



## COUNCIL SUMMONS

YOU ARE REQUESTED TO ATTEND A MEETING OF THE TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL TO BE HELD IN THE DEANE HOUSE, BELVEDERE ROAD, TAUNTON ON TUESDAY 22ND JULY 2003 AT 18:30.

---

### **AGENDA**

The meeting will be preceded by a Prayer to be offered by the Mayor's Chaplain.

1. To receive the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 14 May 2003
2. To report any apologies for absence
3. To receive any communications
4. To receive petitions from Local Government electors under Standing Order 17
5. To receive questions from Local Government electors under Standing Order 18
6. To deal with questions to and receive recommendations and reports from the following members of the Executive:-
7. Councillor Williams (Leader of the Executive)  
Recommendations relating to:-
  - (a) Draft Performance Plan 2003/04
  - (b) Capital Strategy 2003
  - (c) Commutation Adjustment
  - (d) Statement of Accounts 2002/03 (attached report of Financial Services Manager)
8. Councillor Bishop (Transportation and Planning)  
Recommendations relating to:-
  - (a) Disabled Parking Charges
  - (b) Planning Staff
9. Councillor Mrs. Bradley (Leisure, Arts and Culture)  
Recommendations relating to:-
  - (a) Galmington Playing Field
  - (b) The Wellsprings Centre
10. Councillor Mrs. Bryant (Communications)
11. Councillor Cavill (Economic Development, Property and Tourism)  
Recommendations relating to:-
  - (a) Asset Management Plan
  - (b) Redevelopment of Crescent Car Park site, Town Centre Regeneration Opportunities for Retail Growth in the Old Market Centre/Crescent Car Park Area

12. Councillor Edwards (Environmental Services)  
Recommendation relating to Supplementary Credit Approval - Air Quality Monitoring
13. Councillor Garner (Housing Services)
14. Councillor Hall (Resources)
15. Councillor Mrs. Lewin-Harris (Community Leadership)  
Recommendation relating to Community Strategy (see attached report )
16. Appointment of Chief Executive  
Report of Appointments Sub Committee (attached)

G P DYKE  
Member Services Manager

The Deane House  
Belvedere Road  
TAUNTON  
Somerset

TA1 1HE

15 July 2003





## Taunton Deane Borough Council

Annual Meeting of the Taunton Deane Borough Council held in the Principal Committee Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton on Wednesday 14 May 2003 at 6.30 pm

Present: The Mayor (A J Prior-Sankey)  
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Govier)  
Councillors Mrs Allgrove, Beaven, Mrs Biscoe, Bishop, Bone, Bowrah, Mrs Bradley, Mrs Bryant, N P Cavill, Miss Cavill, C A Cluff, Mrs Cluff, Croad, Davies, Denington, Durdan, Floyd, Garner, Gill, Guerrier, Hall, Hayward, Henley, Mrs Hill, Hindley, House, Mrs Jones, Lees, Mrs Lewin-Harris, Lisgo, Meikle, Morrell, Mullins, Murphy, Mrs Nixon, Paul, Miss Peppard, Phillips, Prior-Sankey, Mrs Priscott, Slattery, Mrs Smith, Stuart-Thorn, Trollope, Vail, Watson, Wedderkopp, Weston, Mrs Whitmarsh, Williams and Mrs Wilson.

### 1. Prayers

The meeting was opened with prayers offered by the Mayor's Chaplain, The Reverend Dr Lance Birks.

### 2. Election of Mayor

On the motion of Councillor Floyd, seconded by Councillor Lisgo it was RESOLVED unanimously:-

That Councillor Andrew James Govier be elected Mayor of Taunton Deane Borough for the ensuing year. Councillor Govier made and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

### 3. Deputy Mayor

Moved by the Mayor and seconded by Councillor Meikle, it was RESOLVED:-

That Councillor Jean Margaret Allgrove be elected as Deputy Mayor for the ensuing year.

Councillor Mrs Allgrove made and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

### 4. Mr Adrian John Prior-Sankey

On the motion of Councillor Meikle, seconded by Councillor Floyd it was RESOLVED:-

“That the best thanks of the Council be accorded to Mr Adrian John Prior-Sankey for the manner in which he has discharged the duties of the office of Mayor of the Borough during his term of office.”

Mr Prior-Sankey replied.

5. Past Mayor Badge

The Mayor presented Mr Priory-Sankey with his past Mayor badge.

6. Mayor's Chaplain

The Mayor reported that he had appointed Mr Chris Staley as his Chaplain during his year of office.

7. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 22 April 2003, a copy having been circulated to each Member, were signed as amended by the Mayor.

8. Apologies

Councillors Edwards and Stone.

9. Borough Council Elections, 1 May 2003

The Director of Corporate Resources as Returning Officer reported Councillors elected at the recent Borough Council election:-

Ward

Persons Elected

Bishops Hull

Ian Nathan Morrell,  
8 Daws Mead, Bishops Hull, Taunton

Nigel Stuart-Thorn  
15 Robin Close, Bishops Hull, Taunton

Bishops Lydeard

Joanna Jane Lewin-Harris  
Conquest Farm, Bishops Lydeard, Taunton

Anthony John Beaven  
46 Needhams Patch, Cotford St Luke, Taunton

Blackbrook and Holway

Hazel Ruth Prior-Sankey  
"Poppies", 78 Bacon Drive, Taunton

Denise Jones  
63 Upper Holway Road, Taunton

Francesca Teresa Christine Smith  
5 Bourne Grove, Taunton

Blackdown

Anne Priscott  
The Old Bakehouse, Corfe, Taunton

Bradford on Tone	Clifford William Bishop Hilwin, Hillcommon, Taunton
Comeytrowe	Anthony Russell Floyd The Heritage, 6 Outer Gullands, Taunton
	Alan Frederick Wedderkopp Flat 1, 11 Haines Hill, Taunton
	Alan Paul 6 Fulwood Close, Comeytrowe, Taunton
Eastgate	Richard Lees, 15 South Road, Taunton
	Paul Martin Trollope Flat 1, 10 Upper High Street, Taunton
Fairwater	Marie Kathleen Peppard, 39 Cyril Street, Taunton
	Christopher Paul Guy Phillips Winchmore House, 10 St Andrew's Road, Taunton
	Gregory Frederick Garner Sunningdale, College Road, Taunton
Halcon	Melvyn Andrew Mullins Littlefields, Bushy Cross Lane, Ruishton, Taunton
	Terrence Albert Murphy 3 Southfield Close, Taunton
	Timothy Joseph Slattery Laurel Cottage, Curload, Stoke St Gregory, Taunton
Killams and Mountfield	Bryan Eric Denington 14 Champion Drive, Taunton
	Judith Valerie Cluff 9 Manor Road, Taunton
Lyngford	Colin Croad, Orchard House, Curland, Taunton

	Elizabeth Susan Lisgo 11 Hatchers Court, Kingston Road, Taunton
	Brenda Dawn Weston, 1 Plais Street, Taunton
Manor and Wilton	Jean Margaret Allgrove 24 Avon Close, Taunton
	Terrence John Hall 8 Manor Close, Taunton
	John Richard Grainger Meikle 4 Queens Drive, Taunton
Milverton and North Deane	Anthony John Vail Ashleigh, Milverton, Taunton
	Murray Michael Thomas Lloyd Watson Trebbles Holford Farm, Seven Ash, Bishops Lydeard, Taunton
Monument	Debbie Louise Nixon 7 The Old Maltings, Ham, Wellington
Neroche	John Raymond Williams 172 Greenway Road, Taunton
North Curry	Philip Roland Stone Howards End, Lillesdon, North Curry, Taunton
Norton Fitzwarren	Kenneth Albert William Hayward 1 Chapel Cottages, Norton Fitzwarren, Taunton
Pyrland and Rowbarton	Marcia Jane Hill 14 Triscombe Road, Wellsprings, Taunton
	Thomas Davies 2 Lewis Road, Taunton
	Christopher Anthony Cluff 9 Manor Road, Taunton
Ruishton and Creech	Gwyneth Mary Bryant 1 Horsey Cottage, St Michael Road, Creech St Michael, Taunton
	David William Durdan Fair View, Ham, Creech St Michael, Taunton



Staplegrove	Dorothea Susan Bradley Little Yarford Farmhouse, Kingston St Mary, Taunton
	Conrad James William Guerrier Rowford Barton, Cheddon Fitzpaine, Taunton
Stoke St Gregory	David John House Dykes, Slough Lane, Stoke St Gregory, Taunton
Trull	Mark Justin Edwards The Thatched Cottage, Trull Green, Taunton
Wellington East	Ross Longhurst Henley 20 Trinity Close, Wellington
	Kenneth Christopher Hindley 35 Holyoake Street, Wellington
Wellington North	Catherine Grace Biscoe 10 Station Road, Wellington
	Andrew James Govier 47 Laburnum Road, Wellington
Wellington Rockwell Green and West	David John Gill Raj Bran, 12 Monument Close, Wellington
	Nicola Jane Wilson 20 Trinity Close, Wellington
	Robert Bowrah 30 Holyoake Street, Wellington
West Monkton	Norman Philip Cavill Hill Farm, West Monkton, Taunton
	Stephanie Elaine Lily Cavill Hill Farm, West Monkton, Taunton
Wiveliscombe and West Deane	John Charles Ramay Bone 2 The Linhay, Hurstone Farm, Waterrow, Taunton
	Mary Frances Whitmarsh Orchard Cottage, Croford, Wiveliscombe,

10. Election of Leader 2003/2004

RESOLVED that Councillor Williams be elected as Leader of the Executive for the ensuing year.

11. Appointment of Executive 2003/04

The membership of the Executive for the ensuing year was appointed as follows:-

Councillor Williams (Leader)  
Councillor Mrs Lewin-Harris (Deputy Leader) (Community Leadership)  
Councillor Bishop (Planning Policy and Transportation)  
Councillor Mrs Bradley (Leisure, Arts and Culture)  
Councillor Mrs Bryant (Communications)  
Councillor N Cavill (Economic Development, Property and Tourism)  
Councillor Edwards (Environmental Services)  
Councillor Garner (Housing)  
Councillor Hall (Resources)

12. Appointment of Review Board 2003/2004

The appointment of a Review Board for the ensuing year was agreed as follows:-

11 Members.  
6 Conservative, 3 Liberal Democrat, 1 Labour, 1 Independent.  
(Note: The Review Board will be chaired by the leader of the largest opposition political group on the Council (Councillor Henley).)

13. Appointment of Regulatory Committees and Boards

(a) The appointment of a Planning Committee for the ensuing year was agreed as follows:-

18 Members.  
10 Conservative, 5 Liberal Democrat, 1 Independent, 2 Labour.

(b) The appointment of a Licensing Board for the ensuing year was agreed with membership being selected from a pool of Councillors.

(c) The appointment of a Staffing Board for the ensuing year was agreed with membership being selected, on a proportional basis, from a pool of councillors.

14. Appointment of Review Panels

In accordance with the terms of the Council's Constitution the Chairs of the Review Panels will be nominated jointly following consultation between the leaders of the political groups. Details will be provided at the meeting.

- (a) The appointment of the Community Leadership Review Panel was agreed as follows:

11 Members.

6 Conservative, 3 Liberal Democrat, 1 Labour, 1 Independent.  
(Chair: Councillor Denington.)

- (b) The appointment of the Housing Review Panel was agreed as follows:

11 Members.

6 Conservative, 3 Liberal Democrat, 1 Labour, 1 Independent.  
(Chair: Councillor Mrs Nixon.)

- (c) The appointment of the Leisure and Health Review Panel was agreed as follows:

11 Members.

6 Conservative, 3 Liberal Democrat, 1 Labour, 1 Independent.  
(Chair: Councillor Paul.)

- (d) The appointment of the Strategic, Planning and Transportation and Economic Development Review Panel was agreed as follows:

11 Members.

6 Conservative, 3 Liberal Democrat, 1 Labour, 1 Independent.  
(Chair: Councillor Hayward.)

- (e) The appointment of the Resources Review Panel was agreed as follows:

11 Members.

6 Conservative, 3 Liberal Democrat, 1 Labour, 1 Independent.  
(Chair: Councillor Mrs Whitmarsh.)

15. Standards Committee 2003/04

The appointment of a Standards Committee for the ensuing year was agreed with membership to consist of 7 independent members of the public (already appointed) and 4 Councillors (1 from each Group) and a Parish member from whom Panels would be selected when necessary.

16. South West Regional Assembly

RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs Lewin-Harris be appointed as the Council's representative on the South West Regional Assembly.

17. South West Local Government Association

RESOLVED that Councillors Mrs. Allgrove, Henley and Lisgo be appointed as the Council's representatives on the South West Local Government Association

18. The Chief Executive reported the appointment of Councillor Mrs Whitmarsh as Civic Marshall.

19. Intercessional Prayer

The meeting was closed at 8.15 pm with prayers offered by the Mayor's Chaplain, Chris Staley.

## **COUNCIL MEETING - 22 JULY 2003**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL** **COUNCILLOR WILLIAMS - LEADER OF THE EXECUTIVE**

#### 1. Draft Performance Plan 2003/04

Councils are required by legislation to produce an Annual Performance Plan. This year's Draft Plan has been considered and approved by the Review Board at its meeting on 12 June 2003 and by the Executive on 25 June 2003.

The main focus of the plan is to report the measures being taken to deliver improvements in outcomes for local people and recording progress in delivering these outcomes. The plan has to address key priorities including progress on agreed delivery targets and summarise an Authority's planning improvement activities including those undertaken following Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA).

The Government guidance on which this year's plan is based, introduced a number of new requirements including:-

- progress over the past three years in implementing improvement measures;
- outcomes from or impact of improvement measures implemented over the past three years;
- plans for improvement over the current and subsequent two years;
- performance indicator targets for the current and subsequent 2 years for all statutory indicators and local indicators in priority areas.

The guidance also removes the previous requirements for an efficiency summary and consultation statement; the setting of a five-year period of Best Value Reviews and a summary of any assessment of the level and way in which an Authority exercises its functions.

The revised guidance has changed the emphasis of the Plan. The Council are now required to report the outcomes (effects) of improvements rather than merely detailing the actions taken, translating planned improvements into outcome targets. Councils also have to report over a wider time-scale looking back three years and forward three years. The reporting period for this plan is therefore April 2000 to March 2006.

The Performance Plan is the main document in delivering the Council's corporate priorities. It affects them all as it addresses the Council's key priorities, detailed progress on agreed actions and targets and publishes the Council's improvement proposals. A copy of the Plan has been sent to all members.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that the Draft Performance Plan be agreed.

2. Capital Strategy 2003

As part of good asset management practices, the Council are required to prepare a Capital Strategy, which must be adopted by full Council.

The Capital Strategy, together with the Asset Management Plan and the Housing Business Plan, form the core documents required by the Council to comply with the requirements of the Single Capital Pot.

The Single Capital Pot was introduced in 2001 to allocate credit approvals to Authorities based on their progress towards having a joined-up corporate and strategic by approach to capital investment. The Capital Strategy for 2001 and 2002 had been assessed by the Government Office for the South West as “good” and had earned additional credit approvals for the Council of £50,000 in each of these years.

The Capital Strategy, as attached, is a summary of the Council’s approach to Capital Investment and complies with the format and requirements specified in Government guidance.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that the draft Capital Strategy for 2003 be agreed.

3. Commutation Adjustment

In 1992 the Secretary of State exercised powers to make single payments to Councils to commute all entitlement in future years’ improvement grant subsidy on works carried out before 1992/93. Where Councils had outstanding Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) debt, the payments, instead of being made to the Council, were made directly to the PWLB to reduce or extinguish debts.

The single payment made by the Government reduced authorities indebtedness thereby reducing its credit ceiling (notional) and as a consequence its MRP (Minimum Revenue Position) (real) and Debt Interest (real) Charges to the Revenue Account.

However this reduction was not enough to compensate Councils for the loss of the annual improvement grant subsidy received previously. The calculation of the MRP was therefore amended to include the “Commutation Adjustment”. This was intended to “compensate” Authorities and to return their accounts to the position to that which would have been held if the commutation exercise had not taken place.

This Council has not been following the full requirements of this section of the 1989 Act in its Statement of Accounts. The situation is further complicated by the policy of “voluntary top-ups” to MRP which was policy within Taunton Deane until 2001/02. Officers, together with the Council’s Treasury Advisors’

Sector have gone back through the Council's accounts to April 1992 and have calculated the commutation adjustment for each financial year thereafter.

The difference between what has been charged to the accounts and what the Council were required to charge the accounts over the period to the end of 2001/02 is £2,883,202. During this period the Council operated a voluntary top-up to MRP policy and this could not be unwound. Reintroducing this to the equation reduce this figure to £1,823,899.

This £1.8m could be taken back into the Council's accounts and transferred to the General Fund Reserve. However there are ongoing costs associated with doing this due to the commutation adjustment reducing the MRP which in turn left the credit ceiling means higher than it would have been. The higher credit ceiling means higher future MRP charges to the revenue account. The costs equated to roughly 4% of the "positive adjustment" plus an increase in debts costs borne by the General Fund.

The need for Capital Funding, the future costs associated with it, the aspirations of the Council regarding repayment of debt and the impact of any decision on the new prudential regime were all taken into account by the Executive when considering how much of the £1.8m the Council should take back into the accounts.

There are a number of options. Whilst there is a need for monies to support capital spending, this is balanced with the ongoing Revenue cost that this adjustment will incur. We felt it was prudent to take the maximum commutation allowance now and to take some time to consider how this should be best used to meet the Council's priorities. The funds, if not required, will be returned to the Reserve in 2003/04 and noted as early repayment of debt.

The impending introduction of the Prudential Regime will change all current regulations regarding MRP and the allocation of interest charges between the various Council funds (HRA and General Fund).

District Audit have reviewed and audited the calculations and accept the position.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that:-

- (a) the transferring of the backdated commutation adjustment, amounting to £1,823,899 to the General Fund Reserve and the immediate earmarking of the these funds for capital purposes (RCCO in 2002/03), be agreed;
- (b) the transfer of the 2002/03 commutation adjustment amounting to £116,500 to the General Fund Reserve and the immediate earmarking of this for capital purposes (RCCO in 2002/03), be agreed;

- (c) the transfer of the 2003/04 commutation adjustment amounting to £153,660 to the General Fund Reserve and the immediate earmarking of this for capital purposes (RCCO in 2003/04), be agreed.

Councillor J R Williams



## **TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL, TUESDAY 22 JULY 2003**

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

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

### **STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2002/03**

#### **1 Purpose**

- 1.1 To obtain Council's approval of the annual Statement of Accounts as signed by the Mayor, Leader of the Council and the Head of Finance.

#### **2 Background**

- 2.1 Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations the Statement of Accounts is required to be approved by a resolution of a nominated committee. The current constitutional arrangements allocate this responsibility to full Council. In addition to being signed by the Council's S151 officer (the Head of Finance), for 2002/03 onwards the annual accounts have to be signed by the Chair of the Council Committee which approves those accounts. This responsibility therefore falls upon the Mayor, and to reflect the responsibilities of the specific Executive Councillor, the Leader of the Council will also sign the accounts.
- 2.2 The existing legislation requires the 2002/03 Statement of Accounts to be formally approved by Members by the end of September. It is pleasing to note that these Accounts are being presented to Members some two months ahead of that deadline.
- 2.3 Over the next three years this deadline will be moved back three months to the end of June, and as preparation for this the Financial Services Unit have been aiming to produce the annual accounts well ahead of the statutory deadline. Although it should be noted that further improvements to the closedown process will be required to meet the final deadline which will be in place for the approval of the 2005/06 accounts.
- 2.4 The 2002/03 Accounts presented this evening are subject to audit, and this will take place for some three to four weeks during August. The Accounts presented this evening are complete and this represents an improvement over the 2001/02 Accounts which were presented with some omissions at the same Council meeting last year.

#### **3 Statement of Accounts**

- 3.1 The Statement of Accounts is a bulky document and is therefore not included with the Council Summons; Members will receive a hard copy under separate cover. The format of the Statement of Accounts is largely the same as last year, and complies fully with current local authority accounting arrangements. A new requirement is for the inclusion of a Statement of System of Internal Financial Control which has been signed by the Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive and the Head of Finance.

4     **Notice of Conclusion of Audit**

4.1    Following the conclusion of Audit, the Council will be informed of any significant amendments arising. If there are no significant amendments, there will be no further report on the 2002/03 Statement of Accounts.

5     **Annual Determination**

5.1    Under the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the Council is required to make appropriate annual determinations to encompass General Fund and Housing Revenue Account expenditure. The determinations for 2002/03 are set out in the recommendations below.

6     **Effect on Corporate Priorities**

6.1    Being a corporate document detailing all of the financial activities of the Council the Statement of Accounts for 2002/03 impacts on all corporate priorities.

7     **Recommendations**

7.1    The Council is recommended to:-

a) Approve the Statement of Accounts 2002/03.

b) Make the following determinations in respect of the year ended 31 March 2003:-

1. Section 42(2)(g)

That £947,952 of expenditure for capital purposes, which was financed by grant, be capitalised.

2. Section 56(i)

That basic and supplementary credit approvals of £816,189 (after adjustment for capital grants received) be treated as authority to charge to capital accounts expenditure of that amount.

3. Section 60(2)

That £1,875,814 of useable capital receipts be applied to meet capital expenditure.

4. Section 63(i)

That £483,596 be put aside from the revenue accounts in 2002/03 as a provision for credit liabilities.

**Contact:**     Paul Carter  
                  Financial Services Manager  
                  Tel: 01823 356418  
                  E-Mail: [p.carter@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:p.carter@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

**Background Papers:** Executive, 25 June 2003, Outturn Report 2002/03

## Taunton Deane Borough Council - Capital Strategy 2003

### 1 Our Key Objectives and Principles

- 1.1 The activities of the Council are focussed around promoting the economic, social and environmental well being of the Borough, this is achieved through our Corporate Priorities. These six priorities are key to influencing the overall strategic direction of all spending plans. Our Corporate Priorities are:
- Economy – improving people’s livelihoods and job opportunities,
  - Transport and Access – delivering more accessible services and a better transport system,
  - Crime – developing safer communities,
  - Health – promoting healthier lifestyles and communities,
  - Environment – protecting and enhancing our environment,
  - Delivery – helping to develop strong communities through working in partnership and delivering excellent services.
- 1.2 This strategy covers all aspects of Capital expenditure, including Housing and General Fund capital programmes. Therefore services ranging as widely as Social Housing, Highways, Leisure, IT and Tourism are included.
- 1.3 This strategy is a corporate document; it is influenced by the other corporate documents of the Council, such as the Best Value Performance Plan, Housing Strategy and Housing Business Plan, Community Plan, Local Transport Plan and Asset Management Plan. Our work with the Local Strategic Partnership on the overall Community Plan for the Borough, and the Vision Commission for Taunton also provides key strategic direction and a framework for capital investment within the Borough. These plans are consolidated into the spending plans laid out in the Corporate Strategy and ultimately into the Council’s Budget. This process will be demonstrated by references to those plans throughout this document. In addition best value reviews and service plans also influence our strategy. The Council’s Corporate Management Team, the Executive and Full Council have endorsed it.
- 1.4 The Council exerts enormous influence throughout the Borough, as an employer, a service provider, a tax raiser and importantly as a lever in developing all aspects of living and working in the area. Our capital spending can aid other agencies and local authorities and can directly influence the public at large. The table below gives some key examples together with the relevant Corporate Priority:

Project	How does TDBC Influence Others?	Corporate Priority
Grants to Housing Associations	Enables RSLs to provide social housing in line with TDBC requirements	Access to affordable Housing and an Improved Environment, Service Delivery

Contribution to Wiveliscombe Community Office	The grant enables the local partnership to refurbish the project's offices	Promotion of the local economy, access and delivery of services
Contribution to North West Taunton Package	Without the TDBC contribution, this multi agency scheme would not proceed	Promotion of the local economy, access and delivery of services
Wellington Town Centre Enhancement	The improvement of shopping areas for the general public	Promotion of the local economy and improvement to the environment
DDA Compliance	To make all TDBC building accessible for all members of the public	Access to and delivery of services
Flood Alleviation schemes	Enabled the EA to commission a major flood alleviation scheme within the Borough	Protecting the environment and the economy of the Borough
CCTV schemes	The reduction in crime in key urban areas	Crime reduction and promotion of the economy
The Wellsprings Leisure Centre	Without TDBC commitment to this scheme, the LEA would not have these new facilities	The promotion of healthier living and social inclusion

1.5 The Capital Strategy is a summary of the capital spending objectives that arise from the plans and strategies mentioned above. Consultation is a vital part in the formulation of all of these plans. Therefore as this document brings together the spending aspirations of all those plans the views of all stakeholders are already included in the Capital Strategy. Consultation takes place in many ways, for example, through user groups and surveys (Leisure and Commercial Property), questionnaires (Leisure), representative groups (Housing) and through the Member review panel process employed by the Council.

1.6 In addition the spending plans of the Council have been widely consulted upon through promotion in the publication "Deane Dispatch" and via a series of Budget Consultation workshops which took place with the general public over the Winter. This consultation reflected local and Borough wide priorities and enabled both revenue and capital monies to be closely aligned to the priorities of the Community. In particular it enabled over £70k of improvements to some of our most needy assets to be programmed into the 2003/04 budget. The delivery of the objectives outlined in the Capital Strategy is set out in detail in the AMP and the Housing Business Plan. These joined up plans are approved concurrently by the Council.

## 2 Capital Assets – Taunton Deane in Context.

2.1 The Council is an active Housing Authority with over 6,000 Council Houses and Flats. In addition the Council is responsible for several Leisure Centres, Parks, Car Parks and other operational assets. The Council also holds numerous investment properties. Further information is available in the Context Sheet, which accompanies this document. The value of the total asset base of the Council as at 31 March 2003 is shown below:

Asset Type	General Fund £	Housing Revenue £	Total £
Council Dwellings	0	272,655,450	<b>272,655,450</b>
Other Land & Buildings	32,051,153	9,893,300	<b>41,944,453</b>
Vehicles & Equipment	872,837	57,003	<b>929,840</b>
Infrastructure Assets	5,848,970	1,895,719	<b>7,744,689</b>
Community Assets	1,421,150	0	<b>1,421,150</b>
Non Operational	3,399,000	0	<b>3,399,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>43,593,110</b>	<b>284,501,472</b>	<b>328,094,582</b>

## 3 Service Portfolio Objectives

3.1 The Authority is structured into primary groups of services (portfolios). The Council has clear objectives for investment within each portfolio and this is derived from our Corporate Priorities, our corporate plans and individual service plans, these are detailed in paragraphs 3.2 to 3.8 below. A summary of capital spending for the period 2002/03 to 2005/06 is shown below. This covers a period of four years for General Fund and two years for Housing Services.

Portfolio	2002/03 £	2003/04 £	2004/05 £	2005/06 £	Total £
Community Leadership	10,000	0	0	0	<b>10,000</b>
Corporate Resources	252,681	120,000	85,000	85,000	<b>542,681</b>
Eco. Dev. Tourism & Council Businesses	1,050,841	232,520	185,000	127,000	<b>1,595,361</b>
Environmental Policy	871,821	26,000	10,000	10,000	<b>917,821</b>
Housing	5,811,560	5,787,890	0	0	<b>11,599,450</b>
Leisure, Arts & Culture	757,498	850,920	243,100	91,100	<b>1,942,618</b>
Planning & Transportation	453,349	200,000	0	0	<b>653,349</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,207,750</b>	<b>7,217,330</b>	<b>523,100</b>	<b>313,100</b>	<b>17,261,280</b>

### 3.2 **Community Leadership**

This portfolio is responsible for many cross cutting corporate priorities. For example economy, the crime and disorder strategy, the environment and the delivery of services. This portfolio provides a corporate overview on community issues and on the plans and reviews affecting the whole Borough. Influence on capital projects is at a corporate level, rather than focusing on specific projects, although the financial support for a multi agency community office is a key project for this portfolio.

### 3.3 **Corporate Resources**

This portfolio deals with the majority of the Councils support services. The clear strategy and objective here is to support front line services through improved Information Technology and improvements to corporate assets such as office buildings. Work within this portfolio is derived mainly from the Council's E Government strategy, the AMP and the service plan for office buildings.

### 3.4 **Economic Development, Tourism & Council Businesses**

This portfolio covers a key corporate priority and promotes our obligations on economic well being arising from the modernisation agenda. Projects included in this portfolio arise from the Councils Economic Development and Tourism Strategies and the Vision document. The Council has recently restructured the Development Directorate to enhance and promote our work in the area of economic development. In addition through the AMP process the Council is continuing to investigate economic development opportunities both on its own and in partnership through the Regional Development Agency. This is of particular importance as Taunton has recently been designated a Principal Urban Area, this will lead to many opportunities for the Council. Other examples include the enhancement and regeneration of the town centres of both Taunton and Wellington. In addition the service plans of the Council's trading services such as the Direct Labour Organisation and Crematorium influence the programme through projects such as the purchase of new vehicles and improvements to trading assets as identified in the Asset Management Plan.

### 3.5 **Environmental Policy**

This is a specific corporate priority, and the Capital Programme for this portfolio is designed to maintain and enhance the reputation that the Council has for providing quality services such as environmental health, waste control and street sweeping. For example in 2003/04 the Council has taken advantage of central Government funding opportunities to enable the monitoring of air quality. In addition the inclusion of projects supporting local flood alleviation schemes are consistent with the Local Plan.

### 3.6 **Housing**

The core documents relating to capital investment in this service area are the Housing Business Plan and the Housing Strategy, and is consistent with corporate priorities for healthy living and our environment. This details our plans for the future provision of Housing and the investment required both for our Housing stock and for private sector housing. Housing covers more than

50% of the Council's total capital spending and is particularly dependant on credit approvals as a major source of finance. Our priorities here are:

- to meet local targets for the provision of social housing within the Borough by partnership working with Housing Associations,
- to improve the condition of private sector stock through the provision of renovation grants,
- to improve the condition of the Council's Housing stock to meet the "decent homes" standard as promoted by the Government.

### 3.7 **Leisure, Arts & Culture**

This portfolio contains some of our major assets, such as Leisure Centres and our Parks. Our strategic direction here is to enhance these services through continued investment, and to maximise external funding opportunities for these projects. Arising from a 2002 Best Value review the Council has taken positive steps forward and is now actively setting up a not-for profit Trust for these facilities. This will enable the Council to maintain its Leisure assets to a greater standard whilst still providing quality leisure services to the residents of the Borough.

### 3.8 **Planning Policy and Transportation**

The majority of the projects within this Portfolio derive come from the recommendations that arise from the Local Transport Plan/Parking Strategy/Local Plan/Vision. This portfolio is especially important as it deals with so many fundamental aspects of the role of the Borough Council as a planning authority. Transport and planning issues tend to go hand in hand therefore co-ordination is vital between many different agencies and this is reflected in the priorities of this portfolio. These priorities include co-ordinated transport systems and improvements to the local infrastructure in conjunction with the County Council.

## 4 **Capital Investment Prioritisation and Bidding Regime**

4.1 The Authority has in place an established system to enable Corporate Management Team and elected Members to prioritise between proposed new capital schemes. This system is known locally as the Project Appraisal Report (PARs) system. The purpose behind the PAR is to provide comprehensive information on each new scheme, thereby enabling informed choices to be made. Guidelines on the requirements of the PAR system are available to all Service Managers and are placed on the Council's Intranet site. This process is now in place across the whole Authority. The principles behind the PAR system are not only used at budget setting time but are also used as a framework when considering the implementation of other major capital schemes.

4.2 In addition to the traditional data requirements needed when considering a new project, such as cost and other resource implications, the PAR requires Officers to consider Authority wide objectives, in particular its fit with the Council's Corporate Priorities.

- 4.3 To complete a PAR Officers must provide the following details on each proposed scheme:
- Project Outline and Description,
  - Category of Scheme (ie legal obligation, service necessity, service maintenance or service necessity),
  - Establishment of Need – appropriate analysis of need and rationale,
  - Fit with Corporate Priorities,
  - Fit with Service planning objectives,
  - Sustainability,
  - Option appraisal – ie “do nothing”, full scheme, partial scheme, scheme provided by other agencies, scheme provided through partnership working,
  - Risk identification,
  - Overall project evaluation,
  - Resource implications, capital and revenue, monetary and non-monetary,
  - Timescale for implementation,
  - Recommendations.
- 4.4 Submitted PARs are initially assessed at Director level, onward to Corporate Management Team and then onto the Executive who then make the final decisions as to which new schemes are included in the programmes, which are considered by Full Council.
- 4.5 As part of the above, the revenue implications of each new scheme must be considered. The Financial Services Unit also advises on the overall revenue impact of new schemes to ensure that the approval of new schemes is consistent with the Council’s revenue budget strategy and medium term financial plan.

## **5 Management of the Capital Programme**

- 5.1 The capital programme is formally reviewed and reported on a quarterly basis (along with all other budgets of the Council) to ensure not only spend against budget but also progress of each scheme against other aspects such as timetable and construction progress. In addition an analysis of available capital resources ensures that the “affordability” of the programme is maintained. This process has recently been enhanced by a new structure within the Financial Services Unit which provides a greater level of support to each of the Council’s Directorates, this is of particular benefit when appraising new schemes as both financial and non financial staff are involved in new projects from the outset. Thereby enabling risks (financial and non financial) to be actively managed. This data is reported to both Corporate Management Team and the Executive.
- 5.2 To ensure comprehensive financial data is available the VAT implications of the capital programme on the Council’s partial exemption position are also monitored and reported on a quarterly basis. This highlights the amount of any irrecoverable VAT and the impact on budgets.



- 5.3 In addition to the above the Audit and Review Unit are developing an enhancement to the contract monitoring systems employed by the Council. This will take the form of improved IT systems which will aid managers in the continuous monitoring of spend versus budget together with automatic links to pre-set contract performance indicators. The strategy for the monitoring and measurement of the programme covers the four year period of the programme detailed in paragraph 3.1.
- 5.4 Finally, the process of strategic risk management is employed for high spend/high risk/high profile capital projects. Where applicable, multi discipline project teams are formed to manage these schemes and to report progress and risks to Corporate Management Team on a regular basis.

## **6 Funding of Capital Projects**

- 6.1 The Council recognises that on its own it cannot deliver all of its investment priorities. It is vital to secure partners to assist with meeting our aims and to use external funding sources. For example the Council has worked with the Sports Lottery Fund and will deliver a flagship Leisure Centre in North Taunton which will be used by both local schoolchildren and the general public. The Council is at the forefront of E-Government objectives and is using central Government funding to work on projects within Taunton Deane and as part of a consortium of Authorities across Somerset; the aim being to improve service delivery. In addition the Council is working in partnership with the Environment Agency to provide much needed flood alleviation schemes within the Borough.
- 6.2 As an alternative funding source, and as a commitment to partnership working, the Authority welcomes the concept of PPP and PFI. At a time when capital resources are scarce these alternative funding vehicles will be fully explored. However, as yet no schemes have been identified which would warrant such a venture. With regard to the new Prudential Regime for Capital Finance the Council welcomes the new freedoms (and associated responsibilities) that will be part of the system. This will further enhance the ability of the Council in meeting the needs of the Community. In addition the AMP process has been used as a lever to enable the disposal of surplus and poorly performing assets. The capital receipts arising are then used to fund priority schemes of the Council. Finally the Council ensures that, where applicable, monies secured through S104 and S106 agreements are used to support our capital strategy.

## **7 Links with Best Value and Service Plans**

- 7.1 The development of this strategy cannot be achieved by only referring to the main corporate plans of the Authority. Notice must also be taken of the individual requirements of particular services and the outcomes of Best Value Reviews; this is achieved through the Officer group responsible for the production of the Asset Management Plan. The AMP Group will evaluate all Service Plans, Revenue Budget Development Bids and Best Value Reviews to

ensure that any property/asset issues are included within the AMP/CS and Capital/Revenue Budget.

## 8 Procurement

- 8.1 The Council will through the use of its dedicated Corporate Purchasing Unit ensure that best value is obtained for contracts. This is further enhanced by the requirement of Officers to meet the strict tendering and contractual procedures required under our Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders. Dealing specifically with the principles recommended by the Construction Task Force where project integration and innovation are to be promoted, the Council welcomes this and many initiatives are now in place. The Council has continued to develop a scheme which was introduced in 2001 to work with neighbouring Authorities on a joint commissioning partnership for the construction of new Social Housing Projects. This involves the selection of preferred Housing Associations and builders in order to obtain long term value for money on such schemes (as promoted by the Construction Task Force). Involving multiple builders in a scheme such as this is believed to be the first of its type in the Country. Finally, the Council will continue to reduce the environmental impact of new projects through its energy management schemes and in construction specifications.

## 9 Partnership Working

- 9.1 As mentioned above, the Council fully utilises all alternative external funding sources in delivering its capital projects. However, the Council recognises that monetary needs are only one way in which partnerships are vital in delivering modern service targets. The Council cannot ignore the expertise that partners bring to the Council, in both technical and administrative terms, and the specialities that other providers can bring. In 2002 the Council has continued to develop its links with the County Council Property Service to share information on surplus property and on investment opportunities.
- 9.2 The table below highlights current partnership working (innovative cross cutting issues are shown in *italics*):

<b>Capital Project (TDBC budget)</b>	<b>Other Partners</b>	<b>What do the Partners Provide?</b>
<i>Implementing E Government (£400,000)</i>	<i>Other Somerset Local Authorities/Police Authority/ ODPM</i>	<i>Shared resources/ Shared personnel/ County wide call centre technology for LG services</i>
Silk Mills Railway Crossing (£399,000)	County Council/ Highway Agency	Funding/ Technical support/ Common aim of Local Plan
Flood Alleviation Schemes (£100,000)	Private Housing Developers/Environment Agency/ Parish Councils	Funding/ Technical support

Contributions towards Social Housing Projects (£1,967,410)	Housing Corporation/ Registered Social Landlords	Funding/ Land/ Provision of social housing in accordance with TDBC requirements
Recycling Boxes (£145,000)	Other Somerset District Councils/Somerset County Council/Central Govt.	Funding/Purchasing power/coordinated recycling strategy
<i>Somerset Direct (Funded via Government Grant)</i>	<i>Other Somerset District Councils/Somerset County Council/Central Govt.</i>	<i>Funding/Purchasing power/coordinated innovative approach to service provision</i>
<i>Community Facilities (£120,000) Cotford St Luke</i>	<i>County Council/ Local Developers/ Community</i>	<i>Planning advice/ Funding/ Shared Assets</i>
Grants to Village Halls/ Play Equipment Grants (£360,298)	Parish Councils/ Local Village Hall & Playing Field Committees	Funding/ Enhancement to community assets
Bridgwater & Taunton Canal (£20,000)	County Council	Funding/ Enhancement to community assets

9.3 Partnership working is further progressed within the Council, it is a requirement of the PAR system to consider how any scheme may be implemented through joint working or through the implementation of a scheme by a provider other than the Council.

## 10 Performance Measurement and Benchmarking

10.1 The Council is committed to ensuring that the money that it invests in capital projects achieves the desired outcomes and targeted objectives of the Authority. These targets are detailed in the specific plans and strategies of those services, as described in para.1.3. These outcomes are controlled and monitored in many different ways, for example:

- Grants to Housing Associations are dependant on specific targets relating to both the type of dwellings constructed and targeted occupants (ie special needs), the outcomes are reported to the Council's Housing Panel,
- Housing Improvement and Disabled facilities grant applications undergo stringent assessment criteria, thereby focusing resources towards Council objectives,
- Grants to Village Halls are only given to projects which meet County and Borough Council objectives,
- Where the Council requires external funding, for example from the Sports Lottery Fund, these projects must meet the specific criteria of all funding partners. Detailed outcome reports are provided to all partners,
- Where the Authority provides funding for footpath and street lighting projects there is a specific "needs" assessment made, to ensure that the project meets both Borough and County Council objectives.

- 10.2 The use of the national and local property performance indicators, as detailed in the AMP, will improve the performance of the Council's assets by targeting resources towards low performing assets, for example high cost or low return assets. The Council has in place a stringent target and monitoring procedure for all indicators. Local indicators specifically target the use and return gained from our Commercial portfolio. The results of these indicators are reported to the Corporate management Team and the Executive.
- 10.3 These indicators will also allow specific services and assets to be targeted. For example the data derived from the maintenance backlog exercise will be integrated into the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan to ensure that this backlog is prioritised and that our reputation for good quality assets is maintained. These indicators are also used to inform Members when making asset disposal decisions.
- 10.4 The Council's budgeting procedures also allows the Authority to set benchmarks for areas such as financial return, maintenance costs and energy efficiency. Indeed targets for 2003/04 have already been set and progress will be monitored and reported quarterly to Corporate Management Team and Members. As the asset management process develops on a local and national basis it is envisaged that the performance of Taunton Deane Borough Council will be benchmarked against comparable Authorities.

## **11 Conclusion**

- 11.1 In both 2001/02 and 2002/03 the Council was assessed by the Government Office of the South West as having a "good" capital strategy, the highest level of score. As a consequence the 2003/04 version does not have to be assessed by GOSW, however the Council has continued to develop its capital strategy in line with its corporate priorities. This document summarises the strategic direction of capital investment within Taunton Deane Borough Council. The Council is committed to improving the Borough and recognises that capital investment is a major source of influence.

## **COUNCIL MEETING 22 JULY 2003**

### **REPORT OF COUNCILLOR WILLIAMS – LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

We are now in the thirteenth week of our Administration and it is the first presentation of the new Executive to Council. I feel the transition has been as seamless as possible and I pay tribute to our officers for the tremendous assistance and understanding given to ensure this occurred. Not least I also extend my grateful thanks to my colleagues who, when asked, rose to the challenge and accepted the considerable task of Executive Members for the various Portfolios and offices, all requiring a substantial commitment to ensure the smooth running of this organisation.

My grateful thanks to all.

#### **Overview**

Taunton Deane is on the brink of exciting and challenging times. The award - or is it imposition of Principal Urban Area Status which dictates that Taunton is to become a sub-regional centre, places great responsibility on all of us to ensure that development is carried out to allow growth, but without destroying the very character of the town that we all cherish. This led to the Vision for Taunton exercise which highlighted what the people of Taunton Deane wanted and provided us with an excellent framework with which to move forward. This clearly identified that although growth was felt necessary, all possible should be done to maintain the market town character of Taunton loved so dearly by most.

At this very time, masterplanning of Taunton is being carried out together with an urban design extension by our consultants Terence O'Rourke who have been jointly commissioned by Somerset County Council, SWERDA and Taunton Deane Borough Council to carry out this work. Following the failure of the Crescent Car Park Scheme as we know it, we are also endeavouring to link the overall design of the Crescent Car Park and Mary Street Car Park within the urban design framework exercise for Taunton town centre as a whole. Of course I have always stated and I reiterate that without improvements in Taunton's infrastructure and public transport system, the proposed future development and expansion of Taunton will come to nothing. It is imperative and a commitment of this Administration that our roads and public transport are improved to ensure the economic growth of Taunton is not constricted.

To inform members I give a brief report on some of the major projects and considerations ongoing at present.

#### **Vision for Taunton**

Our consultants - O'Rourkes - have carried out considerable research and consultation and are in the process of preparing a design framework exercise covering the town centre, the Firepool site, the Riverside through to Tangier and the Tangier area. In carrying out this exercise, O'Rourkes have identified large areas of land in and around Taunton Town Centre, not necessarily all in Council ownership, which has potential and provides exciting opportunities for future development. Initial plans have already been presented to councillors and members of the public and

feedback to date has been positive. Terence O'Rourke are due to complete their overall plan by the end of the year when we in conjunction with our partners will have to take this plan forward for implementation. I have no illusions that this will be easy as it will require consummate skill to bring many vested interests to the negotiating table and vast amounts of finance, all of which, will not be found solely from the public sector.

### Crescent Car Park Development

As already noted, the scheme we have been negotiating for around three years has now failed on the basis of its financial viability. The suggestion has been made that a much larger scheme could be viable by looking at both the Crescent Car Park area and the Mary Street Car Park area at the other side of the High Street. We are endeavouring to include this with the Terence O'Rourke design framework exercise for Taunton to gain an overall view of the potential viability of these proposals. The financing of this study is being separately reported by Councillor Cavill and I strongly commend this to you.

### Urban Extension Study

This again is in the course of preparation by our consultants, Terence O'Rourke and preliminary plans have been prepared and presented to councillors and members of the public. I would stress that this is not the inception of a Local Plan but our independent consultants' views of where future development of Taunton could possibly take place. If we are to ensure that Taunton has the ability to grow practically and sustainably then we must be prepared to make hard choices. This to ensure that it has sufficient economic development ability to protect ourselves from larger and developing neighbours up and down the motorway. We are receiving a strong message from our local economic development partners that Taunton is already several years behind other major centres and that we will lose out if growth in Taunton does not occur soon.

### County Cricket Club

We are all well aware of the aspirations of Somerset County Cricket Club to expand sufficiently to host international cricket matches. Within the Vision and planning process of Taunton we must ensure that if at all physically possible these aspirations are met and that as a Council we give all necessary assistance to achieving this. The County Cricket Ground is one of the jewels in Taunton's Crown and it can only aid the economy of Taunton if we assist it to achieve international status and the increased profile that would bring.

### Taunton Market Site

As you will be aware, further consultation and planning has been taking place with a view to re-locating Taunton Market to a site adjacent to Junction 26 at Chelston, Wellington. This study has now been completed and the principle has been established that the chosen site will be acceptable and is unlikely to encounter any major problems with planning or highways. Taunton Deane Borough Council is broadly in agreement with the Taunton Market Auctioneers regarding the relocation of the Market, however, before any formal planning application can be submitted there is a need to understand the financial commitments of all parties in order to facilitate this re-location. This process is underway at present, but I must stress to you that the re-location of the existing market is absolutely essential to the satisfactory re-development of the Firepool area.

### Wellsprings Centre

This by any stretch of the imagination is not one of the Council's successes. Substantial additional sums of taxpayers' money have been allocated to the completion of this project but as the new incoming Administration let me reaffirm our commitment to its completion for the benefit of the community of North Taunton. The good news is that work is underway and despite further setbacks being found, requiring additional injection of funds, we are presently on schedule for building works to be completed by the year end. We are obviously pressing our project managers and contractors to ensure completion of the building sufficiently before Christmas 2003 to allow us to get it up and running for the Christmas period. Regrettably I am not able to give a commitment to this at present as our contractors are being quite necessarily cautious in case further problems or defects are identified which could cause delay.

### Commutated Sum

Much has been said and written about this apparent wonderful sum of £1.8 million that is now available for all to spend. Can I say categorically this is not a pot of gold that has been found for use without any cost implications. It is an amount that we have overpaid above our minimum loan repayments that we now have the opportunity to recover, which, if taken in total, there are substantial revenue implications which have to be carefully considered. Since its announcement I have heard many rash statements about what this Council can afford because of this sum being available. I place on record now that any amounts used will be considered very carefully and unless exceptional circumstances dictate will only be used for capital projects and to lever in substantially greater funds for the benefit of the residents of Taunton Deane. When it was established that this amount was available to us by way of increased borrowings, this Administration prudently, in my view, opted to reserve the whole amount for future consideration as to its best use. This process will take place during the impending budget setting process when our priorities are determined and whether all or part only is retained.

**COUNCILLOR JOHN WILLIAMS**  
**Leader of the Council**

## **COUNCIL MEETING - 22 JULY 2003**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL** **COUNCILLOR BISHOP - PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION**

#### 1. Disabled Parking Charges

The Strategic Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Review Panel, at its meeting on 10 June 2003 considered parking charges for Blue Badge holders. The Panel recommended that the current charges be abolished for Blue Badge holders.

The estimated annual income from charges paid by badge holders is £70,000 per annum. The impact on the 2003/04 budget, due to the timing of this change, was likely to be in the order of £50,000. This can be funded by virement in the current year with £30 coming from HMSO Licensing and £20,000 from Environmental Schemes. The Executive agree with the recommendation of the Review Panel.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that £50,000 be vired for the funding of the removal of charges on disabled car parking.

#### 2. Planning Staff

The Strategic Planning Transportation and Economic Development Review Panel at its meeting on 10 June 2003 considered a report on Performance and Staffing in Development Control. The report outlined the use of the Planning Delivery Grant in 2003/04 and recommended the appointment of one full time and one part time member of staff within the Planning Unit.

As the Executive Councillor for Planning and Transportation, I have agreed the Panel's recommendations and now seek approval of the necessary budget changes.

The Government have issued additional funds to all Planning Authorities in 2003/04 under the heading of Planning Delivery Grant. This money has been issued to Authorities based on planning performance with this Council receiving £75,000. Similar grants might be available in future years but this cannot be guaranteed or budgeted for with any certainty. The grant should be targeted to delivering improved services.

The report submitted to the Panel outlined a request for additional staffing within the Planning Unit which will cost £32,179. This is ongoing expenditure and cannot be funded from the Planning Delivery Grant. The Planning income levels have increased steadily over the last few years. It is proposed to fund the cost of employing additional permanent staff within the Planning Unit by virement. This can be done by increasing the base budget for Planning fee income by £32,180 and increasing the base budget for



Planning staff by the same amount. Should the Planning fee income fall short of the new increased budget, the staffing levels will be revisited.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that:-

- (1) the virement of £32,180 for the funding of additional staff within the Planning Unit be agreed;
- (2) the allocation of the Planning Delivery Grant within the 2003/04 budget be agreed.

Councillor C Bishop

## COUNCIL MEETING 22 JULY 2003

### REPORT OF COUNCILLOR BISHOP – PLANNING POLICY AND TRANSPORTATION

#### Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill

Last month, I attended a meeting, organised by the South West Regional Assembly, to discuss the implications of the proposed changes to Strategic Planning for the area and how the arrangements could be made to work most effectively.

The Government now expects commencement of Parts 1 and 2 of the Bill to be in June/July 2004.

We are fortunate that the stage has been reached with the Taunton Local Plan which will allow the Plan to be adopted under current procedures, and it is expected that the Inspector will present his report in October 2003.

#### Members' Planning Code of Good Practice

The Code of Good Practice has been prepared in response to the Local Government Association's Note on the preparation of Local Codes of Good Practice on Planning matters in the light of the introduction of the new ethical framework and in consultation with the District Audit Service, Local Government Ombudsman and the Standards Board for England.

The aim of the code is to ensure that in the planning process there are no grounds for suggesting that a decision has been biased, partial or not well founded in any way.

The draft code will be considered by the Standards Board in July before it is released to members.

#### SWARMMS – Update

The Secretary of State has responded to the London to South West and Wales Multi-modal (SWARMMS) and agreed recommendations. There is a strong presumption against additional road capacity in areas of environmental sensitivity.

The Highways Agency (HA) have appointed consultants P B Kennedy and Donkin to undertake further work to assess the relative impacts of possible improvements to the A358 and the A303 west of Ilminster. A number of value management exercises have been carried out on the A358 dualling, Somerset County Council have asked W.S, Atkins to shadow the HA consultants work on the A358. Dualling of the A358 is largely feasible on line, except for the section at Henlade, where a new dual carriageway is required. One of the most complex issues is the design of the link to and from the A358 onto the M5 in the Exeter direction.

It is anticipated that the HA will report on the options to the Minister in September 2003 and the Regional Planning Body will also consider it.

#### Employment Land Monitoring Report

At its meeting on 10 June the Strategic Planning and Economic Development Review Panel considered a report on the Council's Land Monitoring Report 2003. The report provides data on a range of indicators, including the estimated employment area in the Borough, the level of employment land 'take up', the supply of vacant employment land, employment density, and the quality of employment areas. This is required as

part of the Council's monitoring activities relating to the development and planning of the area. The report shows that we are on course to meet the employment land requirement of 115 hectares set down in the Structure Plan, and that in the year ended on 31 March 2003, 3.2 hectares of land were developed for employment uses whilst planning permission was granted for 5.6 hectares. Also at 31 March there was a total 27.8 hectares of undeveloped employment land available for a range of development..

#### Tone Mill, Wellington

We are continuing to work with Regeneration Through Heritage ( part of the Prince's Foundation) English Heritage and other partners to promote and investigate the possibility of a community-based regeneration project for this important heritage site. A Planning Day was organised at Tone Dale House on 2<sup>nd</sup> June, at which a range of local individuals and organisations with a potential interest, including councillors, came together to hear more about the idea and contribute their own views. This was highly successful, and it is clear that there is considerable support for this scheme that could help secure the future of Fox Brothers Ltd, provide a visitor attraction, and achieve the restoration and maintenance of important Listed Buildings and equipment. The next stage will be to seek financial assistance for a Feasibility Study of the proposal..

#### Land at Odeon Cinema, Taunton

##### Extension to existing 5 screen multiplex cinema to provide 8 screens.

On 18 and 19 March 2003 I attended an inquiry and gave evidence in support of the Planning Committee's decision to grant permission for the development.

The application was called in for decision by the Secretary of State by a direction made under section 77 of the 1990 Act on 18 September, 2002.

The decision has now been received and I am pleased to report, that after considering all the issues the Secretary of State accepted the Inspectors recommendation and concluded that the proposal was in line with the relevant approved development plan policies or consistent with policies in PPG6 and he granted planning permission for the extension.

It is gratifying to Members of the Planning Committee that their decision has been confirmed.

**CLIFF BISHOP**

## **COUNCIL MEETING - 22 JULY 2003**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL** **COUNCILLOR MRS BRADLEY - LEISURE, ARTS AND CULTURE**

#### 1. Galmington Playing Field

The Executive have considered the financial consequences of the Charity Commission inquiry into the Council's management of the Galmington Playing Field.

The Council has been accounting for and treating the Galmington Playing Field as part of the Council's general asset base. A local benefactor had conveyed the field to the Council in 1931 for use by the local community. This subsequently became registered as a Charitable Trust. The Charity Commission has undertaken an inquiry into the Council's administration of the Trust.

The Council is the owner of the playing field and also the trustee of the charity. The Trust is subject to different accounting rules from the other playing fields owned by the Council. The Trust is subject to the rules laid down by the Charity Commission and other relevant charity legislation. As such the Council must account for the income and expenditure relating to the playing field separately from the other council property.

At present the Galmington Playing Field costs more to maintain than the income received from its use. This cost is currently being met from the Parks and Playing Fields budget within the General Fund but these transactions now have to be removed from that Fund.

The Council, as trustee, is obliged to make financial provisions for the Trust to ensure that it is able to continue operations in future years. The Executive feel that the best way to do this is to continue to meet the annual deficit through an annual contribution from the General Fund budget.

The only asset the Trust has is the playing field itself. As trustee, the Council must protect any capital that the Trust had and cannot sell or dispose of any of the capital of the Trust without the prior consent of the Charity Commission. However in 1987 a portion of the field was sold to the adjoining hospital without reference to the Commission. The amount received was £4,900 and it has not been possible to confirm the precise treatment of this income.

The Charity Commission require the Council to re-establish this capital receipt as an additional asset of the Trust. This means that the capital received, together with compounded annual interest since 1987/88, will be maintained as an interest bearing "Permanent Endowment" of the Trust. In total this now amounts to £16,150. The annual interest generated from this investment will now be used to reduce the annual deficit of the playing field.

In order to create this Endowment, it is necessary to take this amount from the General Fund Reserve and as such approval by Council is required.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED THAT £16,150 be transferred from the General Fund Reserve for the creation of the Permanent Endowment Fund of the Galmington Playing Field Trust.

2. The Wellsprings Centre

At its meeting on 22 April 2003, the Council agreed to authorise the carrying out of advanced works to the Centre in order that it be made wind and watertight. On 2 May, Sport England indicated that they were not prepared to give further grant aid to the Council to complete this project. The leaders of the political groups then represented on the Council agreed to make available the necessary funds to complete the project and the Council's chosen contractor, Bluestone Plc, was advised that they could proceed with the completion work.

In the course of carrying out the advanced works, Bluestone have discovered that there are some apparent structural defects which had not previously been identified at the Centre concerning the internal blockwork wall and the means by which it is attached to the structural steel framework of the building. In addition there are problems concerning the connections between the roof purling and the eaves cleats.

These defects have been spotted as a result of the removal of defective cladding on one of the walls at the Centre and there are two other walls constructed in an identical way. Symonds Group Ltd have therefore recommended that the other two walls be inspected for the same problem.

Bluestone Plc quoted the sum of £68,736 excluding VAT to remove the cladding on the other two walls to allow their inspection, to replace that cladding and to carry out the necessary repair work to the one wall now known to suffer from these defects. It was estimated that to repair similar defects on the other two walls will amount to in excess of £18,000 based on the current quotation.

These structural defects could only have been found when the defective cladding was removed. It was necessary and appropriate to ensure that the other two walls were not similarly defective. With the protective cladding removed it was urgent that the repair works be carried out quickly to avoid further risk to the building. Emergency approval was therefore given by the Leader of the Council to Bluestone starting the works immediately.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that a Supplementary Estimate be made from unallocated Capital Reserves of £34,150.

Councillor Mrs D Bradley

## COUNCIL MEETING 22 JULY 2003

### REPORT OF COUNCILLOR MRS. BRADLEY – LEISURE, ARTS AND CULTURE

#### **Wellsprings Update**

Building work is progressing well on the Wellsprings site. Regular meetings between the Council, Symonds and Bluestone indicate that the new leisure centre will open to the public early in the New Year. The Wellsprings Centre Manager, James Curry (currently based at Blackbrook), is now in the process of re-establishing links with potential clubs, hirers and users and is beginning to put the centre programme together.

#### **Sports Service Best Value Review**

This is our major success story. Rising above hundreds of leisure inspections nationwide Taunton Deane's Sports Services have been judged Good with Excellent prospects for improvements. This is affirmation not only of our capable and dedicated staff but also of the new administration now running this council. This rating from Government's independent Best Value inspectors puts Taunton Deane in the top ten per cent of sports services in the country with few bettering the Council's achievement.

The inspectors visited all the Council's Leisure facilities over one week in May this year and concluded the Council provided a wide range of facilities and services, which are well used, with varied and complementary programmes and a generally good standard of presentation and cleanliness. They noted the service is provided at a relatively low operational cost, is well used and has high levels of customer satisfaction.

The three inspectors said the Council has excellent prospects for improvement for a number of reasons such as the Leisure services track record of improving services with many of the improvement plan targets exceeded in the first year. Most of the proposals in the improvement plan properly focus first on improving the Service for customers.

The Sports Service best value review covered leisure facilities management (Blackbrook Pavilion, Taunton Tennis Centre, Castle Sports Centre, St. James Street Baths, Station Road Pool, Vivary Golf Course and Wellington Sports Centre) and client services including sports development and an active lifestyles programme.

The Service employs 218 full and part-time staff and has a net budget of £1.38 million this financial year. The scope of the review did not include playing pitches or the use of grants. The Council plans to review these independently. This was the second part of the Council's leisure service to be reviewed. The first part, parks and amenities service review, was completed in January 2001 with that service winning the 'Good' rating with 'Promising' prospects for improvement.

The Government has placed a duty on local councils to deliver services to cost and quality standards by the most economic, efficient and effective means available. Best Value is a challenging framework designed to improve local services. Councils are required to assess their own performance and put in place measures to ensure continuous improvement in all of their services.

## **Leisure Trust Update**

Work towards the formation of the Leisure Trust continues to proceed and is placing demands on resources. In particular, the legal documentation and aspects of the lease agreements at Blackbrook and Wellsprings are placing pressure on the proposed implementation timetable. A full update will be presented to the Executive in August.

## **Playing Pitches Strategy**

This Strategy has now received its accreditation.

## **Wheel Sports**

We are working out how best to make provision for both BMX and skate board users bearing in mind the limited funds available to meet aspirations. I am fully aware that the Summer holidays are almost upon us.

## **Arts Plan 2003**

The arts have a cross cutting agenda, particularly addressing economic and environmental priorities of regeneration and sustainability. Delivery is in partnership with other districts and county councils and key strategic arts organisations, in particular The Brewhouse, Take Art! Somerset Dance, Action Track, Somerset Arts Week, Somerset Partnership of Arts in Education Development Agency (SPAEDA) and Equata/Disability Arts. We are also involved in exploring the potential for a Somerset Art Gallery with the Somerset Arts Gallery Trust

## **Pop and Proms in the Park**

Two successful and well-organised events took place in Vivary Park on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> July run by Performing Arts Management complete with firework displays. The only defect to note was the non-materialisation of the beer tent. From my conversations it would appear that this company is interested in building up a market to repeat these events. This is all in line with making a fuller and more varied use of this delightful community asset.

## **The Future**

My attendance at a recent ILAM Conference and also the Hammersmith and Fulham Beacon Council Open Day have driven home to me the hard fact that Councils are not going to be given any more money. Our job is to act as enablers for other organisations to draw down funds from the Community Fund, the Livability Fund, the new Somerset Community Foundation (£500 to £7,000 for the young disadvantaged) and other funds and trusts.

## **COUNCIL MEETING 22 JULY 2003**

### **REPORT OF COUNCILLOR BRYANT - COMMUNICATIONS**

I am pleased to include in my first report that the development of a 'communication strategy' for community services is well under way.

Effective internal and external communications is vital to the success of any organisation. During 2002 it was recognised that our communications were less than effective, this was a recurrent theme in a number of meetings with staff and key organisations with whom we work. As a result it was decided to pilot a methodology for the development and delivery of a communications strategy within Community Services with a view to using it to eventually produce a corporate communications strategy. The work started in March 2003 and a project plan is in place to deliver the strategy and three year action plan by the end of September. The work undertaken so far includes a communications audit and staff questionnaire. Members will be encouraged to give their comments in a questionnaire to be circulated in the next couple of months. This work supports Investors in People, the Comprehensive Performance Assessment, the work around developing a healthy workplace, as well as the environmental health and housing best value reviews.'

We will continue to place emphasis on factual reporting and promoting good news. Recent press coverage has highlighted many aspects of the Council's work and press releases along with the Weekly Bulletin and reports for meetings have accounted for these items being taken up and reported by the local media.

The next issue of Deane Dispatch will be delivered to homes in Taunton Deane by the end of this month. I am pleased to report that in this 'Year of the Disabled' that it will be available on audio tape contributing to the Council's aim to engage the 'hard to reach' groups. Deane Dispatch plays a vital part in our consultations with the public and we will again be seeking people's views on the shaping of the next year's budget and there will be a special issue in the autumn specifically to address the issue of consultation.

**GWYNETH BRYANT**



## **COUNCIL MEETING - 22 JULY 2003**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL** **COUNCILLOR N CAVILL - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PROPERTY** **AND TOURISM**

#### 1. Asset Management Plan 2003

The Executive have considered this Council's submission to the Government Office of the required data for 2002/03 for the Asset Management Plan.

We have also looked at progress made with the 2002 10-Point Action Plan and the 10-Point Action Plan for 2003.

The Review Board at its meeting on 12 June 2003 have also considered the full range of properties covered by the Asset Management Plan.

Consideration was given to the progress made with the 2002 Action Plan. Although it was not a Government requirement, a 10-Point Action Plan for 2003 had been set. Issues arising from last year's programme have been rolled forward for further action.

The full Plan, together with a covering report from the Director of Development is circulated to all members with these papers.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that the 2003 Action Plan be agreed.

#### 2. Redevelopment of Crescent Car Parking Site, Town Centre Regeneration/ Opportunities for Retail Growth in the Old Market Centre/Crescent Car Park Area

Following their investigations, Sovereign Land Limited have now concluded that because of its restricted size the Crescent Car Park site would not be viable to carry out the proposed Crescent Car Park Scheme.

The Council has a nil budget for 2002/03 with the understanding that the developer (Sovereign/Heritage) will reimburse the Council for any fees paid to C B Hillier Parker. To date a total of £38,000 has been spent and a reimbursement of £15,000 has been received from Sovereign Land Ltd leaving an outstanding balance of £23,000. It is also estimated that an additional cost of approximately £5-7,000 will be incurred regarding the employment of C B Hillier Parker to advise on commercial/viability matters for the last quarter of 2002/03. A Supplementary Estimate of £30,000 is required for fees paid to C B Hillier Parker.

The Vision for Taunton is that the Old Market Centre/Crescent Car Park area should function effectively as a major retail destination in the region. A study of the Old Market Centre and the Crescent Car Park wider area will

demonstrate the potential of this area to contribute significantly to the future vitality and viability of Taunton. However it is felt that, at this stage, not only would any scheme for redevelopment be fairly difficult to implement with significant parking disruption during construction, but a careful assessment of viability and the Borough Council's financial return from such a development is crucial.

Detailed consideration has been given by the Members' Steering Group to possible partnership arrangements/consulting arrangements for a feasibility study of the wider area. Terence O'Rourke were commencing production of an Urban Design Framework for the town centre and the master planning of key sites. It is considered that agreement should be sought with the Regional Development Agency, Terence O'Rourke and partners for the master planning of potential development areas on either side of the High Street. If this work was to progress in tandem with the existing programme/consultation arrangements, there is a tight timescale to reach agreement and it would be prudent to have a Supplementary Estimate available for potential master planning and for future consultancy fees to assess scheme viability/potential development partnerships.

The Executive feel that it will be helpful to have a Member Steering Group to oversee progress. The membership of the present Crescent Car Park Steering Group is well placed to fulfil this responsibility.

The revenue implications of the proposals are -

Outstanding C B Hillier Parking consulting fees	£30,000
Contribution to Terence O'Rourke for extending the master planning Urban Design Framework Brief	£25,000
Additional provision for future consultancy fees in respect of any scheme viability assessment/initial negotiations	£15,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£70,000</b>

A Supplementary Estimate in the sum of £70,000 will therefore be required.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that -

- (1) it be noted that the current car park scheme was not viable and should not be pursued at the present time;
- (2) opportunities for retail growth in the Old Market Centre/Crescent Car Park area be investigated and discussions commenced with significant landowners in the area;
- (3) agreement be sought with the Regional Development Agency, Terence O'Rourke and partners to extend the existing contract to secure master planning of the potential retail growth/redevelopment of the Old Market Centre/Crescent Car Park area;

- (4) a Supplementary Estimate of £70,000 be made to enable outstanding fees to be met and to enable matters to progress to assist town centre regeneration;
- (5) the existing Crescent Car Park Steering Group form a Steering Group to oversee progress in regenerating the Old Market Centre/Crescent Car Park area.

Councillor N Cavill

## **COUNCIL MEETING 22 JULY 2003**

### **REPORT OF COUNCILLOR CAVILL- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PROPERTY AND TOURISM**

#### Crescent Car Park

As you will all be aware by now, the Crescent Car park scheme has not been able to be worked up into a viable option. The area being considered now includes an area to the east of High Street. This area, along with Firepool and Tangier, is currently being assessed by Terence O'Rourke as part of their urban design framework study. The consultation is attracting a great deal of interest and comment from our key partners and developers.

#### Asset Management Plan

The previous AMP was rated as good. We are trying to build on this plan and improve to excellent. A great deal of money is required to maintain the Council's assets. The present budget enables us to do the essential work, but not other work to bring them up to the appropriate/desired standard. When the Somerset Influence Panel was consulted, they rated as their #1 priority the maintenance of the TDBC properties. Although we have a 10-point action plan, I believe that the most challenging targets to achieve will be: the compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act,

employment sites to serve areas of need in Taunton North and East, Chelston, and rural areas.

and of course, (as mentioned), the level of budget provisions for future maintenance.

#### Best value review of economic and community regeneration

I commend to you the recently produced paper presented to the Community Leadership Panel. If we adopt option 1, over the next 3 – 5 years, in partnership with others, we have the opportunity to create and safeguard 200 jobs. At the same time Taunton's profile as a regional centre will be greatly enhanced.

#### Tone Mill Partnership

The Prince's Foundation is heading up this partnership, not just to safeguard the building and equipment of the wet finishing works, but also to make a viable scheme of most of that site. Fox Bros wish to bring the wet finishing processes back in house. Furthermore, they hope to develop the production process, for educational and tourism purposes. This will act as a catalyst for other activities on that site. The partnership will be a registered charity, and it is hoped that its charter will enable it to utilise its trading profits for its benefit.

**NORMAN P CAVILL**

**COUNCIL MEETING - 22 JULY 2003**

**RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL**  
**COUNCILLOR EDWARDS - ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

1. Supplementary Credit Approval - Air Quality Monitoring

Successful bids have been made for Supplementary Credit Approval (SCA) for:-

- (a) Action Planning in the sum of £16,000 and
- (b) replacement of Meteorological Station, £5,000.

The coincidental timing of so many air quality projects, each of which require very significant amounts of work, means that the development of the Action Plan for the Air Quality Management Areas cannot be undertaken from within existing staff resources. It is proposed therefore to employ the Air Quality Management Resource Centre at the University of the West of England to carry out a comprehensive review. They have considerable experience in this very specialised field and are highly regarded by the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

The success of future air quality projects will increasingly depend upon reliable and very local meteorological data. It is therefore important that the Council has access to and control of such data.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that the DEFRA offers of Supplementary Credit Approval be accepted in the sums of £16,000 and £5,000 for Air Quality Action Planning and for a replacement Meteorological Station respectively and that the General Fund Capital Programme for 2003/04 be amended accordingly.

Councillor M Edwards

## **COUNCIL MEETING 22 JULY 2003**

### **REPORT OF COUNCILLOR EDWARDS - ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

The portfolio that I am responsible for is very broad with many areas that have a direct impact on the lives of everyone that lives in Taunton Deane. I welcome the challenge and thank the new leader of the Council John Williams for entrusting me with this portfolio.

There are a number of challenges for the varying departments that sit within my portfolio. Initially there are three specific areas, which I am concentrating on:

Licensing  
the Licensing Bill

there are changes coming to licensing powers as a result of

- Councillors should be aware that with the changing responsibilities additional stresses will be on the Licensing department.
- expansion of Street Trading within Deane now as part of my portfolio in line with other licensing functions. This is a real opportunity to enhance the town centre and aim to bring more vibrancy and encourage the market town. As a first success I am delighted that the Farmers market has been extended to run every Thursday from the 14<sup>th</sup> August..

Litter/ Street Scene  
highlighted the following:

I requested a report go forward to Health and Leisure this

- Increase in Street Cleansing on Sundays
- Litter Hotline
- More communication with traders in particular fast food restaurants
- In addition we need to look carefully at fines for all littering in particular fly tipping and the enforcement of these fines.

Noise

I have recently requested that a report be prepared with regard the issue of noise and the Council responsibilities. This will be prepared and discussed by the Health and Leisure panel later in the year. I will be meeting with officers in due course to discuss my ideas in relation to this issue.

Cornhill, Wellington

It came to the attention of the new Executive that there was a very specific problem in Cornhill, Wellington after many years of neglect and inaction. I was tasked with improving the Street Scene with regard litter, street cleansing and the clearance of weeds, moss and algae. I am very satisfied that this first stage has been achieved and I will insist that we play our part within this area to make sure it is regularly cleaned and inspected.

Recycling

We will continue the work with regard recycling and discussions are taking place as to how we can best assess its success as I have expressed a concern that there is a drop in usage which is below my expected levels. This is being investigated and assessed.

I have been visiting as many individuals and departments as I have been able and I have found a great deal of talented, able and determined individuals. I look forward to working with them all in the coming months and years and thank all the officers for their assistance so far.

**MARK J EDWARDS**

## **COUNCIL MEETING 22 JULY 2003**

### **REPORT OF COUNCILLOR GARNER – HOUSING SERVICES**

May 1st 2003 and it was all change, it was with great pleasure that I was elected councillor for Fairwater and great pride that I was given the portfolio for housing. The next four years will be challenging however my overriding priority is, and always will be, the welfare of the people of Taunton Deane.

Already within my short term in office a number of decisions have been made, the most significant being authorisation to complete the refurbishment of the Priorswood Place complex in North Taunton. Good work and considerable monies had already been spent on refurbishing the front of the building however in order to complete the refurbishment of this significant local asset, authorisation was given to complete the refurbishment to the roof and rear of the building together with enhanced security.

On a smaller scale but no less significant was the decision to grant a three year rent free period to the Link Centre at Halcon in East Taunton. The Link centre provides an extremely useful amenity to the local community and is run on an entirely voluntary basis, my thanks go out to Steve and Sandy and all the other volunteers for their continued effort at "The Link"

Naturally other decisions have also been made but the two examples above represent some of the good points however there are some less enjoyable aspects including dealing with neighbour disputes and evictions, but its all part of the job.

Looking forward, I have highlighted three core values that I will be promoting for the people of Taunton Deane:

1. The provision of affordable homes
2. Enabling the elderly to remain in their own homes
3. Pursue right to buy

Naturally these core values are not to the exclusion of all others but I believe that they represent a common sense approach to supporting the welfare of the people of Taunton Deane through the promotion of choice and security of tenure.

In addition to delivery of the core values there are a number of Government initiatives that will have to be worked through with Officers, the Tenants Forum and the Housing Review Panel during future months. These include:

#### **Housing Stock – Decent Homes**

TDBC is required to complete a robust stock option appraisal by July 2005. We are required to demonstrate how we will bring all dwellings up to the decent homes standard. 924 houses currently fail the standard and others will fall into this category over time. Work is about to be commissioned to complete our appraisal by December 2003. Taunton Deane is in a good position as we have already completed the pre-requisites (housing needs survey, Council stock condition survey and private stock condition survey).



## Housing Stock – Stock Options

TDBC has a stock of approximately 6500 council houses. As with many other stock holding councils, the role of TDBC as landlord is under review and therefore a number of options are under review e.g. Housing Association, arms length company, PFI etc.

The stock option appraisal is a major task due for completion by April 2004.

Greg Garner

## **COUNCIL MEETING 22 JULY 2003**

### **REPORT OF COUNCILLOR HALL – RESOURCES**

#### **1 PERSONNEL**

There are a number of key issues affecting staff being actively pursued. We are working towards the appointment of a new Chief Executive, with interviews planned for the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> August.

A revised absence policy and procedures has been produced and will be considered by the Resources Review Panel on 24<sup>th</sup> July. I am confident that the adoption of these policies and procedures will lead to a reduction in staff absence.

Final preparations are being made for the Council's assessment in October for the Investors in People award.

#### **2 MEMBERS SERVICES**

In addition to the induction day for new councillors, training has been provided in Development Control, use of lap tops ethics and probity. A one-day workshop for newly elected councillors and training in dealing with the media (for Executive Councillors) has been provided.

A detailed report will go to the Resources Review Panel on 24<sup>th</sup> July, covering the facilities available to members and will look at how these may be improved. To make sure members are aware of the tools available to help them a booklet will be circulated shortly setting out the wide range of facilities.

Emerging technology continues to play a large part in making members more effective. I therefore intend to arrange for the Council to pay the monthly rental costs of Broadband, or suitable alternative, for all Executive members. Those Councillors themselves would meet installation costs, which is in line with the current arrangement for the installation of second telephone lines. The rental costs can be met from within existing budgets.

A report on the possible use of Broadband technology for all Councillors will go to a future meeting of the Corporate Resources Review Panel.

#### **3 FINANCIAL SERVICES UNIT**

The Financial Services Unit have been focussing on the closure of the Council's accounts for 2002/3 and with this completed the production of the Annual Statement of Accounts are before Council for approval tonight.

In addition the Unit is gearing up for the budget monitoring exercise, which is being undertaken now that we are 3 months into 2003/4. This information will be key in ascertaining our financial performance so far this year.

#### **4 REVENUE SERVICES UNIT**

The collection rates for Council Tax and NNDR are monitored monthly. To date we have been consistently ahead of target for each.

New external bailiffs have been recently appointed to recover Council Tax and NNDR arrears. Initial indications are that they are being very successful.

A new external debt collection agent has been appointed to collect some of the older sundry debt, but with limited success. This was expected because of the nature and age of the debts involved.

The Income, Rents and Control section are concentrating on improving the Direct Debit service by moving towards the implementation of 'paperless' Direct Debit. Once introduced this will enable us to take instructions over the telephone or via the Internet making the service far more accessible and flexible and lead to an increased take up of DD with beneficial effects on the Council's income.

#### **5 INFORMATION SYSTEMS UNIT**

A new performance management Intranet site will be launched on Monday. It will provide a central access point for all Performance Indicators monitored by TDBC.

We are negotiating with our telephone switch supplier to purchase outright the units at Deane House and Priory Depot. This will cost £3350 as opposed to the existing annual rental of £5600.

A new air conditioning unit is being purchased for the machine room, the current units are underpowered and we are seeing problems due to the hardware getting close to over heating in the warm weather we have experienced.

#### **6 BENEFITS SECTION**

Our first quarter performance for new and renewal claims puts us in the top quartile. Because of the transfer of change of circumstances to the Supporting People Team, our performance dipped on this BVPI. We expect to bring this back as the year progresses. Recruitment of extra staff recommended by the BV Plan is continuing. The Investigation Team is exceeding its target for sanctions under the SAFE scheme and a new anti fraud and prosecution strategy will be presented for Member approval at the RRP on 24<sup>th</sup> July, when a breakdown of targets and achievement will be given.

#### **8 SERVICE SUPPORT GROUP**

The main issues within the Service Support Unit are Somerset Direct (the impact on Reception and Switchboard), and the future of the Old Municipal Buildings, widening the use of GIS across all Units and preparation for internal restructuring.

**9 SOMERSET DIRECT**

By the time of this meeting members will have had an opportunity for briefing on this.

**TERRY HALL**

# **TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL MEETING: 22 JULY 2003**

**REPORT OF EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR JOANNA LEWIN-HARRIS**

## **COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR TAUNTON DEANE**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To recommend that Council adopts the Community Strategy for Taunton Deane (attached).

### **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Local Government Act 2000 placed a duty on councils to prepare a 'community strategy', establishing a long term vision and action plan to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area. Although the duty for preparing the strategy rests with local authorities, progress on important issues like reducing crime, improving people's health and developing a strong local economy, depends on forging links with partner agencies - pooling resources, knowledge and expertise. Government guidance therefore specified that community strategies should be developed and implemented by a 'local strategic partnership', comprising representatives of key public, private and voluntary sector bodies operating in the area.
- 2.2 As part of its response to the new duty placed upon it, the Council played a lead role in establishing the Taunton Deane Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) in June 2001. Responsibility for approving community strategies rests with LSPs, but Government Guidance on their preparation also requires that, following approval by an LSP, they are adopted by the local authorities in the area.

### **3. The Community Strategy for Taunton Deane**

- 3.1 The Community Strategy for Taunton Deane ("Our Place, Our Future) has been prepared and is attached as Appendix 'A'. This is a key document, establishing shared aspirations and priorities to improve people's quality of life in Taunton Deane, now and into the future.
- 3.2 It is important to emphasise that the Community Strategy is not a 'Council' strategy, but is a product the Taunton Deane LSP. However, as a key partner on the LSP with lead responsibility for delivering many of the commitments made in the Community Strategy, it is vital that the Council makes a full contribution and is adopts of the final document. A full list of all agencies represented on the LSP can be found in the attached document.
- 3.3 Over recent months, the draft strategy has been subject to extensive consultation with colleagues within the Council as well as partner organisations. Council is

also reminded that the draft Strategy has received the close scrutiny of members at the following key stages:

- **3 June 2003** – The Community Leadership Review Panel provided comments on the draft Community Strategy. The report to the Panel outlined the resource implications and impact on the Council’s priorities of adopting the Strategy.
- **26 June 2003** – The draft Community Strategy was approved by the Taunton Deane Local Strategic Partnership, subject to a small number of amendments.
- **10 July 2003** (see *Weekly Bulletin*) – Executive Councillor Joanna Lewin-Harris decided to approve the conclusions reached by the Community Leadership Panel and Local Strategic Partnership, in respect of the Community Strategy. Further decided to recommend the Strategy to Full Council for adoption on 22 July 2003.

3.4 Council is advised that the attached document is being produced by the Graphics Team at Deane House and the final public version will incorporate photographs and a higher level of design than currently shown.

#### **4. Recommendation**

4.1 Council is **recommended** to adopt the Community Strategy for Taunton Deane, attached as Appendix ‘A’

#### **Contact:**

Brendan Cleere  
(01823) 356 350  
[b.cleere@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:b.cleere@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

'Our Place, Our Future'  
**A Draft**  
Community Strategy for Taunton Deane  
2003 - 2005

Produced by Taunton Deane Local Strategic Partnership

*Updated 08.07.03 v.1*

## Our Place, Our Future – A Community Strategy for Taunton Deane - 2003-2005

### Why a Community Strategy?

This is the first Community Strategy for Taunton Deane. It aims to show how people, communities and organisations will work together to improve quality of life for all living, working and visiting the area, now and in the future. The focus of this Strategy is not on any particular organisation but on the needs and priorities of the people and communities of Taunton Deane.

This Strategy has been developed by working with local people and communities and has been produced by a partnership of organisations called the **Taunton Deane Local Strategic Partnership** (LSP). The Partnership includes representatives from the following public, private and voluntary organisations:

Avon and Somerset Constabulary	(ASC)	Community Council for Somerset	(CCS)
Connexions	(Cxls)	Environment Agency	(EA)
Government Office for the South West	(GOSW)	Probation Service (Avon and Somerset)	(PS)
Somerset Association of Local Councils	(SALC)	Somerset College of Arts and Technology	(SCAT)
Somerset County Council	(SCC)	South West England Regional Development Agency	(SWERDA)
Taunton Chamber of Commerce	(TCC)	Taunton Deane Borough Council	(TDBC)
Taunton Deane Council for Voluntary Service	(TDCVS)	Taunton Deane Primary Care Trust	(TDPCT)
Taunton Deane Tenants' Forum	(TDTF)	Wellington Chamber of Commerce	(WCC)
Wiveliscombe Area Partnership	(WAP)	Somerset Learning and Skills Council	(LSC)

#### **For further information about this Strategy or the Local Strategic Partnership please contact:**

Community Initiatives Unit, Taunton Deane Borough Council, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton, TA1 1HE ☎: 01823 356481 or visit [www.tauntondeane.lsp.gov.uk](http://www.tauntondeane.lsp.gov.uk). **We would welcome your views or comments about this Strategy and our work in general.**



## **Our Place, Our Future – A Community Strategy for Taunton Deane 2003-2005**

### **Contents**

### **Page No.**

**Introduction** - A Vision for Taunton Deane

**Economy** - Improving people's livelihoods and job opportunities

**Transport and Access** - Delivering more accessible services and a better transport system

**Crime** - Developing safer communities

**Health** - Encouraging healthier lifestyles

**Environment** - Protecting and enhancing our environment

**Delivery** – Making the Strategy happen

**Key Partnerships**

**Key Strategies and Plans**

**Glossary of Terms**

## Introduction - A Vision for Taunton Deane

This first Community Strategy establishes our ambitions, priorities and actions to improve quality of life in Taunton Deane.

The Strategy has been prepared by:

- Bringing together the priorities of organisations providing services in Taunton Deane
- Consulting local residents and service users on a range of different topics and issues. Examples include: local authority budget setting, developing a 'Vision for Taunton', young people's stakeholders event and a range of service or issue based community consultations.
- Taking account of data about key environmental, social and economic trends in Taunton Deane. This information has been compiled as a series of fact sheets, available on our website [www.tauntondeane.lsp.gov.uk](http://www.tauntondeane.lsp.gov.uk).

**The overall aim of this Strategy is to improve the quality of life for people and communities in Taunton Deane, now and into the future.**

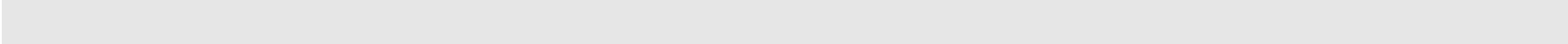
In working towards this aim we have established six priorities:

- **Economy** – Improving people's livelihoods and job opportunities
- **Transport and Access** – Delivering more accessible services and a better transport system
- **Crime** – Developing safer communities
- **Health** – Encouraging healthier lifestyles
- **Environment** – Protecting and enhancing our environment
- **Delivery** – Making this Strategy happen and keeping it under review

**Key Partnerships**, with a crucial role making progress on each of the above priorities, are highlighted throughout the document. The links between these partnerships and the LSP are also represented in the diagram towards the back of the document.

A series of objectives and targets have been set under each of these priorities, with supporting actions to show how these will be achieved in the years ahead. A **lead agency** from our Partnership has been assigned to each action, highlighted in brackets

throughout the document. The role of the lead agency will not be to 'do all of the work', but to co-ordinate progress among key partners and report achievements back to our Partnership.



## Working with Communities

To complement the approach taken to develop this Taunton Deane Community Strategy, we are also working with local parishes and interest groups to form six area based community plans. These will be used to further enrich this Strategy over a three year rolling programme of community planning activity. This has been established as follows:

<b>West Deane and Brendons</b>	<b>2002/2003</b>	<b>A Vision For Taunton</b>	<b>2002/2003</b>
<b>Wellington and Area</b>	<b>2003/2004</b>	<b>Blackdown Hills</b>	<b>2003/2004</b>
<b>Quantocks</b>	<b>2004/2005</b>	<b>The Levels</b>	<b>2004/2005</b>

The West Deane and Brendons Market and Coastal Towns Initiative (MCTI) community planning process has had the active involvement of 700 people, many of whom have been working together to see how best to tackle key issues affecting their communities. The Wiveliscombe Area Partnership and a Community Planning Steering Group oversee the process. A community strategy for the area has been endorsed by the LSP and local implementation plans are being established through a 'brokering' process.

A 'Vision for Taunton' was developed in 2002 by a special commission comprising of members of Taunton Deane and Somerset County Councils. The 'Vision Commission' took evidence from hundreds of local people and groups with an interest in Taunton's future role as the County Town of Somerset and one of eleven 'Principal Urban Areas' (PUAs) in the South West region. The Vision acts as a blueprint for the development of the Town over the next 25 years, heralding a series of exciting new developments and projects, which will ensure Taunton's success as a thriving sub-regional centre. A special 'Reference Group' has been established, reporting direct to the LSP, to oversee delivery of the Vision for Taunton and engage the wider community in its many projects.

Local issues and actions need to be considered within the context of the role Taunton Deane plays as part of Somerset and the South West Region. The actions contained within this Strategy and the local community plans have been developed with sensitivity to their impact on the wider geographical area.

As this Community Strategy evolves, we will ensure that we make a real difference to Taunton Deane's communities by influencing how partners work together and respond to local needs. We will let you know of our progress by reporting back on our website and in future publications.

If you would like to comment on any of the work outlined within this Strategy, or get involved with local community planning exercises, please register your views or interest on our web site, return the tear-off slip at the back of this document or contact us on the telephone number shown on the inside cover.

We welcome your views and input and look forward to continuing to working with you to improve the quality of life for all in Taunton Deane.

### **How you can get involved in community planning and community development**

- For general information about what is happening in your local area please call the Community Initiatives Unit, Taunton Deane Borough Council ☎: 01823 356596 or visit [www.tauntondeane.lsp.gov.uk](http://www.tauntondeane.lsp.gov.uk)
- In the West Deane or Brendons please contact the Community Agent, Wiveliscombe Area Partnership, Wiveliscombe House ☎: 01984 624777
- In the Blackdown Hills please phone the Community Planning Officer ☎: 01823 680681 where you can find out about forthcoming consultation events
- Find out if your community is carrying out a Village/Parish/Town appraisal. For further information contact Community Council for Somerset ☎: 01823 331222
- Contact Taunton Deane Council for Voluntary Service ☎: 01823 284470 to get information about volunteering opportunities and voluntary groups in your area – including practical support and advice on how to set up a local group or help developing an existing voluntary service
- Contact your local parish, town or borough Councillor to express your views or find out about ways to get involved in your area for more information call Deane House ☎ 01823 356555
- Make your views heard by getting involved in: Somerset Influence Panel, Somerset Diversity Panel, Your Shout, Taunton Deane Tenants Forum, Area Youth Forums or the Youth Parliament; contact Taunton Deane Borough Council ☎ 01823 356596
- Apply for a community chest grant for your local project ☎ 01823 702786
- Get advice about developing a Social Enterprise ☎ 01823 355611

## **Economy – Improving people’s livelihoods and job opportunities**

### **Key Partnership: Taunton Deane Economic Partnership**

Taunton Deane has a population of 102,300 residents, based in an area of 178 square miles. The main centres of population are Taunton, Wellington, Wiveliscombe and Bishops Lydeard, with many smaller villages and hamlets throughout the Borough.

Taunton Deane is generally prosperous, with relatively low levels of unemployment. However, the area does suffer from lower rates of pay and relatively high house prices. Social deprivation is not widespread within the Borough, although there are significant pockets of greater need in parts of Taunton itself. There are also issues of need arising from rural isolation across Taunton Deane.

The local economy is dominated by service industries, light industry, distribution and tourism. Large companies are under-represented and rates of new business start-up are below regional and national averages. One of the main pressures in the economy is the lack of strategic sites for new development and serviced employment sites.

The economy benefits from Taunton Deane’s excellent strategic location. The M5 passes through the Borough, providing swift links to London, the Midlands, South Wales and further into the South West. The Borough also has good rail links to these areas.

### **Objectives and Actions**

#### **Improving the vitality of Taunton Deane’s towns and rural communities**

- Ensure the delivery of the “Vision for Taunton” - developing Taunton as a thriving sub-regional centre in the South West (TDBC)
- Develop the use of Taunton’s Castle Green area to reflect a landmark public square, with regular markets and special events (TDBC)
- Promote Taunton as a natural centre for Regional Governance (TDBC)
- Widen the range of job opportunities to reflect growing areas of the local economy (TDBC)
- Identify options and the benefits of locating an Agricultural Business Centre near the M5 in Taunton Deane (TDBC)

- Redevelop key sites in Wellington and Wiveliscombe for housing and employment as detailed within the Local Plan (TDBC)
- Invest in community, leisure, and cultural facilities and in public open spaces to benefit local communities and attract businesses to relocate here (TDBC)
- Make better use of the river and canal network in Taunton (TDBC)
- Promote a more diverse economy, better able to withstand any economic downturns (TDBC)
- Support the development of Taunton Deane's Industrial Sector (TDBC)

**Increase tourist visitor expenditure in Taunton Deane (per annum) by:**

- Further developing the Welcome Host Awards and Green Tourism Award for tourist providers across the area (TDBC)
- Improving the availability of an out of hours information service for visitors to the area (SCC)
- Improving the range and quality of visitor and local attractions (TDBC)
- Establishing a main-line link to West Somerset heritage railway (SCC)
- Promote Taunton's unique, distinctive identity and heritage (TDBC)

**Increase new business start-ups and enable the retention and expansion of existing businesses by:**

- Supporting farming and land based industries through the Somerset Agricultural Advisory Service (TDBC)
- Providing sites and infrastructure to encourage continued growth of the Taunton Deane economy (TDBC)
- Developing a strategic employment site close to the M5, promoting Taunton Deane as a key centre for regional development (TDBC)
- Promoting the purchase of local produce through Somerset Foodlinks projects (SCC)
- Expanding availability of Broadband, helping businesses to remain competitive by taking advantage of information technology (SCC)
- Maintaining and developing business support through the Somerset Business start up programme and the Business Chest grant programme (SCC)

## **Promote and support opportunities to improve people's livelihoods**

### **Increasing the proportion of working age people in employment by:**

- Encouraging employers to recruit local people and to commit themselves to workforce development (LSC)
- Maintaining and expanding provision of good quality play schemes, after school clubs and childcare that supports parents' working patterns (SCC)

### **Promote opportunities for raising skills and improve educational attainment by:**

- Improving access to learning at all levels and for every stage of life (LSC)
- Improve access to university courses through local providers (LSC)
- Promoting the benefits of learning LSC)

## **Tackling disadvantage**

### **Increase support and investment for areas of greatest need within Taunton Deane by:**

- Supporting Taunton East Development Trust (SCC)
- Supporting North Taunton Partnership to implement the regeneration programme for the area (TDBC)
- Ensuring that local areas of need within Taunton have the capacity to shape their own future and benefit from the wider implementation of the 'Vision' for the Town (TDBC)

### **Overcome barriers to employment caused through rural isolation by:**

- Working with rural communities to identify issues and relevant local solutions through Communities First in Rural Somerset, Rural Renaissance and Market and Coastal Towns Initiative (TDBC)

### **Improve access to learning, particularly for those disadvantaged geographically or socially by:**

- Implementing the pilot North Taunton Community Participation Project to overcome barriers to informal and formal learning opportunities (TDBC)
- Supporting families with children under four to access learning opportunities through the Taunton Sure Start Programme (SCC)
- Ensuring that key learning providers use venues that meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (Public authorities, LSC)
- Supporting holiday activity schemes for young people (TDBC)



**Reduce the number of school days where children and young people are excluded by 10% by:**

- Developing individual learning plans and pastoral support programmes (SCC)
- Introducing mentoring schemes for young people at risk of being excluded from school (SCC)

**Reduce the Percentage of young people aged 16-18 years who are not in education or training by 10% by 2006**

(Cxns)

**How you can get involved**

- Buy products from local businesses, producers and use local contractors through using the local and District Wide Business Directories – available from Taunton Deane Borough Council ☎: 01823 356485
- If you are starting your own business, consider accessing a Rural Somerset Business Chest Grant. Contact Business Link ☎: 08457 211112
- If you are a business looking to relocate to Taunton Deane, pick up an Inward Investment CD Rom Presentation from Taunton Deane Borough Council
- If you are a young person seeking employment or training but have travel problems, see if the Somerset Rural Youth Project Moped scheme can help get you on the road ☎: 01278 722100 or Email: moped@sryp.org.uk
- If you are a local food producer get in touch with Somerset Food Links for advice and support ☎: 01458 274485
- Enrol on a course at your local college or outreach centre
- Volunteer to become a school governor
- Become a Student Mentor and motivate a young learner to achieve their potential. Contact Education Business Partnership ☎: (01823) 320 331
- Visit the museum or library and take advantage of the opportunities they offer for learning
- If you are a young person seeking career and training advice contact Connexions service ☎: 01823 321212
- Contact the Volunteer Bureau at Taunton Deane C.V.S to explore how you can gain new skills and experience through a range of volunteering opportunities

## **Transport and Access – Delivering more accessible services and a better transport system**

**Key Partnerships:**

- Accident Prevention Forum**
- Rural Transport Partnership**
- SomersetOnline**
- Transport Planning Conference**

Ensuring that services and facilities are accessible to all people is a challenge for all service providers. In Taunton Deane we are aware that there are a number of factors that can have an impact on the convenience of the services and facilities that are on offer – factors such as where you live, your work patterns or your individual requirements, such as a disability, family commitments or if English is not your first language. To meet these challenges we need to find better ways to meet the range of needs.

A better transport system, offering a variety of transport choices, will improve quality of life in a number of ways. These include improved health and fitness, greater road safety; less congestion and traffic related pollution, greater independence and improved access to services.

### **Objectives and Actions**

#### **[Develop more accessible services and facilities](#)**

##### **Increase the ways that people can access information, services and facilities by:**

- Promoting the 'SomersetOnline' Project in accordance with the National e-government strategy, enabling electronic access to information and services (SCC)

- Promoting the delivery of services via the telephone through Somerset Direct, Care Direct, NHS Direct and Job Centre Plus (Public Authorities/Agencies)
- Ensuring that public facilities are accessible for disabled people (Public Authorities/Agencies)
- Ensuring that information and services are appropriate and suitable for individual requirements and offered in alternative formats (Public Authorities/Agencies)
- Promoting equality of opportunity for all through the development and implementation of Equality Plans and Race Equality Schemes (Public Authorities/Agencies)

### **Improve road safety**

#### **Reduce the death rate in road accidents involving children and young people by:**

- Supporting the 'Roadrunners' programme to reduce road accidents in young people (ASC)
- Promoting and supporting the 'Safe Routes to School' initiative (SCC)

#### **Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on the roads of Taunton Deane by:**

- Supporting the Safety Camera partnership to encourage drivers to keep to the speed limit (ASC)
- Encouraging people returning to motorcycling to participate in the motorcycle training programmes (ASC)
- Promoting the use of cycle routes (SCC)

### **Addressing local traffic problems**

- Explore opportunities to improve motorway capacity and connections (SCC)
- Working towards upgrading regional connections (A358) and linkages to M5 (SCC)
- Implement a package of measures to improve Taunton's transport infrastructure, including an inner relief road, Park and Ride sites and a new bridge over the railway line at Silk Mills, Taunton (SCC)
- Implement the Wellington Transport Strategy, including building of a new relief road as part of the Longforth Farm development (SCC)
- Introduce effective bus, coach and rail interchange at Taunton Station site connecting to the town centre, with similar provision across Taunton Deane as set out in the Local Transport Plan(SCC)
- Explore options to improve rail links to London (SCC)

- Improve information on parking facilities (TDBC)
- Improving the condition of roads and footpaths in Taunton Deane (SCC/TDBC)
- Encourage all large employers to have Employee Travel Plans (SCC)
- Increase the levels of walking and cycling to work (SCC)
- Support the development of the local cycle route network (SCC)

### **Tackling disadvantage**

- Supporting the development of community car/transport schemes in rural communities (SCC)
- Encouraging take up of concessionary travel passes (TDBC)
- Promoting and supporting the Rural Youth Project moped loan scheme for young people (SCC)

#### **How you can get involved:**

- Support your local shops and facilities
- Develop a workplace Car Share Scheme. Contact the Somerset County Council for advice or support ☎: 01823 355598
- Set up an Employee Travel Plan at your workplace
- Use public transport whenever possible
- Walk or cycle to work or school to improve your health and reduce traffic congestion (The majority of road trips are less than two miles)
- If you are a young person seeking employment or training but have travel problems see if Somerset Rural Youth Project Moped Scheme can help get you on the road ☎: 01278 722100 or Email: [mopeds@sryp.org.uk](mailto:mopeds@sryp.org.uk)
- Support Taunton Deane Community Transport Scheme
- If you have a particular problem accessing a service or facility contact the agency concerned so we can see how we can help

## Crime – Developing Safer Communities

### Key Partnership: Taunton Deane Crime and Disorder Partnership

Taunton Deane is a safe place to live, but to ensure that we all feel secure from the effects of crime and anti-social behaviour we need to work together across organisations and communities. The Taunton Deane Crime and Disorder Partnership works to make sure that we can all make a real contribution towards helping to combat crime and tackle the causes. Work across Taunton Deane is informed by both National and local priorities and targets as well as by public opinion and concerns. The work programme includes tackling issues such as drugs, alcohol and disorder, domestic and public violence, anti-social behaviour, burglary and retail crime, vehicle crime and hate crime.

#### Targets and Actions

##### Reduce crime and disorder

##### **Reduce the number of youth offenders by 7% by 2006 by:**

- Working with young people so that they take responsibility and make reparations for offences (SCC)
- Training partnership agencies working with young people to deliver restorative justice (SCC)

##### **Increase the participation of problem drug mis-users (including prisoners) in drug treatment programmes by 66% by 2005 by:**

- Expanding Drugs Treatment Testing Orders to target prolific offenders (Drug Action Team – reported by SCC)
- Continue to deliver drug rehabilitation programmes (Drug Action Team – reported by SCC)

**Reduce the number of assault victims receiving hospital treatment by 10% by 2005 by:**

- Banning those responsible for repeated drug and alcohol related offences from Taunton Town Centre (ASC)

**Reduce the number of victims experiencing repeat domestic violence 4 or more times by 10% by 2005 by:**

- Securing funding to pilot a unified county wide resource centre for Domestic Abuse (SCC)

**Reduce domestic burglary by 14% each year per 1,000 households by 2005 by:**

- Promoting the Safe and Secure and Bobby Van schemes to eligible residents (TDBC/ASC)

**Increase the number of shop theft detections by 5% by 2005 by:**

- Maintaining and introducing CCTV coverage in areas of most need (TDBC)

**Reduce incidents of vehicle crime by 5% by 2005 by:**

- Implementing the Vulnerable Vehicle scheme across Taunton Deane (ASC)

**Reducing the fear of crime**

- Installing door entry systems on Council property designed for the elderly (TDBC)
- Seeking to secure a future for parish and neighbourhood warden schemes in Taunton Deane (TDBC)
- Working to 'design out' crime in all new developments through appropriate planning (TDBC)

**Improve people's confidence about going out at night by 10% by:**

- Increasing the number of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes (ASC)
- Investigate expansion of CCTV across Taunton Deane (TDBC)

- Introduction of 'Clubsafe' initiative across the area to improve the safety of club-goers (ASC)

### **Tackling disadvantage**

- Identifying neighbourhoods where crime levels are high and working with residents to reduce crime (ASC)
- Assisting drug users who are undertaking treatment to access leisure facilities (PCT)
- Providing targeted programmes of sporting activities for young people at risk of offending (TDBC)
- Supporting learning opportunities for sufferers of violence or abuse (SCC)

#### **How you can get involved:**

- If you see a crime in progress dial 999 and ask for the Police
- Report crime and suspicious incidents confidentially: Crimestoppers ☎: 0800 555 111
- If you have any concerns or ideas about tackling crime and disorder in your community, contact your Parish Wardens ☎: 01823 430858 **or** contact your Neighbourhood Wardens ☎: 01823 324081
- If you are experiencing domestic abuse contact Domestic Abuse free phone service for free confidential support and advice ☎: 0800 69 49 999 (this number won't appear on your phone bill)
- For information on Neighbourhood Watch Schemes contact your local Police Station
- Visit the Avon & Somerset Constabulary website at [www.avonandsomerset.police.uk](http://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk) for information on crime reduction, or details on how to become a special constable
- For ideas on crime prevention visit the website at [www.crimereduction.gov.uk](http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk)
- For copies of the Crime and Disorder Strategy detailing a full range of actions for the area please contact the Community Safety Officer, Taunton Deane Borough Council ☎: 01823 356411)





## Health – Encouraging Healthier Lifestyles

### **Key Partnerships: Taunton Deane Public Health Network Voluntary Sector Network**

In general, people in Taunton Deane experience relatively good health. However, there are key areas of improvement - where greater effort is required to ensure that opportunities to enjoy good health are enjoyed by everyone, particularly those who suffer disadvantages arising from low income, rural isolation or other individual needs.

Many factors influence people's health and well-being. These include lifestyle factors such as diet, access to social and community facilities, income, living and working conditions, housing conditions, access to health care, education, leisure or cultural activities and the local environment. In Taunton Deane we are particularly keen to tackle those issues that cause poorer health among certain groups in our area.

#### **Targets and Actions:**

##### **Improving health**

##### **Reduce deaths from heart disease by two fifths and deaths from cancer by one fifth by 2010**

- Helping people to stop smoking through the Smoking Advice Service (PCT)
- Encouraging people to have a healthy diet through the 'Five-A-Day' initiative (PCT)
- Ensuring that anyone suspected of having cancer is seen by a specialist within two weeks (PCT)

##### **Reduce mental illness and suicide by one fifth by 2010**

- Improving access to community mental health and social care services (PCT/SCC)

##### **Improve the health of older people by:**

- Developing a PROGRESS project, to encourage older people's participation in physical exercise and reduce falls (PCT)
- Supporting the Age Concern Somerset Safe and Secure scheme to reduce accidents in the home (Public Authorities/Voluntary Agencies)

**Promote independence by helping older people to live in their own home and receive appropriate support by:**

- Providing intermediate care when leaving hospital (PCT) and appropriate home support (SCC)
- Supporting carers who are elderly to have a break (SCC)
- Expanding Extra Care Housing as a replacement for some residential care (SCC)
- Introducing a 'Care and Repair Agency' for Taunton Deane, offering practical help and advice to older and disabled people (TDBC)

**Reduce the teenage pregnancy rate amongst women under 18 by 50% by 2010 by:**

- Implementing the actions contained within the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy (PCT)

**Promoting healthy lifestyles**

- Developing a Taunton Deane Public Health Strategy and Network by 2004 (PCT)

**Reduce the number of accidental deaths and injuries as a result of fire in dwellings by:**

- Promoting the installation of smoke detectors and the regular changing of batteries in domestic premises (TDBC)
- Encouraging the installation of domestic sprinklers in new housing developments and existing houses of multiple occupation (TDBC)

**Encourage involvement in culture, leisure and the arts by:**

- Ensuring there is adequate provision of and accessibility to recreational facilities, including local parks, children's play areas, sports facilities and playing fields, to meet people's needs (TDBC)
- Exploring the options within Taunton to provide a conference centre, auditorium, hotel and new museum and heritage facility (TDBC)
- Encouraging involvement in physical activity and use of leisure services through a range of initiatives such as 'Proactive' Physical Activity Referral scheme, Cardiac Rehabilitation programmes, 'Flexercise' Scheme, Active Retirement programmes (TDBC)
- Completing the new Wellsprings Leisure Centre project during 2003 (TDBC)
- Encouraging the development of Somerset County Cricket Club to become a Test Match venue and centre for training (TDBC)

- Encouraging enjoyment of and participation in the arts through a range of organisations such as The Brewhouse, Take Art!, Somerset Film and Video and Action Track (TDBC)
- Implementing the Arts and Disability Action Plan (TDBC)
- Developing a public arts strategy (TDBC)

**Encourage voluntary sector development and volunteering opportunities**

- Develop a voluntary and public agency 'Compact' to support collaborative working (SCC/Voluntary Sector Network)
- Promote the value of volunteering within Taunton Deane communities (TDCVS)
- Support the development of volunteering opportunities (TDCVS)

**Tackling disadvantage**

**Reduce Child Poverty by 5% by March 2005 in areas of greatest need by:**

- Contributing to the implementation of the Sure Start Taunton programme of services and facilities for 0-4 year olds and their families (SCC)

**Reduce the level of homelessness by:**

- Implementing the 'Planning out Homelessness' strategy to alleviate homelessness and significantly reduce the need to resort to Bed and Breakfast accommodation particularly for families (TDBC)

**Increase the provision of affordable housing by:**

- Developing a range of new build affordable accommodation through the Quantocks Housing Partnership (TDBC)
- Seeking provision of an element of affordable housing within appropriate new housing development, as proposed in the Taunton Deane Local Plan (TDBC)

**Ensure that people with disabilities that need adaptations in their homes have access to assistance as appropriate by:**

- Continuing to provide grants for adapting homes (TDBC)

**Improve the quality of care and support for vulnerable people in the community by:**

- Developing the Supporting People Programme, which promotes housing related support services (SCC)

**Reduce Fuel Poverty in vulnerable households in Taunton Deane by 2010 by:**

- Targeting energy efficiency improvement grants to those living in fuel poverty (TDBC)

**Enhancing access to leisure facilities and activities by:**

- Increasing sports and leisure provision for people with disabilities (TDBC)
- Promoting take up of leisure concessionary schemes for people on low incomes (TDBC)

**How you can get involved:**

- Take regular exercise or try something new by calling in at your local leisure centre
- Ensure that you are eating a balanced diet including five portions of fruit and vegetables per day
- If you are trying to give up smoking contact your GP or the Smoking Advice service ☎: 01823 323808 for help and support
- If you are a parent or carer of children under the age of 4 years and live in the Taunton Sure Start Area, see how you can get involved by contacting Sure Start Taunton ☎:01823 322124
- If you are a carer contact Somerset Carers Project for help and support ☎: 01278 437200
- Contact Taunton Deane C.V.S ☎ 01823 284470 for information on health focused voluntary organisations and self help groups or opportunities to volunteer within your community
- Checking your smoke alarm battery every week will ensure your safety
- Support and get involved your local arts events
- For more information about the Disability Facilities Grant for household adaptations ☎ 01823 356443 or Social Services ☎ 01823 338781
- To find out if a energy efficiency improvement grant could help you please contact ☎ 01823 356383
- To check if you qualify for a concessionary leisure pass pick up a form from your local leisure centre

## Environment – Protecting and Enhancing our Environment

Taunton Deane is situated in an attractive part of rural Somerset, surrounded by areas of outstanding natural beauty – the Quantock Hills to the north, Blackdown Hills to the south, Somerset Levels to the east and Exmoor and the Brendon Hills to the west.

We recognise that protecting and enhancing our unique natural and built environment is central to maintaining the quality of life enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. Promoting lifestyles and forms of development which minimise environmental damage, both locally and further afield, will ensure that Taunton Deane continues to prosper for generations to come.

**Key Partnerships:**        **Somerset Waste Partnership**  
                                     **Sustainable Somerset Forum**

### Protecting and enhancing our environment

- Supporting the development and delivery of Areas of Outstanding Beauty management plans (SCC)
- Developing and delivering a Green Spaces Strategy for the Borough (TDBC)
- Protecting the countryside from inappropriate development through the planning process (TDBC)
- Promoting the highest standards of design, including landscaping, in new development, public spaces and buildings (TDBC)
- Promoting the inclusion of public art in environmentally sensitive public space designs (TDBC)
- Implementing the Bio-diversity Action Plan – conserving Taunton Deane’s natural habitats, wildlife and plant species (TDBC)
- Promoting the planting of a wide variety of both native and exotic tree species, incorporating the concept of Taunton as the ‘Tree Town of the South West’ (TDBC)
- Monitoring delivery of the Nature Conservation Strategy for Taunton Deane (TDBC)
- Maintaining street cleanliness throughout Taunton Deane (TDBC)
- Using robust enforcement together with information from the public to deter polluters in order to keep compliance with river quality objectives to 92% or better. (E A)

- Campaigning to improve care of the environment in order to achieve a 12% reduction in pollution incidents based on figures for 2003 (EA)

**Reduce levels of fly-tipping to 60% of 2003 levels by 2007 (EA).**

**Ensure that national air quality objectives are achieved by:**

- Working in partnership to maintain and improve local air quality in relation to traffic based pollution (TDBC)

**Reduce the impact of flooding by:**

- Monitoring flood alleviation measures for Norton Fitzwarren and other areas at risk of flooding in Taunton Deane (EA)
- Providing grant support for households to undertake small-scale flood alleviation measures (TDBC)
- Implementing the River Parrett Catchment Plan (EA)

**Improve Parks and countryside management by:**

- Protecting public open spaces and investing in their quality and accessibility (TDBC)
- Seeking to create new areas of public open space and to designate local nature reserves (TDBC)
- Promote the Parish Tree Planting Scheme (TDBC)

**Promoting sustainable lifestyles**

**Increase the household waste recycling rate to 30% by 2005/06 by:**

- Encouraging 38,500 households to use the kerbside recycling collection and organic waste collection service (TDBC)
- Encouraging households where kerbside collections are not possible to access drop-in sites across the area (TDBC)
- Promoting waste reduction, reuse and recycling within households (TDBC)

**Promote the use of renewable energy by:**

- Encouraging take up of the national Clear Skies Initiative grant scheme, which support homeowners and community/public organisations to install renewable energy technology (TDBC)
- Supporting the design and construction of buildings to be energy efficient, and the use of sustainable construction techniques and materials (TDBC)

- Supporting exploration of renewable energy sources and the setting and attainment of realistic targets for use of renewable energy (SCC)

**Tackling disadvantage:**

To improve access to public open spaces and local nature reserves for disabled people (TDBC)

**How you can get involved:**

- Volunteer locally to improve the quality of your local environment for further information contact Taunton Deane C.V.S ☎ 01823 284470 or Somerset Wildlife Trust ☎ 01823 451587
- Apply for a small Environmental Scheme grant to start a project in your area ☎ 01823 356596
- To purchase a compost bin or water butt for your home contact Original Organics ☎ 01884 841515
- If you are at risk from flooding, find out what action you should take from the Environment Agency ☎ 0845 9 881188 For further information about the Clear Skies initiative visit [www.clear-skies.org](http://www.clear-skies.org)

## **Delivery – Making the Strategy Happen**

### **2003 and Beyond**

This first Community Strategy for Taunton Deane is an 'umbrella' document. It aims to establish the priorities facing Taunton Deane in the years ahead and give a common sense of direction for the many detailed plans and activities to improve local quality of life throughout the area.

Making such an ambitious and wide-ranging Strategy happen will be challenging. Our approach is based on the following critical ingredients:

#### **Assigning Responsibilities**

- To avoid any confusion over who is responsible for delivery, a lead agency from our Partnership has been assigned to each action throughout the document. Their role will be to co-ordinate action among the many others involved and report progress back to the Partnership.

#### **Monitoring and Reporting Progress**

- A brief 'overview' of the whole Strategy will be held at each meeting of the Partnership, where partners identify particular problem issues and actions required to put things back on track are agreed.
- In addition, a more focused discussion will take place at each meeting, concentrating on one of our priorities (e.g. Economy, Crime). This will involve presentations from identified lead agencies, key partners and partnerships, (see 'map' overleaf outlining how the priority is being delivered. The discussion will identify any support required from the Partnership to ensure



the successful delivery of the Community Strategy. During the discussion, each agency on Partnership will be invited to report on what they are doing to deliver the priority.

- The Partnership will prepare an annual report for widespread circulation. This will set out our achievements and future targets. Regular progress reports will also be posted on our website and in the local media.

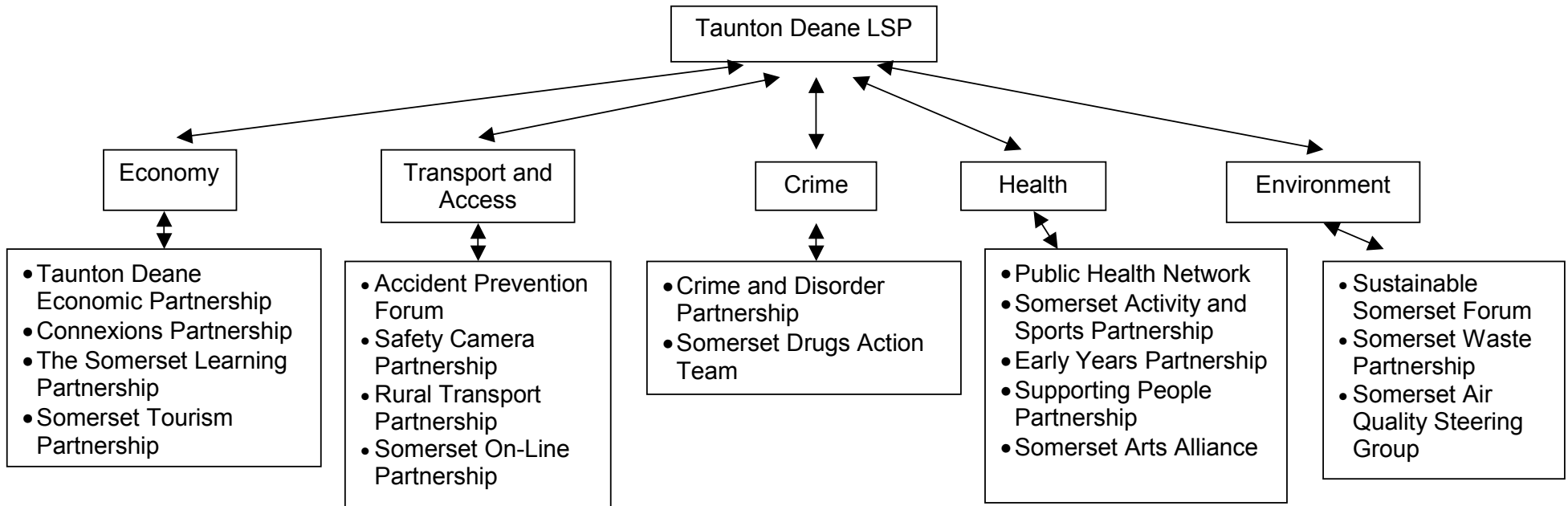
### **Ensuring evidence is up to date**

- We have produced a series of fact sheets on each of our priorities, also available on our website. These provide the evidence and trends upon which the objectives and targets within our Community Strategy are set. We will ensure that these fact sheets are kept up to date, in line with the latest available information.

### **Consultation and Regular Strategy Updates**

- This is our first Community Strategy and will act as a platform for further consultation on local needs and actions required to local quality of life.
- The Taunton Deane Community Strategy will be updated in 2005 and every three years thereafter. This will enable information from local area based work (e.g. Vision for Taunton) to feed into the wider Strategy for the area. It will also provide an opportunity to generate more specific and quantifiable targets to improve local quality of life where these do not exist at present.

## Working In Partnership to Improve Quality Of Life



### EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITY/AREA-BASED PARTNERSHIPS

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wellington Economic Partnership</li> <li>• Taunton Town Centre Partnership</li> <li>• Wiveliscombe Area Partnership</li> <li>• North Taunton Partnership</li> <li>• Taunton East Development Trust</li> <li>• Neighbourhood Watch Groups</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wellington Health and Well-Being Group</li> <li>• Levels and Moors Partnership</li> <li>• Blackdown Hills Rural Partnership</li> <li>• Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Taunton Deane Tenants Forum</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

## **Key Strategies and Plans**

There are many other key strategies and plans which influence quality of life in Taunton Deane. This page indicates a selection of key strategies in the area, organised under each of our priorities. It is not an exhaustive list.

### **Economy**

Connexions Strategy  
Taunton Town Centre Strategy  
Learning and Skills Council Strategy  
TDBC Tourism Strategy  
TDBC Economic Development Strategy  
Taunton Deane Local Plan  
South West Regional Economic Development Strategy  
A Vision for Taunton  
Local Public Service Agreement

### **Environment**

Somerset Household Waste Management Strategy  
Bio-Diversity Action Plan for Taunton Deane  
Home Energy Conservation Strategy  
Local Air Quality Strategy  
River Parrett Catchment Plan  
Local Public Service Agreement

### **Crime**

Crime & Disorder Strategy for Taunton Deane  
Somerset Drugs Action Team Strategy  
Avon & Somerset Constabulary Policing Plan  
Youth Justice Plan  
Local Public Service Agreement

**These strategies are available either on our website or by telephoning (01823) 356 481.**

### **Health**

Cultural Strategy  
Teenage Pregnancy Strategy  
Local Health Delivery Plan  
Accident Prevention Strategy  
Housing Strategy  
Homelessness Strategy  
Local Public Service Agreement

### **Transport & Access**

Somerset Local Transport Plan  
Parking Plan for Taunton  
Somerset Accident Prevention Strategy  
e-government strategies (SCC & TDBC)  
Race Equality Schemes (public authorities)  
Local Public Service Agreement

## **Glossary of Terms**

The following list explains some of some of the terms used in this document

### ***(To be completed)***

Affordable Housing	Regeneration
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	Renewable Energy
Bio-diversity	Rural Isolation
Bobby Van Scheme	Rural Renaissance
Broadband	Safe and Secure Scheme
Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)	Social Enterprise
Clubsafe	Somerset Direct
Communities First in Rural Somerset (CFIRS)	SomersetOnline
Compact	Somerset Food Links
Community Planning	Supporting People
Community Strategy	Sure Start
Concessionary Travel	Sustainable Lifestyles/Development
Connexions	Transport Infrastructure
Disability Discrimination	Village Appraisal
Domestic Violence & Abuse	Vision for Taunton
e-government	Vulnerable Vehicle Scheme
Employee Travel Plan	
Fuel Poverty	
Local Strategic Partnership	
Market and Coastal Towns Initiative (MCTI)	
Neighbourhood Wardens	
Parish Tree Planting Scheme	
Parish Wardens	
Principal Urban Area	
Recycling	

## **COUNCIL MEETING 22 JULY 2003**

### **REPORT OF COUNCILLOR MRS. LEWIN-HARRIS – COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP**

#### Community Planning

The draft Taunton Deane Community Strategy “our Place our Future” was agreed at the meeting of the Local Strategic Partnership in June and is before you as a separate agenda item with a recommendation that it be adopted by this Council.

The Community Strategy and Action Plan for West Deane and the Brendons was also presented to the same meeting of the Local Strategic Partnership. This Strategy was widely commended and endorsed by the Partnership. The wide ranging consultation process that has led to the production of this Strategy has been led by a community partnership with active support from officers of local agencies, with a locally appointed community agent to co-ordinate the process. The Strategy has been developed under six themes: Housing Health and Community, Economy, Sports Arts and Recreation, Children and Young People, Environment and Coordination and Communication and the action plan, which is divided into actions for “now” “soon (2004-05) and later (2006+) details the way forward.

Work is now underway on developing a Community Strategy for the Wellington Area and a stakeholders’ meeting is scheduled to take place on 22<sup>nd</sup> July.

#### Crime and Disorder Strategy

The first Update to the Taunton Deane Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy 2002 – 2005 is just about complete now. The action sheets have been updated and statistics to show whether we are on course to meet our targets have now been collated. The Update and introductory overall summary should be launched and ready for distribution by the middle of July.

#### Neighbourhood and Parish Wardens

I have been impressed by the value that both the local communities and the police now put on the work done by the Parish and Neighbourhood Wardens. Their uniformed presence on the streets reassures the local community and they have the time to build up relationships in that community and develop a fund of local knowledge which is most valuable. They are the eyes and ears, not only of the police but also of the local authority and I am convinced that they have a important role to play in helping to improve the quality of life in the communities they serve as well as reducing crime and fear of crime.

Future funding for these schemes is still under consideration, and we are working closely with partners in the Crime and Disorder Partnership to find the best way forward.

#### Local Democracy Week

Local Democracy Week this year is from 13 to 19 October and the theme is “Listening to Tomorrow’s Voters”. The idea is to focus on young people aged 13 – 19 with a view to holding events to attract their interest in local government. We have, in Taunton Deane, one of the youngest Councillors in the country and this gives us an ideal opportunity to engage with new

voters, and those who will soon be new voters, to explain to them what local government is about, why it is relevant to them and what difference they can make.

**JOANNA LEWIN-HARRIS**

**COUNCIL MEETING – 22 JULY 2003**

**APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE**  
**REPORT OF APPOINTMENTS SUB COMMITTEE**

The Appointments Sub Committee met on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2003 to begin the process of recruiting a new Chief Executive.

The remuneration package to be offered was reviewed in the light of the current job market. Independent advice was also received from the South West Regional Assembly.

The current remuneration package is £79,333 and includes a lease car allowance and private health insurance.

On the basis of the advice received the Sub Committee agreed to advertise the post with a remuneration package comprising a salary scale of £77,271 to £85,002. When a lease car and private health insurance is added to the salary, the package maximum would be £88,557.

A supplementary estimate from general fund reserves will be required to cover the increase in the remuneration package.

The Sub Committee took the decision as a matter of urgency within the guidelines of the Council's constitution.

Full Council is **RECOMMENDED** to endorse the decision.