brewhouse remains committed to playing a creative role in the County, known as an arts organisation, not just as a building, with a life outside its four walls promoting work and activities in other venues and forums through site-specific projects and work presented further afield. The Brewhouse keys into wider social and economic agendas and is working to redefine what an arts centre is, and how it brings audiences and artists together. Learning is at the heart of its work. This should remain.
- 2.8 The former Gaumont cinema, now a Mecca bingo hall, was assessed as a possible replacement building, but is considered inappropriate due to its scale and the architectural integrity of the listed interior which would limit the ability to break up the large central space. However, its large seating capacity, formerly 1725, added to the fact that it has a stage and fly tower, might make the venue attractive to a commercial operator (two expressed an interest in the building as a live venue). The current operators, Mecca, have no plans to re-locate and the capital investment needs of the building (estimated at £10m), and operator's re-location costs (£3.5m) do not make a development viable at the moment.
- 2.9 Research and consultation has indicated that there is very limited capital funding likely to be available in the near future for a major theatre project in Taunton, unless it was linked to another development such as the proposed new library, which should benefit from private sector funding. This consideration is critical in determining the most appropriate development approach and, would seem to rule out the possibility of a completely new facility in the foreseeable future.

It is also evident that future revenue funding is unlikely to increase significantly in the near future. Taunton Deane Borough Council has indicated

that it does not envisage any major revenue funding increases; Arts Council England will continue to consider supporting the venue with project grants, and has earmarked additional funding for investment in Somerset, but will not be in a position to consider revenue funding over the coming three-year period; and Somerset County Council has no specific plans to increase its funding. The preferred scheme must therefore address the venue's capacity to generate income from trading and other activities, as well as enhancing the venue's creative and presentational facilities.

It is estimated that, provided the proposed riverside commercial development is included within the scheme, new income would cover additional operating and programme expenditure, making it revenue neutral. However, future revenue needs would need to be addressed and agreed by the key stakeholders, in the context of the Arts Council funded *Thrive* programme, which is exploring new ways of working in the arts in Somerset and keying into broader social and economic agendas.

- 2.10 In order for the scheme to progress it is essential that it is adopted by Taunton Deane Borough Council as the premier objective of the cultural vision for the town. While it has been given a high priority with the ambitions of Project Taunton, this will need reinforcing within the Council's own economic, social and cultural priorities and in the broader context of the County's cultural aspirations, if it is to come to fruition.
- 2.11 An effective management arrangement will be essential in taking a scheme forward. The Brewhouse Theatre management board lacks capacity to undertake such a task on its own. Furthermore the nature of the scheme, its linkage into Project Taunton and Town Centre regeneration programme, and its importance to Taunton and the County's cultural development aspirations, mean that a partnership approach will be required.
- 2.12 It is recommended therefore that the Brewhouse scheme is taken forward as a key flagship development under the framework of a wider Taunton Cultural Partnership committed to driving forward an agreed cultural agenda for the Borough and involving all of the key partners. It is proposed that a Theatre Development Partnership Board be established with responsibility for taking the scheme forward and securing the capital investment required. The Partnership Board should consist of Taunton Deane Borough Council; Somerset County Council; the Brewhouse Theatre and Arts Centre; the Taunton Cultural Consortium; Project Taunton; and Arts Council England South West.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 The report gives clear and pragmatic answers to the key questions about the future role of the Brewhouse theatre. It does not give all the answers about how this can be brought to fruition, and in particular the answers to the funding issues. However, if all partners agree to this as the way forward it gives us an evidenced based platform from where to start. It is also clear from the report that it will need all partner organisations to sign up to this and to

work together if we are going to achieve the size and type of Theatre and Arts Centre that Taunton needs and deserves.

4. Recommendations

- 1 That the Executive approve the key recommendations in 2 and in particular:
- 2 The Executive will adopt this scheme as a priority within the Council's economic, social and cultural priorities.
- 3 the Executive authorise the Strategic Director to represent the Council on the Theatre Development Partnership Board, or its equivalent.

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