



## EXECUTIVE

YOU ARE REQUESTED TO ATTEND A MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE TO BE HELD IN THE JOHN MEIKLE ROOM, THE DEANE HOUSE, BELVEDERE ROAD, TAUNTON ON WEDNESDAY 15TH JULY 2009 AT 18:15.

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### AGENDA

1. Apologies.
2. Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 17 June 2009 (attached)
3. Public Question Time.
4. Declaration of Interests. To receive declarations of personal or prejudicial interests, in accordance with the Code of Conduct. The usual declarations made at meetings of the Executive are set out in the attachment.
5. Implementation of Sort It Plus Recycling Collections. Report of the Strategic Director (attached). Joy Wishlade
6. Review of Deane DLO - Brief for External Advisors. Report of the Strategic Director (attached). Brendan Cleere
7. Local Authority Business Growth Incentives Scheme. Report of the Economic Development Manager (to follow). Phil Sharratt

Tonya Meers  
Legal and Democratic Services Manager  
07 July 2009

Executive Members:-

Councillor Henley (Chairman)

Councillor Coles

Councillor R Lees

Councillor Paul

Councillor Prior-Sankey

Councillor Slattery

Councillor Mrs Smith

Councillor A Wedderkopp

Councillor Mrs Wilson



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



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



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

## **Executive – 17 June 2009**

**Present:** Councillor Wedderkopp (Vice-Chairman) (In the Chair)  
Councillors Coles, R Lees, Paul, Prior-Sankey, Slattery, Mrs Smith  
and Mrs Wilson

**Officers:** Shirlene Adam (Strategic Director), Joy Wishlade (Strategic Director), Kevin Toller (Strategic Director), Tonya Meers (Legal and Democratic Services Manager), Tim Burton (Development Manager), Lizzie Watkin (Management and Financial Accounts Operations Manager), Ruth James (Performance and Client Lead), Emily Collacott (Acting Financial Services Manager), James Barra (Chief Environmental Health Manager), Maggie Hammond (Strategic Finance Officer), Phil Sharratt (Economic Development Manager), Erin Taylor (Scrutiny Officer), Adrian Priest (Asset Holdings Manager) and Richard Bryant (Democratic Services Manager)

**Also present:** Councillors Bishop, Cavill, Mrs Court-Stenning, Critchard, Edwards, Farbahi, Gaines, Hall, Hayward, Ms Herbert, Horsley, House, Mrs Lewin-Harris, Meikle, Morrell and Williams.  
Ian Franklin and Mark Green from Project Taunton.

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm.)

### **44. Apology**

The Chairman (Councillor Henley).

### **45. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 30 April 2009, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and were signed.

### **46. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Paul declared a personal interest as a Member of Somerset County Council. Councillor Prior-Sankey declared personal interests as a Member of Somerset County Council, the Somerset Waste Board and the Somerset Strategic Housing Partnership. Councillor Coles declared a personal interest as a Director of Southwest One. Councillor Mrs Smith declared a personal interest as an employee of Somerset County Council.

### **47. A Review into the viability of the Council providing increased funding to the Brewhouse Theatre, Taunton**

Submitted for information and comment, the recommendations of the Task and Finish Review into the viability of the Council providing increased funding to the Brewhouse Theatre, Taunton.

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Councillor Meikle, the Chairman of the Task and Finish Group explained that the Task and Finish Review had been set up to seek a solution to bridge the Brewhouse Theatre's budget gap.

At its first meeting, the Task and Finish Review had agreed that its terms of reference should be to recommend a sustainable future for the Brewhouse Theatre, with the role of amateur companies explored as one of the issues.

A series of meetings of the Task and Finish Review had been held and evidence had been collected from a number of sources including the Brewhouse Theatre, the amateur groups and the Arts Council.

In the past few weeks, the Task and Finish Review had discussed the recommendations it wished to make and these had been considered and supported by the Community Scrutiny Committee on 26 May 2009. These recommendations were as follows:-

### **Recommendation 1**

That the Council should alter its grant to £200,000 per year, subject to the following conditions:-

- The Section 151 Officer was satisfied with the Business Plan;
- The Amateur Groups had a greater involvement (including choice of theatre dates);
- The Trustees moved towards further numbers of volunteers to assist in the reduction of staff costs; and
- The Tourist Information Centre be removed from the budget for the forthcoming year.

### **Recommendation 2**

That the Brewhouse Management engaged and actively worked with Taunton Deane to encourage and provide new links to other cultural organisations.

### **Recommendation 3**

That the Board of the Brewhouse accepted the re-introduction of a Taunton Deane Monitoring Panel to meet with them monthly. Such information to be effectively transmitted to all Councillors.

Although the Executive strongly supported the provision of a further grant of £50,000 to the Brewhouse Theatre in the current financial year, Members felt unable to guarantee the same level of funding in 2010/2011. Although there would be a presumption that a similar amount would be made available to the theatre in Year 2, it was agreed that this should form part of the Council's overall budget considerations before a final decision was made.

On this basis, Councillor Mrs Smith proposed the following amendment to replace the three recommendations of the Task and Finish Group. This

amendment was seconded by Councillor Coles:-

“That:-

- (1) An additional grant of £50,000 be provided in the current financial year to the Brewhouse Theatre funded from vacancy savings in Theme 1 of the Core Council Review (£10,000), unallocated Local Authority Business Growth Initiatives funding (£10,000) and an interest policy change (£30,000);
- (2) The management of the Brewhouse Theatre be required to engage and actively work with Taunton Deane to encourage and provide new links to other organisations;
- (3) In particular, the management of the Brewhouse Theatre be required to work with the Youth Service to find a solution within the building for joint location. An agreement to be in place by September 2009;
- (4) Works with Taunton Deane in connection with the joint location of the Tourist Information Centre (TIC) be progressed, together with works to enable Taunton Deane to formulate a robust business plan for the possible move by September 2009;
- (5) Arrangements be put in place to enable the amateur groups to have a greater involvement in the Brewhouse Theatre;
- (6) A plan for the further use of volunteers be developed;
- (7) A monthly reporting mechanism to Taunton Deane be agreed; and
- (8) The management of the Brewhouse Theatre be required to move the staff car parking off site permanently so that the works to the area to the side and at the front of the theatre could be upgraded.”

This amendment prompted considerable discussion and calls for the details contained in the confidential appendices to be debated.

Prior to considering the Outline Projections submitted by the theatre for the period 2009-2014 and the Council’s Section 151 Officer’s comments in response, the Executive **resolved**:-

“that the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting because of the likelihood that exempt information would otherwise be disclosed relating to Clause 7 of Schedule 12(A) to the Local Government Act 1972 and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.”

The Section 151 Officer, Shirlene Adam, confirmed that the business plan submitted by the Brewhouse, which included the proposed £50,000 additional grant was robust.

Despite further discussions in connection with the Year 2 funding, the Executive agreed that the proposed wording of the amendment was appropriate. The amendment was put and was carried.

The substantive Motion which is set out below was put and was carried.

**Resolved that:-**

- (1) An additional grant of £50,000 be provided in the current financial year to the Brewhouse Theatre funded from vacancy savings in Theme 1 of the Core Council Review (£10,000), unallocated Local Authority Business Growth Initiatives funding (£10,000) and an interest policy change (£30,000);
- (2) The management of the Brewhouse Theatre be required to engage and actively work with Taunton Deane to encourage and provide new links to other organisations;
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- (5) Arrangements be put in place to enable the amateur groups to have a greater involvement in the Brewhouse Theatre;
- (6) A plan for the further use of volunteers be developed;
- (7) A monthly reporting mechanism to Taunton Deane be agreed; and
- (8) The management of the Brewhouse Theatre be required to move the staff car parking off site permanently so that the works to the area to the side and at the front of the theatre could be upgraded.

**48. Review of Parish Delegation Procedures**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning Taunton Deane's Parish Delegation Scheme which had been set up in the early 1990s. It remained the only scheme of its type in the country.

The agreements with the eight parishes involved (Wellington, North Curry, Burrowbridge, Stoke St Mary, Milverton, Pitminster, Bishops Lydeard and Ruishton) had now expired and it was appropriate to consider whether new agreements should be negotiated.

Whilst the original motivations behind the scheme, which were to enable decision making at a very local level and to improve communication between Taunton Deane and the Parish Councils remained valid, a number of concerns and issues had been raised. These included:-

- Changes to the scheme introduced in 2002, in an attempt to reduce the resource implications and speed up decision making, had unfortunately led to a situation where Parish Councillors could fetter their discretion by considering applications without a Planning Officer being present or having all the relevant facts available. The possibility of the Parish Councils being left vulnerable to challenge was not an acceptable situation to be in;
- The operation of the scheme created additional resource implications for the Development Management Team at a time when all advice was

suggesting that resources should be redirected away from minor proposals towards major developments that delivered the growth agenda;

- The operation of the scheme had an adverse impact upon performance against the relevant national indicators; and
- Improvement in Information Technology meant that the benefits from Parish Clerks notifying neighbours of proposals no longer applied.

This matter had previously been reported to the Planning Committee on 30 March 2009. Representatives from the Parishes had addressed the Committee and all those who had spoken said that they appreciated the scheme and wished it to continue.

The Planning Committee had made a number of observations for consideration by the Executive including the following:-

- (a) It was wrong to have a system that applied only to eight parishes and could not be extended due to resource implications. There should not be a two tier system;
- (b) The scheme was resource hungry, particularly when officers had to attend meetings that did not even start until 8pm;
- (c) Concern over the ability and training of Parish Councillors. The provision of additional training would only add to the resource implications of retaining the scheme;
- (d) Whether the scheme continued or not, Parish Council opinions remained important;
- (e) Parish Councillors should not be put in a position where they might fetter their discretion leading to decisions being challenged;
- (f) Parish Councils generally did a good job and the scheme should continue. However, there were things that needed to be tightened up; and
- (g) Due to changes in appeal processes, Parish Council minutes would need to be very full.

Reported that if the scheme was to continue it could only practically do so if all relevant applications were considered with a full report and a Planning Officer present. To do this would mean Planning Officers attending more meetings (with associated additional costs) and would also restrict opportunities for further improvement against the relevant national indicators.

The question that also needed to be asked was whether this scheme was actually providing value for money to the Taunton Deane Council Tax payer.

It was therefore suggested that the cost of supporting the scheme (which primarily involved the cost of sending officers to meetings) should be met by the Parish/Town Councils themselves. The Development Manager, Tim Burton, informed Members that the cost of attendance by a Planning Officer to each meeting where applications were going to be determined had been calculated at £90 per appearance.



The administrative procedures associated with the scheme resulted in additional tasks for Parish Clerks without adding value to the process and irrespective of any changes to the decision making aspects, it was also suggested that the requirement for Parishes to carry out notification should be deleted from the agreements.

Prior to discussing this matter, Members heard from representatives from Pitminster and North Curry Parish Councils. Written representations had also been submitted by Milverton and Stoke St Mary Parish Councils.

Whilst fully accepting that the scheme did need “tightening up”, Members were concerned about the introduction of charging for the attendance of Planning Officers at a time when all Parish Precepts had been agreed.

In the circumstances, it was felt that charging should not be implemented until 1 April 2010. This would give the eight parishes in the scheme ample time to decide whether they wished to continue to participate in the determination of planning applications and if they did, to make the necessary financial arrangements.

**Resolved that:-**

(1) The scheme should continue in respect of the decision making elements only, but with the cost of supporting the decision making process being met by those Parish/Town Councils involved;

(2) The agreements be amended to require those Parish/Town Councillors determining applications to undertake appropriate levels of training. The agreements to also contain additional requirements relating to minute taking and timing of meetings; and

(3) The introduction of the £90 per meeting charge be deferred until 1 April 2010 to enable those Parish/Town Councils who wished to continue to participate in the scheme to amend their budgets accordingly.

#### **49. Pioneer Somerset – Moving Forward**

Reference Minute No 5/2009, considered report previously circulated, which set out proposals for programme management arrangements for the Pioneer Somerset Programme and the associated resource requirements.

Pioneer Somerset was a programme of work, supported by the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Programme (REIP), designed to radically transform and enhance the system of two tier local government across the County. It had three aims which were:-

- To achieve annual revenue savings arising from enhanced two tier working of £20m, by 2012/2013 (base year 2007/2008);

- For every principal authority in Somerset to achieve levels of overall resident satisfaction in the National top quartile by 2013; and
- To achieve a marked improvement in the perception, reputation and recognition of Somerset and each of its local authorities, including positive Direction of Travel and Use of Resources ratings in the new Comprehensive Area Assessment of level 3 or above by 2013.

A recent assessment by SOLACE Enterprises Limited had been carried out to review progress with the programme; identify barriers to future delivery and assist the Pioneer Somerset Board to develop solutions to move the programme forward. This had culminated in a workshop on the 17 April 2009 which involved the Pioneer Somerset Board, Deputy Leaders, Chief Executives and key officers from the Directors Group.

Significant progress had been made in a number of areas, including the following:-

- Re-affirmation of the vision and outcomes of the Programme;
- Re-affirmation of the previously agreed priority work streams as part of the Phase 1 report - customer access, shared services and community leadership. An additional fourth priority work stream had also been added;
- Identified a number of 'first priority' shared service proposals which officers had produced for consideration by the Pioneer Somerset Board; and
- Agreed programme management arrangements considered essential to build and maintain momentum with the programme. Each Leader would ensure that any necessary approvals were obtained in their Council in order to put the resources in place to establish the programme management arrangements.

The budget difficulties that the public sector and in particular local authorities would be likely to face in forthcoming years were discussed. National indications suggested that the original efficiency savings target applied to Pioneer Somerset would be insignificant, alongside the likelihood of more substantial public sector budget reductions in the future. Radical action was required by the six councils to prepare the sector for the impact of this level of budget reduction and this was added as a fourth priority work stream.

The Pioneer Somerset Board had a rolling programme of shared service schemes which signalled their future intent. A workshop to discuss forward budget planning and how Councils could support each other in achieving the level of savings was planned for July 2009.

In order to provide a greater level of clarity and impetus to the shared service options under the priority work stream, officers had been instructed to bring

forward proposals as a matter of urgency in four key areas which offered potential for shared services:-

- the virtual 'majors' team proposal;
- operational Housing / Strategic Housing functions;
- Equalities and Diversity functions; and
- Legal Services.

The Pioneer Somerset Board had also asked the Somerset Waste Partnership to actively market the partnership to neighbouring authorities beyond the County boundary. It was clear from research into two-tier 'pathfinders' that in the area of 'waste' Somerset was well ahead 'of the game' and the Board considered that there was potential to benefit from this.

The unexpected loss of the appointed Programme Manager in June 2008 had stalled delivery of the programme. If the momentum now being achieved was to be maintained, additional dedicated officer capacity for the programme would be essential. This re-affirmed the view of the Joint Scrutiny Panel. Various options had been considered but the Pioneer Somerset Board had agreed to the appointment of the following:-

- a dedicated independent Chief Executive for the Programme;
- a dedicated Programme Manager; and
- additional dedicated professional and administrative support necessary to support the above appointments.

Further RIEP funding was not available to support these appointments. The Leaders had therefore agreed to seek the necessary resources from their respective Councils up to a total budget of £350,000 (full year estimated costs) and proportioned across the six Councils as invest to save bids. The apportionment to Taunton Deane was £13,400. It was expected that funding beyond 2009/2010 for the remainder of the programme would come from savings made by the programme.

The programme management appointments were considered essential if the potential benefits of Pioneer Somerset were to be achieved.

The proposals contained within the report had been considered by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 8 June 2009. Members had expressed considerable concern and had decided not to support this suggested way forward, recommending that Pioneer Somerset found alternative ways of creating meaningful savings without investing additional money. The Committee also took the view that there was no need for an additional layer of management, particularly in the light of the original Unitary bid which stated that the Council's had excessive senior management.

Despite these views, Members agreed that Pioneer Somerset had to move forward and that the proposals outlined appeared to be acceptable. It was also noted that all of the other Districts and the County Council had already agreed to meet their proportions of the additional costs involved.

**Resolved** that Full Council be recommended to approve the allocation of £13,400 from reserves to cover Taunton Deane's part of the Pioneer Somerset project management costs on the basis of invest to save.

#### 50. **Treasury Management Outturn 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 Update**

Submitted report previously circulated, which detailed the treasury management activities for 2008/2009 and the current position to date for the 2009/2010 financial year.

The Council's Debt, as at 31 March 2009, stood at £15,000,000 following restructuring.

It was noted that the Bank of England had reduced rates seven times during the year from 5.25% to the current all time low of 0.5% as at 31 March 2009. This had been in response to the well publicised 'credit crunch' which had led to the current recession. Fixed rate borrowing of £12,000,000 had been repaid. £6,000,000 of this was replaced with one year variable rate borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB). It was anticipated that the remaining £6,000,000 would be borrowed in 2009/2010. This would take advantage of the expected long term lower cost of this debt.

Noted that the average consolidated rate of interest on the total portfolio for 2008/2009 was 5.01%. Investments had partly diminished due to the repayment of PWLB borrowings.

Reported that the level of investments outstanding at 31 March 2009 amounted to £5,300,000. The average range of interest rates achieved during 2008/2009 was 0.6% - 6.38%. Interest earned on these investments amounted to £914,000 of which approximately £735,000 was allocated to the General Fund, and the balance to the Housing Revenue Account and some internal reserves and funds.

Further reported that for the current year interest rates were likely to remain unchanged and that it was not envisaged that any additional borrowing would be undertaken other than the completion of the debt restructuring.

The short term variable rate loan of £6,000,000 would be repaid to the PWLB in November 2009. As at 3 June 2009, sums totalling £14,500,000 had been invested at interest rates ranging from 0.30% - 1.33%.

**Resolved** that the treasury management outturn for 2008/2009 and the position to date for 2009/2010 be noted.

#### 51. **Proposal to move Standing Order 29(1)**

With the three hour limit having been reached, **resolved** that Standing Order 29(1) be suspended to allow the meeting of the Executive to be extended by an additional 30 minutes.

**52. Performance Monitoring – Outturn Report on 2008/2011 Corporate Strategy, 2008/2009 Financial Outturn and 2008/2009 Performance Indicators**

Reported that the monitoring of budgets, the Corporate Strategy Objectives and Performance Indicators was an important part of the Council's overall performance management framework. Submitted report previously circulated, which outlined the final data for 2008/2009.

In respect of budget monitoring, the General Fund Revenue outturn showed an underspend of £46,000 or 0.33% when compared with the current budget.

The General Fund Capital Programme expenditure for the year amounted to £8,508,000 against a total budget for the year of £6,361,000. This overspend was due to Project Taunton which had been funded externally. This had left a genuine underspend of £697,000 which would be rolled forward into the 2009/2010 budget.

The Housing Revenue Account outturn showed a working balance carried forward into 2009/2010 of £2,757,000 which was £10,000 or 0.34% less than predicted in the most recent budget monitoring report. Members noted the reasons for this variance.

The Deane Helpline had made a surplus of £10,000 which was above budget monitoring projections. The balance on the Deane Helpline Trading Account at 31 March 2009 amounted to £12,664.

Housing Revenue Account Capital expenditure amounted to £5,366,000 against the current budget of £6,085,000. This underspend had been identified via budget monitoring and would be slipped into 2009/2010 increasing the programme available.

During the year, the Deane DLO made an overall trading surplus of £95,000. The balance on the DLO Reserve as at 31 March 2009 would be £507,000. A summary of performance for both 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 was submitted.

With regard to the Corporate Strategy 2008-2011, the Objectives of the Council together with the Key Actions to attain them had been listed within the Corporate Strategy which had previously been approved by the Executive.

Progress for the year against the 21 objectives was good and details were submitted. 52% of the Corporate Strategy objectives were on course with 38% either partially completed or with action pending.

Also reported that 50% of 24 statutory and local Performance Indicators for 2008/2009 were also on target.

The progress being made with the Local Area Agreement National Indicators and the Southwest One Performance Indicators were also reported.

**Resolved** that:-

- (1) The draft outturn positions on revenue and capital for both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account for 2008/2009 be noted; and
- (2) The performance against targets for both the Corporate Strategy and national and local indicators for 2008/2009 be noted.

53. **Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Drivers, Vehicles and Operators Handbook and Related Policy Issues**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the review, renewal and consolidation of a number of existing hackney carriage and private hire driver policies.

The Licensing Department had been working with the local taxi trade to review and consolidate a number of previous decisions and practices undertaken by the Council. The purpose was to draw all the recommendations, policies, practice and conditions into one document. The document would be named the "Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Drivers, Vehicles and Operators Handbook" and once approved, would be the definitive source of information for those in the trade, officers and other agencies. The draft of this handbook was submitted.

Previously the Council had removed the restriction on the number of Hackney Carriages in Taunton Deane. In response to Government Policy in relation to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, a resolution was made that all new licensed Hackney Carriages would need to be wheelchair accessible. A period of protection until 2005 was granted for the existing saloon fleet. This date was then extended to 2012. The Department for Transport (DfT) had launched a consultation document on 'Improving Access to Taxis' which had raised the following points:-

- Disability Discrimination Act compliance could not be seen as just providing wheelchair accessible vehicles;
- There was a recognition that disability could take many forms and therefore different types of vehicle could provide the best response to this; and
- The current make up of the Taunton Deane fleet compared favourably with the national statistics in terms of proportion of wheelchair accessible vehicles.

There were currently 140 Hackney Carriages in Taunton Deane, of which 86 were wheelchair accessible. There were 54 saloon vehicles and a total of 60 of plates 1 – 63 were currently occupied.

Until there was clear direction from Government, it was proposed that the number of saloon vehicles would be set at a maximum of 65. 65 plates would be specifically allocated as saloon plates which would be allocated to existing users of such plates. Any remaining saloon plates would be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

The Council had previously agreed that any newly licensed vehicle would have to comply with a standard livery requirement. However, this had never been implemented. The imposition of any new scheme would have to include a considerable lead time of 5 years, so that any consequent vehicle change could be planned by vehicle operators.

Reported that there was no evidence to suggest that any potential benefits outweighed the considerable outlay to the trade in implementing a livery scheme.

The Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Drivers, Vehicles and Operators Handbook had been developed to consolidate information in relation to the Council's approach to taxi licensing.

The Handbook would be an evolving policy document for use by all in the trade. The Handbook would be sent out with every new application and would be available on the Council's website for viewing, or downloading.

The more important issues contained in the Handbook were detailed. In addition it was intended to remove the requirement for vehicle engines to be at least 1400 cubic capacity. This would allow the trade to explore smaller engine and/or alternate fuel vehicles to address environmental concerns.

It was intended that future minor amendments to the Handbook would be made in agreement with the Principal Licensing Officer and the Chairman of the Licensing Committee. Major changes would be referred to the Licensing Committee for agreement.

Extensive consultations had been undertaken in developing the handbook with the local taxi trade. Comments from the consultation had been included in the Handbook. There appeared to be broad support for the principle and contents of the Handbook from the trade.

Consultation had also been undertaken with the Access Officer from the Taunton Deane Disability Forum. The Forum supported maintaining the fleet balance of saloons and wheelchair accessible vehicles as currently existed. The Forum reported a lack of available Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles between 8 and 9am and 3 and 4pm. However this was due to bookings related to taking children to and from school which was a problem for all styles of vehicles and customers.

The Forum had also reported more concerns about allegations relating to taxi driver behaviour in that some taxi drivers were sometimes unwilling to take wheelchair users and excuses were made or wheelchair users were allegedly blatantly ignored. This type of behaviour was contrary to existing drivers conditions and would be investigated separately.

The Licensing Committee had considered this matter at its meeting on 28 April 2009 and had fully supported the recommendations.

**Resolved that:-**

(1) The resolutions 4 and 5 of the Environmental Services Committee of 17 November 1998 (Minute No. 50/1998 relating to vehicle livery) be repealed;

(2) The previous Executive resolutions 1 and 2 of 19 December 2001 (Minute No. 136/2001 relating to wheelchair accessible vehicles) also be repealed;

(3) The Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Drivers, Vehicles and Operators Handbook, with the policy implications that this entailed; including the issue of two unallocated saloon plates to new operators be adopted;

(4) Any future changes to the Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Drivers, Vehicles and Operators Handbook be undertaken with prior consultation with the taxi trade through the Taunton Deane Taxi Association and Taunton Deane Disability Forum and that any future changes be approved by the Licensing Committee at the discretion of the Chairman of the Licensing Committee; and

(5) The following conditions contained within the Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Drivers, Vehicles and Operators Handbook, under the provisions of Part II of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, be adopted:-

- Standard Conditions for A Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Driver's Licence;
- Standard Conditions for Private Hire Operators Licence;
- Standard Conditions for a Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence;
- Standard Conditions for a Private Hire Vehicle Licence;
- Conditions for vehicle testing and Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Test Criteria.

**54. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**Resolved** that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item because of the likelihood that exempt information would otherwise be disclosed relating to Clause 9 of Schedule 12A to the Local



Government Act, 1972 and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

**55. Potential Purchase of Capital Asset, Taunton**

Considered report previously circulated, detailing the proposal to purchase a capital asset.

An opportunity had arisen for the council to consolidate the ownerships of an area of land in Taunton. This would not only ensure that a key employment site was brought back into use but would also be a valuable asset for the Council opening up a number of options for future uses.

A valuation of the site and its potential for income generation had been undertaken and this was submitted for the information of Members. This document also contained a full description of the site and the buildings.

Taunton was short of employment land and the purchase would safeguard employment use on this site. It was also adjacent to some of Taunton Deane's own housing and it would be possible to use some of the site for affordable housing, if the Council wished.

**Resolved** that:-

- (1) The purchase of the site as a key investment for the Council be approved in principle;
- (2) Following the provision of the full survey report and further financial analysis, the decision as to the purchase of the land be fully investigated by the Leader and Portfolio Holder together with the Chairman of the Corporate Scrutiny Panel and the Shadow Portfolio Holder, with the final decision being made at a special meeting of the Executive;
- (3) Borrowing be approved for costs that could not be met from other public funding available up to a sum to be agreed by the Executive. The borrowing strategy to be developed but initially should be on as short term a basis as possible with the payment of the debt from the sale of other assets;
- (4) A report on the potential for the disposal of those and any other relevant assets mentioned be prepared with the view that the income be used to replace any borrowing incurred;
- (5) A small group of officers and Members be set up to develop a strategic plan for the use of the site;
- (6) Should the site be purchased, commercial agents be engaged to market the site to potential occupiers; and
- (7) The income from the site be used in the following priority order:-

- (a) To service any debt arising from the purchase;
- (b) To replace the current annual income to the Council;
- (c) To support the delivery of regeneration (currently Project Taunton) post 2010/2011; and
- (d) To support the General Fund.

(The meeting ended at 10.10 p.m.)

## **Usual Declarations of Interest by Councillors**

### **Executive**

- **Members of Somerset County Council – Councillors Henley, Paul and Prior-Sankey**
- **Employee of Somerset County Council – Councillor Mrs Smith**
- **Director of Southwest One – Councillor Coles**
- **Member of Somerset Waste Board – Councillor Prior-Sankey**

# **Taunton Deane Borough Council**

**Executive - 15 July 2009**

## **Implementation of Sort It Plus Recycling Collections**

**Report of the Strategic Director (Joy Wishlade)**

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Slattery)

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the Executive's approval to the introduction of a kerb side collection service of plastic bottles and cardboard. This level of service is known as Sort It +.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Somerset Waste Board instituted trial rounds with differing collection frequencies of plastic bottles and card (Sort It +) in 2008.
- 2.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Board of Taunton Deane Borough Council discussed the interim results of the trial in September 2008 and agreed that Service Package 2 (SP2) appeared to be the best value in terms of performance vs cost although it was recognised that SP5 would produce a higher level of performance if it could be made to be affordable.
- 2.3 A new "one – pass" vehicle was used for further SP5 trials earlier this year. These proved successful and significantly lower the cost of SP5. This service package means that food waste and current recyclables (paper, cans, glass) plus card and plastic bottle recyclables will be collected weekly and residual rubbish collected fortnightly.
- 2.4 Somerset County Council County Council has increased the Recycling Credit payments to district councils who plan to implement Sort It + as the increase in recycling will lower the risk of sending waste for disposal in landfill. More recycling lowers the risk of incurring higher tax costs for the residents of Somerset in landfill tax. Thanks are due to the County Council for the increased payment as it has reduced the cost of the new services to the district authorities.

### **3. Trial Results and Costs**

- 3.1 The full report from the Somerset Waste Partnership on the outcome of the trials and the final costs of Sort It + are found at Appendix 1.
- 3.2 The recommendation of Somerset Waste Partnership following the trials is

that SP5 should be the adopted package for Somerset as its extra costs are relatively low compared to the improvement in recycling and customer satisfaction.

- 3.3 It should be noted that Somerset County Council has increased the Recycling Credit payments to District Councils wishing to implement Sort It + as the increase in recycling lowers the risk of sending for disposal in landfill.
- 3.4 The report at Appendix 1 makes clear that there is currently no solution for providing the enhanced recycling service to communal properties. This is approximately 2,600 households in Taunton Deane. May Gurney and Somerset Waste Partnership are in continued discussion looking at options for these properties. However, the current price does not include the communal properties and whatever solution is found would be an increased cost.

#### 4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The total annual costs for Taunton Deane if SP2 or SP 5 were implemented across the county with all Districts participating are:-

|     |          |
|-----|----------|
| SP2 | £181,600 |
| SP5 | £210,100 |

These prices are based on 2009/2010 costs and are net of Recycling Credit payments.

However with less authorities participating at the outset the costs rise. These will reduce as other authorities come on board. Whilst all Somerset districts are considering introducing SP5 only Taunton Deane and Sedgemoor are likely to implement in the current financial year. If both authorities decided to go forward the annual cost to Taunton Deane would be £269,300. The roll out will be phased over the 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 period. There is currently £145,000 in the budget this year and £189,000 in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2010/2011 giving a total of £334,000. It will therefore be possible to reduce the requirement in the MTFP by £64,700 from 2010/2011 (subject to any further costs arising from services to communal properties). Should only Taunton Deane go ahead on its own, the SWP and May Gurney have confirmed that there will be no added costs.

- 4.2 As the Sort It+ services are rolled out it is recommended that the bring bank sites are removed. Our budgets show that the original budget for bring banks was £101,200 but that this was reduced by £15,000 as part of the DLO savings plans. The Executive agreed as part of its budget to remove bring banks in line with the implementation of the Sort It + services. A further £40,000 has therefore been taken out of the 2009/2010 budget and £46,200 from 2010/2011 in the MTFP. There are therefore no further savings to be made on this budget line. As part of the roll out programme

the SWP will provide a strategy for the removal of the bring banks that fall within the budgetary constraints of the overall programme. It should be noted that there will be difficulties to exactly align the removal of bring banks with the geographical roll out of the new services.

- 4.3 There are also capital costs for the purchase of extra recycling bins. The cost for Taunton Deane is £163,400 at current prices. However, Somerset County Council is in receipt of Waste Infrastructure Grant and has agreed to assist District Councils in these purchases by offering 75% of the cost. Thus the cost to Taunton Deane Borough Council is £40,900. This funding is available from residual waste reserves.

## **5. Legal Implications**

- 5.1 Taunton Deane will enter a legal agreement with May Gurney to deliver kerb side card and plastic bottle collections throughout the Borough.

## **6. Implementation**

- 6.1 Implementation across Taunton Deane will be phased over 2009/2010 and 2010/2011. SWP and May Gurney will provide a detailed roll out plan that is most operationally and cost effective. A communication plan will be implemented prior to each part of the roll out for both Ward Members and the public involved in that particular area.

## **7. Recommendation**

The Executive is asked to consider the following recommendations:-

1. That Taunton Deane adopts SP5 for Sort It + collections with roll out commencing in 2009/2010 and completing in 2010/2011;
2. That a strategy for the removal of bring banks is developed as part of the implementation of the Sort It + services;
3. That the Council's MTFP is amended for 2010/2011 onwards to reflect the actual costs of Sort It +;
4. That recommendations and options for servicing communal properties are developed as soon as possible;
5. That Full Council is requested to approve an increase to the capital programme of £40,900 for the estimated shortfall in capital funding which is to be funded from uncommitted waste services reserves; and
6. To provide any further comments for consideration by the Somerset Waste Board.

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## **SORT IT PLUS Recycling Collections**

Report of David Mansell, Strategy and Communications Team Leader

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. This report provides details of the final prices for SORT IT PLUS collections in Taunton Deane.
- 1.2. SORT IT PLUS is an integrated package of waste collections with a weekly service for food waste, fortnightly for refuse, optional charged service for garden waste and with the 'plus' of adding cardboard and plastic bottles to kerbside recycling collections.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. Taunton Deane Borough Council adopts Service Package 5 for SORT IT PLUS collections, which provides a weekly recycling service for all materials, including new collections for plastic bottles and cardboard.
- 2.2. The Board notes the information presented in this report and provides any comments for consideration by the Executive and Somerset Waste Board.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1. A series of trials were launched in May 2008 to test a number of options for the provision of SORT IT PLUS collections. These covered 8,500 households in Mendip, Sedgemoor and Taunton Deane.
- 3.2. The SORT IT PLUS trials tested innovative new recycling collection vehicles, involving one or two pass collections for all materials including food waste, and different frequencies of recycling collection, as shown below.

| RECYCLING COLLECTION FREQUENCIES | Service Package 3 | Service Package 2 | Service Package 5 |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Standard Dry Recyclables*        | Fortnightly       | Weekly            | Weekly            |
| Plastic Bottles & Cardboard      | Fortnightly       | Fortnightly       | Weekly            |
| Food Waste                       | Weekly            | Weekly            | Weekly            |

\* Paper, glass, cans, foil, clothes, shoes and car batteries.



- 3.3. Early findings of the trials were reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2008 and a final report on the trial results was presented to the Somerset Waste Board on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2008.

#### 4. Key Trial Findings

- 4.1. Service Package 5 (SP5) achieved the best recycling performance in the trials and was the most popular service package with residents. Service Package 2 (SP2) also achieved a good performance and proved a fairly popular option.
- 4.2. Some of the key findings from monitoring of the trials and from a questionnaire sent to all residents on trial rounds are shown in the table below.

| KEY TRIAL FINDINGS<br>MONITORING & SURVEY  | Service<br>Package 3 | Service<br>Package 2 | Service<br>Package 5 |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Projected Recycling Rate for Taunton Deane   | 52%                  | 55%                  | 58%                  |
| Respondents saying SORT IT PLUS is much better or better than previous collections | 69%                  | 75%                  | 87%                  |
| Respondents recycling a lot more or more than before                               | 72%                  | 76%                  | 83%                  |
| Respondents saying their refuse bin is generally full and with extra refuse sacks  | 5%                   | 6%                   | 2%                   |

#### 5. Collection Vehicle Design for Service Package 5

- 5.1. The prototype recycling collection vehicle, used by Somerset Waste Partnership's collection contractor May Gurney, on SP5 rounds during the trials proved to be unsuitable as a long-term option, as it was not efficient enough in operation.
- 5.2. However, May Gurney used this experience to help develop a new vehicle design, which they started using on similar recycling collections in Barnet at the end of 2008. May Gurney were soon confident enough in this design to offer this as a solution to Somerset and indicated that it would allow SP5 collections to be provided at a similar cost to those for SP2.

- 5.3.** The new vehicle design allows all SORT IT PLUS materials for recycling, including plastic bottles, cardboard and food waste, to be collected by the same vehicle on a single pass. Loading capacity, especially for light bulky materials such as plastics and cardboard, is greatly increased by lowering the position of material stillages and allowing light materials to be mechanically lifted to new compartments at a higher level. The new design offers a number of manual handling improvements by lowering loading heights and removing the need for stepping up on to the vehicle. It is also designed to reduce noise arising from the loading of glass.
- 5.4.** Testing of the new vehicle design was required to confirm that it could be adapted to provide sufficient capacity for recycling yields in Somerset and to include food waste, which is not collected in Barnet. This testing started in March on Mendip trial rounds and continued in Sedgemoor and Taunton Deane from April.
- 5.5.** A few minor issues arose with the use of the new single pass vehicle design in Somerset, all due to differences in materials collected in Barnet. May Gurney have identified modifications that will be made to the single pass vehicle for collections in Somerset, which include increasing capacity for cardboard and food waste and improving containment for cans collected mixed with plastic bottles. These modifications will allow May Gurney to provide a bespoke single pass collection vehicle designed for use on SORT IT PLUS collections in Somerset.

## **6. SORT IT PLUS Implementation**

- 6.1.** A second black recycling box will be provided for SORT IT PLUS collections, so that residents will have two boxes for recycling: normally, a green one for paper, glass and foil and a black one for plastic bottles, cans and cardboard. These boxes are designed so that they can stack one top of each other.
- 6.2.** Communication arrangements would be the same as adopted for the trial rounds in Taunton Deane. There would be a notice issued in advance to the local media and affected Ward Members and Parish Councils. Boxes with a clear instruction leaflet would then be issued 1-3 weeks before the new collections start to households covered by each roll-out phase.

## **7. Collections for Communal Properties**

- 7.1.** May Gurney have not proposed a method for collecting plastic bottles or cardboard from the 2,600 households (approximately) living in communal properties in Taunton Deane. These are normally served by micro-recycling centres with wheeled bins for different materials, but the current collection vehicles used for this service are not suited for collecting cardboard.
- 7.2.** Further work will be undertaken to identify options for adding plastic bottles, cardboard and food waste to recycling collections from communal properties.

## **8. End-Use Markets**

- 8.1.** Last November, when the final report on the trials was presented to the Somerset Waste Board, there had been a downturn in prices paid for some materials, such as cardboard and plastic bottles, due to the global economic crisis unfolding at that time. Consequently, May Gurney were not willing to add these new materials to kerbside recycling collections in Somerset, unless they could revise their collection prices to reflect the exceptional market conditions and reduced values of these materials.
- 8.2.** Since that time, Somerset Waste Partnership contractors, including May Gurney, have continued to be able to supply materials collected in Somerset to good end-use markets and there has not been any need for stockpiling. In part, this is due to the high quality of materials collected for recycling in Somerset, with high standards of source separation.
- 8.3.** Some materials, such as paper and glass, were largely unaffected by the market downturn and were secured under long-term supply contracts in any case. The markets for other materials, including plastic bottles and cardboard, have since stabilised and have shown signs of recovery, with improved prices paid. As a result, May Gurney will now add plastic bottles and cardboard to recycling collections in Somerset with prices based on achieving values for all material as originally tendered.

## **9. Increased Recycling Credit Payments**

- 9.1.** To provide support for the adoption of SORT IT PLUS collections and reflecting increased costs of sending waste for disposal to landfill, Somerset County Council has offered to increase Recycling Credit payments to District Councils by £20 per tonne for the additional material collected for recycling by SORT IT PLUS. This additional income has been included in calculations for the latest prices, provided below, for SORT IT PLUS collections in Taunton Deane.

## **10. Cost Comparison for Service Packages 2 and 5**

- 10.1.** If all districts in Somerset adopted Sort IT PLUS collections and once fully rolled out, annual revenue costs for Taunton Deane would be:  
Service Package 2 - £181,600  
Service Package 5 - £210,100
- 10.2.** These prices apply to 2009/10 and are net of Recycling Credit payments from Somerset County Council.
- 10.3.** Somerset Waste Partnership recommends that SP5 is adopted for SORT IT PLUS collections due to the improved performance and customer service that it offers over SP2 for relatively little extra cost.

## **11. Final Prices for Service Package 5**

- 11.1.** Sedgemoor District Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council made provisions in their budgets for 2009/10 to introduce SORT IT PLUS collections in their districts.
- 11.2.** SP5 collections fully rolled out in Sedgemoor and Taunton Deane would have an annual revenue cost for Taunton Deane of £269,300.
- 11.3.** This cost applies to 2009/10 and is net of Recycling Credit payments from Somerset County Council. It is less than the prices estimated at the end of the trials in November 2008, which were £292,000 for SP2 and £356,000 for SP5 in Taunton Deane.
- 11.4.** Costs would reduce with more Somerset districts adopting SORT IT PLUS, due to increased economies of scale that arise, which are reflected in service prices provided by May Gurney. Cost shares for further district groupings and for years with partial roll-outs are in the process of being prepared, using prices submitted by May Gurney.
- 11.5.** If Sedgemoor District Council decided not to adopt SORT IT PLUS from 2009/10, the costs for Taunton Deane Borough Council proceeding alone would be no more than reported above in 11.2. Roll-out costs would also not increase.

## **12. Capital Costs**

- 12.1.** The total capital cost for the provision of a second recycling box, together with a small allowance for some households requiring provision of the first box and/or food waste bins, will be £163,400 at current prices. Somerset County Council has offered to pay 75% of this cost from a DEFRA Waste Infrastructure Grant, leaving a capital cost to Taunton Deane Borough Council of £40,900.
- 12.2.** This capital cost is £3,000 lower than when last reported due to boxes now being available at lower prices.

## **13. Roll Out Costs and Timetable**

- 13.1.** Costs during roll out years are in the process of being calculated and will be reported to Taunton Deane Borough Council as soon as these are available.
- 13.2.** Working within the budgets planned of £145,000 for 2009/10 and £189,000 for 2010/11, it is expected that this will allow SORT IT PLUS collections to be extended to 5,000 households in November 2008, to a further 15,500 households in March 2010 and with Borough-wide roll-out then completed during 2010/11.
- 13.3.** This includes continued provision of SORT IT PLUS collections to the five trial rounds and roll-out communication costs.

## 14. Risk Assessment

| Risk   | Likeli-Hood | Impact | Mitigation   | Residual Risk |
|--|-------------|--------|--|---------------|
| Increase in district capital costs for boxes or food bins.                         | Medium      | Low    | Costs recently updated to reflect current prices. Possibility of obtaining better prices through planned new procurement process based on high numbers required for SORT IT PLUS.  | Low           |
| Recycling Credit payments will fall due to tonnage projections not being achieved. | Medium      | Medium | Sensitivity analysis undertaken of impact. SORT IT PLUS tonnage increases maintained at levels recorded during trials, but now on lower base levels for 09/10 with reduced tonnages due to recession. Possibility that yields will increase when economy recovers. | Low           |
| May Gurney net costs exceed those estimated for SWP prices.                        | Low         | Medium | May Gurney have taken a cautious approach, with prices approved at director level, and are contractual bound to new prices submitted.  | Low           |
| Capital cost of new depot infrastructure exceeds estimates.                        | Low         | Low    | An initial site survey has been undertaken. A full survey will be undertaken shortly and full development plans prepared.  | Low           |

## 15. Background Papers

- 15.1. SORT IT PLUS Trials – Early Findings, 4 September 2008 to Overview and Scrutiny Board, Taunton Deane Borough Council
- 15.2. SORT IT PLUS Trials – Final Report, 21 November 2008 to Somerset Waste Board

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# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Executive – 15 July 2009

### Review of Deane DLO – Brief for External Advisors

#### Report of the Strategic Director (Brendan Cleere)

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillors Richard Lees, Hazel Prior-Sankey and Tim Slattery)

#### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek Executive approval of the brief for consultants to be appointed in late July 2009, to advise the Council on options for the future of services provided by Deane DLO.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1 Full Council approved an alternative approach to completing the Core Council Review in April 2009.
- 2.2 The alternative approach included the commissioning of independent external expertise to advise the Council on Theme 3 of the Core Council Review – to develop options for the future of services provided by Deane DLO.
- 2.3 An outline of the timetable for Theme 3 of the Core Council Review is provided in the table below:-

Table 1: Indicative Timetable for Theme 3 of Core Council Review

| Activity   | Indicative Deadline |
|--|---------------------|
| Challenge of current activities by members and identification of priority outcomes the Council want to deliver for residents and the communities of Taunton Deane, from this theme. Staff and a number of key stakeholders will also be engaged in this process. | End June 2009       |
| Detailed brief agreed by Members, outlining the requirements of independent advisors commissioned to develop options for the future of services provided by Deane DLO.   | Early July 2009     |
| Independent and external specialist advice commissioned to develop options against the brief agreed by Members.  | End July 2009       |

| Activity  | Indicative Deadline |
|---|---------------------|
| Interim feedback on emerging options provided to Members. Members to provide guidance on which options to develop in more detail. | End September 2009  |
| UNISON considers steer given by Members, with opportunity to provide input prior to decision on preferred option.                 | October 2009        |
| Members sign off preferred option(s). (Corporate Scrutiny, Executive and Full Council if necessary).                              | November 2009       |
| Corporate Management Team produce proposals to implement the preferred option(s), with timetable.                                 | December 2009       |

### 3. The Brief

- 3.1 It is important that the brief that external advisors will work to accurately reflects the wishes of Members.
- 3.2 The attached brief (Appendix A) has been prepared following consultation with UNISON, senior management across the authority, the Members Change Programme Steering Group and most recently the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 2 July 2009.
- 3.3 Interviews of four short-listed bidders will take place on 23 July 2009. The attached brief has been sent to bidders, to enable them to prepare detailed tenders in advance of the interview. Any significant changes to the attached brief as a result of the Executive's discussion will be notified to all bidders in advance of the interviews.
- 3.3 Members will note that the brief refers to a number of appendices to be compiled in a pack for the external advisors. The information in the pack will give external advisors further background and context to help with the Review. Members can obtain this appendix pack by contacting Brendan Cleere (contact details provided at the end of the report).

### 4. Recommendation

- 4.1 The Executive is **recommended** to approve the attached brief (Appendix A).

### Contact

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**Appendix A**

# **Options for the Future of Services Provided by Deane DLO**

## **Brief for Consultants**

**July 2009**



## **Contents**

### **Section**

1. Introduction
2. About Deane DLO
3. Outputs Required from the Review
4. Stages of the Review
5. Key Dates for the Review

### **Appendices**

1. Annual Report 2008/2009, Taunton Deane Borough Council
2. Report on Core Council Review proposals, including overall structure of Taunton Deane Borough Council
3. Operational Plans for Deane DLO:-
  - Parks Service
  - Highways, Cleansing and Transport
  - Housing Property Services and Building
4. Analysis of current Deane DLO functions, cost and performance
5. Key Stakeholders for Review of Deane DLO
6. Report on potential shared service arrangement with Sedgemoor District Council's 'Clean Surroundings' DLO.
7. Outcomes from stakeholder consultation events held in June 2009.
8. Nursery Business Plan 2009
9. Project Plan for Review of Deane DLO

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Taunton Deane is situated in an outstanding landscape of natural beauty, extending from the Somerset levels along the River Tone, with the Quantock Hills to the north and the Blackdown Hills to the south. Covering 462 square kilometres, it is predominantly a rural borough with two main centres of population, Taunton and Wellington, and a number of smaller towns and villages.
- 1.2 Taunton Deane Borough Council was rated an 'excellent' authority by the Audit Commission in 2004. We have maintained our excellent status through a focus on providing value for money in all that we do and staying focused on our Vision, to:

***Make life better for people and communities***

### The Core Council Review

- 1.3 The Council recognises the need to change as an organisation to meet the different needs of our communities and the increasing challenges facing all public sector bodies.
- 1.4 In February 2009, the Council approved the 'Core Council Review'. This review aims to introduce a new structure and ways of working that will enable the Core Council to:
- Be fit for purpose, delivering our vision, widened roles and ways of working
  - Deliver substantial efficiency savings for 2009/10 and beyond

### What is 'the Core Council'?

- 1.5 The 'Core Council' refers to those staff working in services which are not delivered through a partnership arrangement.
- 1.6 One of the Council's most significant partnership arrangements is a joint venture company called Southwest One, established in 2008. Founder partners in Southwest One include Taunton Deane Borough Council, Somerset County Council, Avon and Somerset Constabulary and IBM. Southwest One provides a wide range of corporate and support services to the Council, including:
- HR
  - Finance
  - IT
  - Property Services
  - Revenues and Benefits

- Customer Services
  - Health and Safety
  - Procurement
- 1.7 Other significant partnerships that the Council is involved in include the Somerset Waste Partnership, Tone Leisure and South West Audit Partnership.
- 1.8 Approximately 475 staff are employed within the Core Council.
- 1.9 The Core Council staffing structure is based on four themed groups:
- Theme 1 - Strategy and Corporate (38 staff)**  
**Theme 2 - Growth and Development (74 staff)**  
**Theme 3 – DLO/Business (200 staff)**  
**Theme 4 - Operations and Regulation (154 staff)**
- 1.10 Following approval by Full Council, the detailed structure for Theme 1 (Strategy and Corporate) began on 1 April 2009. Themes 2, 3 and 4 will be developed and implemented over 2009/10. A report to the Council's Executive about the Core Council Review is contained in the separate Appendix Pack, which outlines the overall structure and functions contained within each theme.
- 1.11 This brief relates to theme 3 of the Core Council Review, concerning the development and selection of options for the future delivery of services provided by Deane DLO.
- 1.12 The Council now wishes to appoint a consultant to assist the Council in this task, carrying out a robust and independent analysis and bringing forward a range of options for members to consider. Details of the brief are set out in section 3.

### Pioneer Somerset

- 1.13 Pioneer Somerset is a programme of enhanced partnership working between the county and five district councils of Somerset, to achieve the following outcomes:

#### **Outcome 1 – Efficiency**

To achieve annual revenue savings arising from enhanced two-tier working of £20m, by 2012/13 (Base year: 2007/08).

#### **Outcome 2 - Customer satisfaction**

For every principal local authority in Somerset to achieve levels of overall resident satisfaction in the National top quartile, by 2013.

### **Outcome 3 – Reputation and Partnership Working**

To achieve a marked improvement in the perception, reputation and recognition of Somerset and each of its local authorities, including positive direction of travel and use of resources ratings in the new Comprehensive Area Assessment of level 3 or above, by 2013.

- 1.14 Pioneer Somerset is a Somerset wide programme affecting every local authority service in the County. It sets an important context for this review and consultants will, as part of this brief, be expected to advise on the potential for closer partnership working with neighbouring local authorities on DLO services.

## **2. About Deane DLO**

- 2.1 Approximately 200 staff are employed at Deane DLO, based at Priory Depot on the outskirts of Taunton.

- 2.2 Functions of Deane DLO are described below:

### **2.3 Highways DLO (13 FTE)**

- To provide the Council with a high-quality, reliable and cost-effective civil engineering service, including maintenance of hard surfaces and drainage, an out-of-hours response to flooding emergencies, and other related activities.
- To create net income for the Council through commercial work.

### **2.4 Parks Service DLO (69 FTE)**

- To provide high quality parks, gardens and sports pitches that are safe and secure, and accessible to everyone.
- Generate income to reduce overall costs to the council taxpayer.
- To ensure that the Borough is an attractive place for residents, visitors and businesses.
- To support community groups in creating a pleasant and sustainable environment.
- To provide safe and secure play areas with a range of engaging activities that are accessible to all young children and their parents, and activity areas for older children and teenagers.
- To provide high quality plants and floral displays for the Council, and to generate income from sales to external customers.
- Maintain council housing green spaces to a good standard.
- Protect and maintain the council's tree stock.

In addition to maintaining approximately 180 hectares of land belonging to the council the Parks service also maintains the grounds for 160 schools and 12 hospital sites throughout Somerset as well as numerous other smaller areas for housing associations and parish councils etc.

## 2.5 Building DLO (73 FTE) and Housing Property Services

- To provide continued investment in the maintenance and management of the Housing stock and assets thus ensuring that they meet the tenants' needs.
- To ensure Best-Practice and full compliance with relevant legislation relating to Property Services.
- To involve all relevant stakeholders in the decision-making process.
- To operate at no cost to the Council's General Fund.
- To operate a repairs service with 24/7/365 call out

Housing stock remains in Council ownership, following a tenants' vote on potential housing stock transfer in December 2006. Currently, the overall client and contractor elements of Housing Property Services sit under one Manager, with separate teams responsible for each element. Both teams are based at Priory Depot. As part of the wider Core Council Review, the Council will determine where the client side of this function best sits within the overall structure.

## 2.6 Cleansing DLO (25 FTE)

- To provide a high-quality and cost-effective street cleansing and public convenience service throughout the Deane.

## 2.7 Nursery (2 FTE)

- To provide a cost-effective plants and floral displays to TDBC.
- Provide safe storage for materials, equipment and goods for the Parks service.
- Provide community educational facilities
- Maintain the provision of plants for floral displays to Britain in Bloom standard.

The Council completed the relocation of the horticultural nursery from its Taunton town centre site to a new location on the outskirts of Taunton in 2008. The new site at Stoke Road offers greater capacity and is equipped with state of the art technology to enable the most efficient cultivation of horticultural products for a wide range of clients.

The Business Plan for the new nursery is included within the appendix pack.

## 2.8 Transport DLO (2 FTE)

- To provide a cost-effective fleet management and maintenance service for the Council.

This service is currently less commercial than the other areas and therefore identified in the business plan as having the potential for expansion. As it stands currently the Transport DLO has more of a support service role than one of directly delivering services to the residents of the Deane.

## 2.9 Stores Function

- To supply goods and materials for the various DLOs, at the time they need them.

The consultant will be required to advise on the future of the in-house stores facility, as part of their work on developing options for the future of services provided by Deane DLO.

## 2.10 An important feature of Deane DLO's current business model is the variety of work carried out on behalf of external clients, such as the Environment Agency, Somerset County Council, housing associations, parish and town councils and private householders. This external commercial work is designed to reduce the overall cost of services provided to the authority and strengthen the Council's overall budget position.

A more detailed analysis of Deane DLO functions and finance is provided in the separate appendix pack.

## Potential Partnership with Sedgemoor District Council DLO

### 2.11 Discussions started with Sedgemoor District Council in 2007, to explore possibilities of generating efficiencies through closer working between the cleansing and horticultural functions of the two DLOs.

### 2.12 A Project Team was formed to explore this in more detail and bring forward a range of options for the two authorities to consider. The report of the Project Manager is included within the appendix pack, and outlines the project team's preferred option of a shared management arrangement between the two authorities to deliver cleansing and horticulture functions.

- 2.13 The report has yet to be formally considered by the Council and the brief for the consultant appointed includes the requirement to advise and make recommendations on this potential partnership arrangement, within the context of the wider possible options for the future of Deane DLO.

### **3. Outputs Required from the Review**

- 3.1 Over the period August 2009 to November 2009, the consultant will be required:
1. To develop a range of options for the delivery of services currently provided by Deane DLO, set against the background of the wider aim of the Core Council Review to generate substantial efficiency savings. For the DLO, members have set a minimum revenue savings target of £112k, to be generated either through cost saving measures or income generation through commercial activity. The consultant will also be required to advise on the future of the stores facility under each option.
  2. To benchmark the performance of DLO services against industry norms, as evidence to support the range of options developed.
  3. To advise on implementation details for the options developed, including the likely timetable, costs, employment matters and procurement approaches in relation to any potential external or outsourcing arrangement.
  4. To advise on the significant business risks, opportunities, advantages and disadvantages associated with each option. This should include advice on the current business model.
  5. To explore the potential for closer connection with functions in other themes of the Core Council, particularly those services which generate income, such as licensing and the crematorium.
  6. To explore the potential for increased income generation and commercial activity under each option, having regard to any legal and policy restrictions on this.
  7. To seek the views of neighbouring local authorities, with particular emphasis on the potential for enhanced shared service delivery consistent with the Pioneer Somerset programme. In particular, this should include advice and recommendations on the potential shared service arrangement with Sedgemoor DLO.
  8. To consult staff, elected members, tenants and key stakeholders on possible options.

9. To evaluate options, weighing these up against elected members' priorities, outcomes of performance benchmarking of current services and the views of different stakeholder groups.
10. To recommend a preferred option or options for the future.

#### **4. Stages of the Review**

- 4.1 The Review will be split into two key stages:

**Stage 1** - where an early 'long-list' of options will be developed and put before members, with advice provided on steps 2 – 5 of the brief. This stage will conclude with selection by members of a short-list of options.

**Stage 2** - involving more detailed work on short-listed options and consultation and engagement with key stakeholder groups. This stage will conclude with the selection by members of a preferred option (or options) for the provision of services currently delivered by Deane DLO.

- 4.2 In developing and refining options, the consultant will be required to seek the views of a range of key stakeholders. Stakeholders will include (but not be limited to): elected members (particularly the Leader of the Council, Executive Portfolio Holders and the Members Change Programme Steering Group), Strategic Directors and Managers, DLO staff representatives, UNISON representatives and a number of external clients and partner organisations. A full stakeholder list is contained within the separate Appendix Pack.
- 4.3 Bidders will note that early consultation on options for the future of DLO services has already taken place with a wide range of staff, elected members and stakeholders. A report of these well attended events (held on 23 June 2009) is included within the separate appendix pack. A separate event for Housing tenants was held on 29 June and this is also appended.

#### **5. Key Dates for the Review**

- 5.1 The successful consultant will be appointed in late July 2009 and must be able to begin work immediately. The review must conclude by 11 November 2009.
- 5.2 Key dates during the course of the Review are set out below, although this is not an exhaustive list:



## **Stage 1**

**By 31 July 2009** - Start up meeting with appointed consultants

**21 August 2009** - Completion of interim report (long list of options)

**3 September 2009** - Corporate Scrutiny Committee discussion of long-list options, with comments provided for consideration by Executive.

**16 September 2009** - Executive decision on options for short-list

## **Stage 2**

**5 October 2009** - Completion of draft final report and recommendations on preferred option/options.

**29 October 2009** – Corporate Scrutiny Committee discussion of draft final report

**11 November 2009** - Executive consideration of final report and decision on preferred option/options.

- 5.3 The detailed project plan contained in the separate Appendix Pack establishes all key activities and milestones which the appointed consultant will be required to meet.

## **Contact:**

For further information about this brief, please contact:

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# Taunton Deane Borough Council

Executive – 15 July 2009

Report of the Interim Economic Development Manager

## Local Authority Business Growth Incentives (LABGI) Scheme : Awards 2009/2010

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Fran Smith)

### 1. Background

1.1 Members will recall that the LABGI Award received during 2008/2009 was £319,051, which when combined with the £91,149 Reserve carried forward into that financial year, the final sum available for expenditure was £410,200.

1.2 It was agreed that these funds were retained within Economic Development and allocated against three blocks over a three-year period of activity as follows:-

|                               |                |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Pioneer Somerset integration  | £ 85.5k        |
| Economic Development activity | £244.7k        |
| Deprived Area Regeneration    | £ 80.0k        |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>£410.2k</b> |

1.3 Appendix 1 to the previous report gave a more detailed breakdown of the allocations for 2008 – 2011, which are summarised in the table below:-

#### LABGI Allocations 2008 - 2011

|                                       | 2008/09       | 2009/10       | 2010/11       | Block Total   |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
|                                       | £             | £             | £             | £             |
| <b>PIONEER SOMERSET</b>               |               |               |               |               |
| Into Somerset                         | 20,000        | 20,000        | 20,000        |               |
| Inward Investment Support & Aftercare | 6,000         | 6,000         | 6,000         |               |
| Creative Industry Support             | 7,500         |               |               |               |
| <b>Totals</b>                         | <b>33,500</b> | <b>26,000</b> | <b>26,000</b> | <b>85,500</b> |
| <b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>           |               |               |               |               |
| Economic Development Planning         | 30,000        |               |               |               |
| BID Shop Front Grant                  | 15,000        | 10,000        |               |               |
| BID Core Costs                        | 15,000        | 10,000        |               |               |
| BID Levy                              | 4,300         | 4,300         | 8,600         |               |
| Taunton TIC                           | 75,000        |               |               |               |
| Wellington Economic                   | 40,000        |               |               |               |

|                        |                |               |               |                |
|------------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Partnership            |                |               |               |                |
| Rural Business Support | 7,500          |               |               |                |
| Rural Projects Support | 5,000          | 10,000        | 10,000        |                |
| <b>Totals</b>          | <b>191,800</b> | <b>34,300</b> | <b>18,600</b> | <b>244,700</b> |

**DEPRIVED AREA  
REGENERATION**

|                                    |               |               |               |               |
|------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Taunton Deane YE Primary Programme | 5,000         |               |               |               |
| Enterprise Gateways                | 25,000        | 20,000        | 20,000        |               |
| Feasibility Studies                | 5,000         | 5,000         |               |               |
| <b>Totals</b>                      | <b>35,000</b> | <b>25,000</b> | <b>20,000</b> | <b>80,000</b> |

**Total Allocation** **410,200**

## 2. Report on Expenditure 2008/2009

### 2.1 Into Somerset

The delay in the formation of a Company with which to contract has meant that the £20,000 allocated for expenditure during 2008/2009 has not been spent. A 'seed corn' fund of £10,000 was paid against invoice during 2007/2008 to Somerset County Council (SCC) and has covered Taunton Deane liability for 2008/2009. The remaining allocated funds are sufficient to meet the liability until the proposed end of the current delivery contract which will run to March 2011.

It is therefore proposed that this underspend be accrued into this FY and allocated as follows:-

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| Additional Brewhouse Grant Contribution                                     | £10,000        |
| Match funding for LSC grant to complete Economic Development Strategy (EDS) | <u>£10,000</u> |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>£20,000</b> |

### 2.2 Inward Investment Support and Aftercare

The delayed launch of Into Somerset has delayed investment in support and aftercare for Inward Investment and the £6,000 allocated for expenditure during 2008/2009 has not been spent.

It is proposed that this £6,000 be accrued into 2009/2010 in addition to the £6,000 already allocated for expenditure within this financial year to create an allocation for expenditure of £12,000 in 2009/2010 in order to produce marketing materials for potential inward investors in support of Firepool and Firepool Lock, Westpark 26 at Wellington and the identified need to diversify the Taunton Deane economy.

### 2.3 Creative Industry Support

This liability has not been called down due to the Business Boost project not being extended. It is proposed that the £7,500 allocation be reallocated for expenditure once the Economic Development Strategy (EDS) has been completed to support the growth of Creative Industry businesses within Taunton Deane.

## 2.4 Economic Development Planning

The Economic Development Unit have completed three pieces of work that contribute to the Local Development Framework (LDF) and the EDS within the budget previously allocated:-

- 'Employment Land and Premises Survey'
- 'Taunton Deane Local Economic Assessment' statistical review
- 'Envisioning the Future of the Taunton Economy' stakeholder survey

## 2.5 Business Improvement District (BID): BID Shop Front Grant and BID Core Costs

The total payment to the Taunton Town Centre Company to assist in the delivery of the BID contract varied from the amount previously allocated as follows:-

|                      | <b>Allocated<br/>2008/09</b> | <b>Allocated<br/>2009/10</b> | <b>Total<br/>Allocated</b> | <b>Actual<br/>2008/09</b> |
|----------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| BID Shop Front Grant | £15,000                      | £10,000                      | £25,000                    | £20,000                   |
| BID Core Costs       | £15,000                      | £10,000                      | £25,000                    | £40,000                   |
| <b>Total</b>         |                              |                              | <b>£50,000</b>             | <b>£60,000</b>            |

This variation occurred for three reasons:-

1. The BID financial year runs 1 October to 30 September, and the BID contract began 1 October 2007. No allocations had been made to the BID contract for payment during October 2007 – March 2008
2. The expected payments from TDBC to the BID Shop Front grant were not required because there was no draw down by businesses during the first year of the BID Contract October 2007 – September 2008.
3. The BID Core Cost requirement is for £20,000 per annum and no allocation had been made for the £10,000 actual costs incurred by the Town Centre Company for the 6 months period October 2007 – March 2008. The current economic situation has increased the difficulty of increasing revenue from other sources to offset the cost of the administrative liability. As a Corporate Priority, it was agreed by the Portfolio Holder to support the Town Centre Company to deliver the BID Contract and offset the full value of the Core Cost requirement for the two-year period October 2007 - September 2009.

The expenditure allocation for the BID contract for 2009/2010 was brought forward into 2008/2009, and the additional £10,000 was vired from an under-spend on Enterprise Gateways.

## **2.6 Taunton Tourist Information Centre (TIC)**

The sum of £10,000 was made available to the TIC Manger to purchase essential equipment to meet operation needs and a further £5,000 was expended on an external consultant to appraise the financial viability of the TIC from a 'stand-alone' business perspective. The findings of this consultancy report will be incorporated into the feasibility planning for the relocation of the TIC to the Brewhouse.

It is proposed that the remaining £50,000 be accrued into 2009/2010 as funding toward the TIC relocation costs.

## **2.7 Wellington Economic Partnership (WEP)**

The £40,000 allocation to the WEP for 2008/2009 was as follows:-

|                   | <b>2008/09</b>               |
|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Food Town Event   | £20,000 Accrued from 2007/08 |
| Food Town Event   | £10,000                      |
| Wellington Vision | £10,000                      |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>£40,000</b>               |

The Food Town Event Committee overspent against budget during 2008/2009 by nearly £10,000, so the payment of £40,000 masks this overspend and the consequence is that there is no longer an allocation to support progressing projects to achieve the Wellington Vision.

## **2.8 Rural Business Support**

Total expenditure is expected to be less that £3,000 from the allocated £7,500. Once the expenditure is reconciled it is proposed £2,500 be reallocated to the Young Enterprise programme (see below) and that the balance be reallocated to support future EDS priorities.

## **2.9 Rural Projects Support (LARC)**

The delay in SWRDA approving business plans for all three LARC areas that cross into Taunton Deane administrative area has meant that community project proposals have been delayed and it has not been possible to use the allocated funds to match fund bids for LARC funding.

It is proposed that the £5,000 allocated for expenditure in 2008/2009 be reallocated to the Young Enterprise programme (see below).

## **2.10 Young Enterprise**

The Young Enterprise programme runs from September to June, and therefore crosses financial years. The £5,000 allocation for 2008/2009 therefore included a £2,500 payment to meet the liability for the previous year's programme, with £2,500 remaining within the budget for payment of project delivery costs in 2008/2009 against a total agreed liability of £5,000.

There was no allocation made to continue the programme during 2009/2010.

It is therefore proposed that:-

1. £2,500 underspend from Rural Business Support be reallocated to fund the final payment for delivery of the 2008/2009 programme, and
2. £5,000 be reallocated from Rural Projects Support to fund an additional year of the programme from September 2009 to June 2010.

### **2.11 Enterprise Gateways**

The delay in appointing a developer for Firepool, and the need to work with delivery partners to ensure that there was competence and capacity to effectively deliver the programme, resulted in an underspend of £20,000 allocated for expenditure during 2008/2009. However, £10,000 of this underspend was vied to meet the additional payment to support the BID contract.

It is proposed that the remaining £10,000 underspend be reallocated to support future EDS priorities within deprived areas.

### **2.12 Feasibility Studies**

The withdrawal of support from the SWRDA to fund a feasibility study into a Wellington relief road resulted in no expenditure occurring against the £5,000 allocation.

It is proposed that this underspend, and the allocation of £5,000 for 2009/2010 be reallocated to offset any liability resulting from the relocation of the TIC.

## **3. LABGI Award 2008/2009**

- 3.1 The retrospective LABGI Award for Taunton Deane for 2008/09 has been confirmed as £69,310, which is significantly less than previous years:-

| <b>Taunton Deane LABGI Awards</b> |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| 2005/06                           | £138,171 |
| 2006/07                           | £245,327 |
| 2007/08                           | £319,051 |
| 2008/09                           | £69,310  |

- 3.2 It is generally felt that the Award will continue for this funding cycle to year 2010/2011, the final payment being received at the beginning of FY 2011/2012, but it is not known with any certainty what the level of the Award will be for future years.
- 3.3 It is therefore proposed that a 'commitment only' strategy be adopted for expenditure during 2009/2010 as shown above to allow expenditure prioritisation of this year's Award to be made against the new EDS and planning for economic recovery with the creation of a Reserve, with expenditure proposals to be brought back to Executive in a future paper.

#### 4. Summary of Proposed Changes to Allocations 2009/2010 and 2010/2011

##### LABGI Allocations 2009 - 2011

|                                       | 2009/10       | 2010/11                  |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
|                                       | £             | £                        |
| <b>PIONEER SOMERSET</b>               |               |                          |
| Into Somerset                         | 20,000        | 20,000                   |
| Inward Investment Support & Aftercare | 12,000        | 6,000                    |
| Creative Industry Support             |               |                          |
| <b>Totals</b>                         | <b>32,000</b> | <b>26,000</b>            |
| <b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>           |               |                          |
| Economic Development Planning         | 10,000        | 0 £20k LSC match funding |
| BID Shop Front Grant                  | 0             | 0                        |
| BID Core Costs                        | 0             | 0                        |
| BID Levy                              | 4,300         | 8,600                    |
| Taunton TIC relocation                | 60,000        |                          |
| Wellington Economic Partnership       | 0             | 0                        |
| Rural Business Support                | 0             | 0                        |
| Rural Projects Support                | 10,000        | 10,000                   |
| <b>Totals</b>                         | <b>84,300</b> | <b>18,600</b>            |
| <b>DEPRIVED AREA REGENERATION</b>     |               |                          |
| Taunton Deane YE Primary Programme    | 5000          | 2500                     |
| Enterprise Gateways                   | 20,000        | 20,000                   |
| Feasibility Studies                   | 0             |                          |
| <b>Totals</b>                         | <b>25,000</b> | <b>22,500</b>            |
| <b>Future EDS Priorities*</b>         | 88,810        | LABGI Reserve            |

\* Exact figure subject to reconciliation

#### 5. Recommendations

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Executive agree to a strategy of commitment only expenditure for the LABGI funds during 2009/2010 as shown in the table at paragraph 4 above, and to the creation of a Reserve of funds for future expenditure to support economic and

business growth priorities that will be identified within the new Economic Development Strategy.

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