



COUNCIL SUMMONS

YOU ARE REQUESTED TO ATTEND A MEETING OF THE TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL TO BE HELD IN THE PRINCIPAL COMMITTEE ROOM, THE DEANE HOUSE, BELVEDERE ROAD, TAUNTON ON TUESDAY 20TH APRIL 2004 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 Meeting of the Council held on 24 February 2004 (enclosed)
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) Corporate Review and Restructure (enclosed)
(b) Financial Strategy (enclosed)
8. Councillor Bishop (Planning Policy and Transportation)
Recommendation relating to Taunton Deane Local Plan - Proposed Modifications (enclosed)
9. Councillor Mrs. Bradley (Leisure, Arts and Culture)
10. Councillor Mrs. Bryant (Communications)
11. Councillor Cavill (Economic Development, Property and Tourism)
12. Councillor Edwards (Environmental Services) - TO FOLLOW
13. Councillor Garner (Housing Services)
14. Councillor Hall (Resources)
15. Councillor Mrs. Lewin-Harris (Community Leadership)

G P DYKE
Member Services Manager

The Deane House
Belvedere Road
TAUNTON
Somerset

TA1 1HE

13 April 2004

TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the Taunton Deane Borough Council held in the Principal Committee Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton on Tuesday 24 February 2004 at 6.30 pm.

Present: The Mayor (Councillor Govier)
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Mrs Allgrove)
Councillors Beaven, Bishop, Bone, Bowrah, Mrs Bradley, Mrs Bryant, N P Cavill, C Cluff, Mrs Cluff, Croad, Davies, Denington, Durdan, Edwards, Floyd, Garner, Gill, Hall, Henley, Hindley, House, Mrs Jones, Lees, Mrs Lewin-Harris, Lisgo, Meikle, Morrell, Mullins, Murphy, Paul, Ms Peppard, Phillips, Prior-Sankey, Ms Priscott, Slattery, Mrs Smith, Stone, Vail, Watson, Weston, Mrs Whitmarsh, Williams and Mrs Wilson

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 16 December 2003, copies having been sent to each member, were signed by the Mayor.

2. Apologies

Councillors Mrs Biscoe, Miss Cavill, Guerrier, Hayward, Mrs Hill, Mrs Nixon, Stuart-Thorn, Trollope and Wedderkopp.

3. Public Question Time

- a) Michael Cull of Oake Close, Oake, drew attention to recent press and media coverage of activities being carried out by him. He asked:
- “Given the current situation in Oake Close, Oake, does the Council intend to exercise any form of control over the tenants of its properties there or the primary/secondary businesses which some of them appear to be operating from Council premises in possible breach of their tenancy agreements?”
 - “Having intimated that the ownership of Oake Close pond would be transferred to myself almost a year ago, Council Officers now appear to have reneged on this allusion. Upon what basis has this decision been made? Is there any possibility that the Council and/or its Officers would either reconsider its position in this matter or consider a leasehold/rental agreement? If the Council and/or its Officers does not see fit to adopt either course of action, are they prepared to reimburse me for the cost of the preparatory work already undertaken?”

Councillor Garner replied that it was the Council’s policy to act if problems of nuisance were being caused. Complaints would be investigated thoroughly. If Mr Cull felt that the enjoyment of his property was being affected, he should submit his complaint in writing and it would be investigated.

With regard to the issue of Oake Pond, Councillor Garner replied that he would shortly be meeting officers to discuss this matter.

- b) Paul Partington referred to the recent decision to change the dates on which Council Tax instalments should be paid. He asked what was the total cost of sending out letters to all those who paid by direct debit informing them of the change in payment dates.

Councillor Williams replied that without prior notification of the question, he was unable to provide the necessary figures. He did point out, however, that the change in payments dates had saved a substantial addition to the Council Tax by the extra revenue it would generate.

4. John Williams - Housing Manager (Operations)

The Mayor (Councillor Govier) drew attention to the recent achievement of John Williams, Housing Manager, in rowing across the Atlantic. The Mayor, on behalf of the Council, congratulated John on this magnificent achievement.

5. Members Allowances

Mr David Baker OBE, Chair of the independent Members' Allowances Panel, reported that the Panel had completed its annual review of members' allowances.

A copy of its report and recommendations had been circulated to all Councillors. It had also been considered by the Resources Review Panel at its meeting on 13 November 2003.

The Panel submitted the following recommendations for consideration by the Council:

- a) The existing Members' Allowance Scheme be discontinued and replaced with the following scheme with effect from 1 April 2004.

	£
Basic Allowance (payable to all members)	3,312
Leader	9,315
Executive Councillors (8)	3,623
Chair, Planning Committee	3,105
Chair, Review Board	3,105
Chairs, Review Panels (5)	1,035

- b) (i) Travelling and subsistence allowances shall be payable to Councillors incurred by them in the necessary carrying out of those official activities as a Councillor as appear on the list of "Approved Duties" set out in the Appendix to the report.
- (ii) A new mileage rate of 40p per mile be paid with effect from 1 April 2004. The rate for motor cycles to be 24p per mile and bicycles to be 20p per mile.

(iii) Subsistence rates be as set out below:

	£
Breakfast	4.48
Lunch	6.17
Tea	2.43
Evening Meal	7.64

c) Payment for the care of Councillors' Dependent be in accordance with the following conditions:

(i) Councillors shall be reimbursed, up to a specified maximum limit, for costs actually incurred in providing care for any of the following who are at the time part of the claimant's household living with him/her and who would normally be looked after by him/her, whilst the claimant is undertaking an "approved duty".

- Children under the age of 14
- Elderly person (aged 60 and over)
- People with disabilities
- People with learning difficulties

(ii) In addition to living as part of the claimant's household, the dependent must be unable to be left unsupervised by the carer.

(iii) The carer must not be someone who also ordinarily lives with the claimant as part of the household.

(iv) For the purposes of (a) above:

- "Approved duty" would be a duty under the Council's scheme.
- The maximum hourly rate repayable should be consistent with the statutory minimum wage.

(v) The claimant must produce a receipt for payments he/she has made to the carer and must sign a certificate which, amongst other things, will state that the costs were properly and necessarily incurred in the course of, or to permit him/her undertaking his/her duties as a Councillor.

(d) (i) No advice on a level of participation allowance for Parish Councillors be offered by the Panel until a formal request be received from a Parish Council.

(ii) Allowances for travelling and subsistence be identical to those payable to Borough Councillors and the same level of such allowances should apply for all Parishes throughout Taunton Deane.

- (iii) Parish Councillors be permitted to seek the reimbursement of the actual cost of items used for Parish Council business such as computer consumables, or a nominal sum, provided such payments were approved by the Parish Council.
- (e) (i) That all members of the Council be entitled to membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme.
- (ii) Both the basic and special responsibility allowance be treated as amounts in respect of which such pensions are payable.

These recommendations had been considered by the Council's own Resources Review Panel at its meeting on 13 November 2003. The Panel had recommended that the recommendations of the independent Members Allowances Panel be agreed.

Moved by Councillor Williams, seconded by Councillor Hindley, that the recommended Members' Allowance Scheme be amended by removing the proposed entitlement of members to membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme.

The amendment was put and was agreed.

Moved by Councillor Hall, seconded by Councillor Mrs Lewin-Harris, that the proposed Members' Allowance Scheme be implemented on a phased basis with 12% being paid in 2004/05 and the Panel's recommendations being implemented in full with effect from 1 April 2005.

The amendment was put and was lost.

The substantive motion (that the recommendations of independent Members' Allowances Panel be agreed subject to it being amended to delete membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme) was put and was agreed.

6. Car Parking Charges 2004/05

Submitted recommendations from Councillor Bishop, Executive Councillor, Planning and Transportation, following a meeting of the Traffic Regulation Order Panel held on 17 February 2004.

On the motion of Councillor Bishop, it was RESOLVED that the Taunton Deane Borough (Off street Parking Places) (No 24 Amendment) Order 2004 as set out in Appendix A to these minutes, be agreed.

7. Recommendations to Council from the Executive

(a) General Fund Revenue Estimates 2004/05

The Executive had considered its 2004/05 budget proposals. The report considered had contained details on:

- (i) the General Fund Revenue Budget proposals for 2004/05;
- (ii) the results of the public consultation exercises;
- (iii) draft figures on the expected financial position of the Council for the following two years;
- (iv) Prudential Indicators for 2004/05; and
- (v) an overview of the proposed increases in fees and charges for 2004/05.

The report had also been considered in detail by the Review Board.

Moved by Councillor Williams that the budget for General Fund services for 2004/05 be agreed and that:

- (i) the transfer for any under spend in 2003/04 back to General Fund Reserves be agreed;
- (ii) the use of £16,523 from General Fund Reserves to support the 2004/05 budget be agreed;
- (iii) the development bids outlined in the report submitted to the Executive be agreed;
- (iv) the increases to fees and charges set out in the report to the Executive be agreed;
- (v) the proposed 2004/05 budget being Authority expenditure of £10,975,203 and Special Expenses of £25,750 to be agreed in accordance with the Local Government Act 1992.
- (vi) the predicted General Fund Reserve balance at 31 March 21005 of £1,310.466 be noted; and
- (vii) the Prudential Indicators for 2004/05 as set out in the report to the Executive be agreed.

An amendment was moved by Councillor Henley, seconded by Councillor Prior-Sankey that the General Fund Revenue Estimates 2004/05 be amended in accordance with the alternative budget proposal, details of which were submitted and had been circulated to each member.

The amendment was put and was lost.

The original motion was put and was carried.

(b) General Fund Capital Programme 2004/05 to 2006/07

The proposed capital programme of the Council amounted to £6,383,046, leaving £1,381,056 of unallocated capital resources available for future schemes.

All capital expenditure had to be financed from borrowing, capital receipts or other revenue funds. After taking into account the current programme which had already been approved and financed, the anticipated available surplus resources for the period 2003/04 to 2006/07 were £175,000 of Capital Receipts and £1,813,356 of unallocated Capital Reserve, making a total of £1,988,356.

In previous years, the Council's resources took into consideration the use of Credit Approvals. With effect from 1 April 2004, a new system called the Prudential Code would come into effect which would give Local Authorities the freedom to borrow.

It is not anticipated that the Council would take advantage of its new freedom to borrow.

The Capital Receipts of £175,000 represented income that was expected to be generated from the sale of assets. This income could be wholly reinvested in funding capital schemes.

The current approved capital programme was £5,483,621. This included any slippage in schemes that had been rolled forward from 2002/03 and any subsequent Supplementary Estimates that have been approved by the Council.

The Review Board had considered the capital Programme and had made no suggestions for changes.

Since the consideration of the programme by the Review Board, Executive Councillors had revisited the proposed programme and suggested one further addition. The scheme for continued financial support in 2004/05 for improvements to the Taunton Canal/River Corridor (£10,000) was now included in the draft programme.

On the motion of Councillor Williams, it was RESOLVED that the General Fund Capital Programme, as set out in the report to the Executive, be agreed.

(c) Council Tax Setting 2004/05

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

The estimated expenses chargeable to the non-parished area of Taunton in 2004/05 was £25,750 and this formed part of the total net expenditure of the Council. Details of the Parish Precepts levied and the appropriate Council Tax at Band 'D' were submitted.

On the motion of Councillor Williams it was RESOLVED that, subject to final determination including the Council Tax for Somerset County Council and the Police Authority:

(i) That it be noted that at its meeting on 14 January 2004 the Executive calculated the following amounts for the year 2004/05 in accordance with the regulations made under Section 33(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended):

- 38,675.69 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as its Council Tax base for the year.

-	Ash Priors	66.24	Neroche	241.01
	Ashbrittle	86.72	North Curry	684.85
	Bathealton	84.19	Norton Fitzwarren	657.25
	Bishops Hull	1,070.16	Nynehead	147.57
	Bishops Lydeard/ Cothelstone	1,822.78	Oake	317.62
	Bradford on Tone	276.96	Otterford	163.25
	Burrowbridge	203.81	Pitminster	444.97
	Cheddon Fitzpaine	626.00	Ruishton/ Thornfalcon	606.84
	Chipstable	113.17	Sampford Arundel	128.78
	Churchstanton	307.45	Staplegrove	715.61
	Combe Florey	110.46	Stawley	116.69
	Comeytrowe	2,066.03	Stoke St Gregory	374.36
	Corfe	131.93	Stoke St Mary	192.98
	Creech St Michael	934.29	Taunton	15,417.20
	Durston	57.56	Trull	938.40
	Fitzhead	118.96	Wellington	4,509.10
	Halse	145.65	Wellington (Without)	292.30
	Hatch Beauchamp	244.08	West Bagborough	153.99
	Kingston St Mary	432.85	West Buckland	398.46
	Langford Budville	213.97	West Hatch	139.68
	Lydeard St Lawrence/ Tolland	193.38	West Monkton	1,073.39
	Milverton	573.00	Wiveliscombe	1,081.75

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

(ii) That the following amounts now be calculated by the Council for the year 2004/05 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:

- £50,521,900 being the aggregate of the amount which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2)(a) of the Act. (*Gross expenditure including amount required for working balance*).
- £39,215,734 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(3)(a) to (c) of the Act. (*Gross income including reserves to be used to meet Gross Expenditure*).
- £11,306,166 being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year.
- £6,464,458 being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its general fund in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates, revenue support grant, additional grant or SSA reduction grant (increased by the amount of the sums which the Council estimates will be transferred in the year from its Collection Fund to its General Fund in accordance with Section 97(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (*Council Tax Surplus*) and increased by the amount of any sum which the Council estimates will be transferred from its Collection Fund (Community Charge) directions under Section 98(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 made on 7 February 1994 (*Community Charge Surplus*).

Fitzhead	130.92	Wellington	133.13
Halse	128.65	Wellington (Without)	128.60
Hatch Beauchamp	128.10	West Bagborough	129.62
Kingston St Mary	130.49	West Buckland	135.45
Langford Budville	124.34	West Hatch	130.50
Lydeard St Lawrence/ Tolland	124.65	West Monkton	126.88
Milverton	127.10	Wiveliscombe	131.42

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

- See attached.

Note: Since the meeting of the Executive, notification of the level of the Police Authority precept had been received. Somerset County Council met on 18 February and an indication of its level of Council Tax had also been received. Attached as Appendix 1 and 2 are tables which indicated the revised figures.

(d) Annual Investments Strategy

Recent legislation required each Local Authority to produce an annual Investments Strategy.

In summary, the strategy required that:

- all Council investments must be made with prime consideration being given to security of capital and liquidity of those investments; and
- security was enhanced by use of all credit ratings;
- Investments were limited on amounts and time to ensure that the Council could honour cash commitments and benefit from positive interest rate movements;
- Advantage of favourable moves in the interest rates should be taken by conducting forward deals supported by advice from specialist advisers;
- External fund management was deemed not appropriate at this time; and

- The Executive would be updated on any proposed changes/ amendments to the strategy at future meetings and be presented with an end of year assessment included in the annual Treasury Management Outturn Report.

On the motion of Councillor Williams, it was RESOLVED that the Investments Strategy, as submitted to the Executive, be agreed.

(e) Third Quarter Budget Monitoring

The forecast outturn figures for General Fund Revenue predicted a net underspend of 0.21% or £32,217 against the current approved budget.

The Executive had considered this under spend and allocated areas where it would be used.

On the motion of Councillor Williams, it was RESOLVED that the variations to the budget be agreed and the fiancé available be allocated as follows:

	£	
	5,000	Golf course flooding
	2,000	Golf course tree pruning
	10,000	Car park signs
	4,000	Hunts Court - pump priming
	5,000	Chewing Gum Clearing Initiatives
	6,217	Pay on foot - feasibility study
Total	32,217	

(i)

Valuation Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Ash Priors	80.26	92.64	107.02	120.40	147.16	173.92	200.68	240.80
Ashtrille	81.60	95.20	109.80	122.40	149.60	176.80	204.00	244.80
Barnhampton	82.00	96.24	110.91	123.78	151.26	178.77	206.28	247.52
Bishops Hall	86.20	100.56	114.94	129.80	158.94	190.77	225.58	268.60
Bishops Lydeard/Cathelstone	88.91	100.93	117.38	130.80	161.38	191.89	226.37	259.60
Broadford On Teme	87.38	101.94	116.91	131.07	160.20	189.33	226.14	258.14
Microbridge	92.24	107.62	122.99	138.87	169.12	199.87	230.61	276.74
Cheddon Fitzpaine	83.08	96.32	110.77	124.62	152.32	180.07	207.70	249.24
Chiptonable	84.36	100.08	117.81	130.04	162.00	191.46	220.90	265.08
Churchstanton	92.68	108.12	123.67	140.24	170.82	200.82	231.76	280.04
Coabe Finney	90.99	98.81	112.92	127.04	156.27	185.91	211.71	254.08
Comystrowe	82.59	94.36	110.12	123.89	151.42	178.94	206.48	247.78
Corfe	94.01	98.80	112.09	128.10	156.32	182.15	210.18	252.20
Crosch St Michael	87.68	102.29	116.91	131.52	160.95	189.99	223.20	263.04
Durston	78.21	81.28	104.28	117.92	143.38	169.47	196.84	232.64
Fitzhead	87.28	101.42	114.37	130.92	160.07	189.11	218.20	261.84
Halze	86.78	100.09	114.35	128.45	157.34	184.84	214.91	257.30
Hatch Beauchamp	85.40	99.43	113.87	128.10	156.37	182.04	213.62	256.20
Kingdon St Mary	80.99	101.49	115.89	130.40	158.89	188.49	217.48	260.14
Langford Budville	82.49	96.73	110.92	124.34	151.97	179.81	207.21	248.08
Lydeard St Lawrence/Tolland	83.10	96.49	110.80	124.85	152.35	180.05	207.75	249.50
Milverton	83.73	98.85	112.98	127.10	155.26	182.99	211.87	254.20
Nerosche	82.64	100.12	115.98	131.19	160.30	188.44	218.84	262.30
North Curry	88.94	103.77	118.99	133.42	163.07	193.72	222.38	266.84
Norton Fitzwarren	91.10	106.28	121.87	136.05	167.02	197.39	227.76	273.30
Hytchhead	86.78	101.25	114.71	130.18	159.11	189.04	216.94	260.34
Oske	88.48	99.54	112.82	126.30	154.84	180.42	211.18	253.40
Otterford	77.35	80.71	103.67	114.63	142.35	168.47	194.84	232.64
Pitminster	83.59	97.52	111.46	126.39	154.28	181.10	208.38	250.78
Rushington/Thornfalcon	89.87	103.33	118.10	132.86	162.39	191.91	221.48	268.72
Sampford Arundel	100.74	117.53	134.32	151.11	184.69	218.37	251.95	302.22
Staplegrove	84.92	99.08	113.23	127.30	156.10	184.71	212.91	254.78
Stawley	83.46	97.38	111.39	125.20	153.82	180.85	209.24	250.40
Stoke St Gregory	88.44	103.18	117.92	132.44	162.14	191.82	221.10	265.32
Stoke St Mary	83.87	98.47	111.74	122.80	153.35	180.94	209.91	251.92
Tewton	78.84	82.01	104.14	116.30	145.88	170.88	197.14	236.60
Trull	82.72	96.31	110.30	124.09	151.47	178.28	204.81	248.18
Wellington	88.74	103.44	118.34	133.13	162.72	192.30	221.94	268.24
Wellington W/out	89.71	100.22	114.21	128.40	157.18	189.76	218.23	257.20
West Bagborough	92.64	108.12	123.67	140.24	170.82	198.44	228.00	274.34
West Buckland	90.30	105.36	120.40	134.48	163.85	193.23	223.75	270.30
West Hatch	87.00	101.50	116.30	130.30	159.30	184.30	217.50	261.00
West Monkton	84.68	98.49	112.78	129.49	155.39	183.28	211.44	253.74
Wiveliscombe	87.63	102.21	116.82	131.42	160.49	189.83	219.03	262.84

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at (i) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 5(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands (Council Tax for Individual Parishes and the Borough).

10.2.3 That it be noted that for the year 2004/05 the Somerset County Council and the Avon & Somerset Police Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Somerset County Council	604.84	705.67	804.44	907.29	1109.81	1310.51	1512.15	1814.58
Avon & Somerset Police Authority	82.39	87.29	111.19	122.00	152.49	180.89	208.48	260.18

(ii)

Valuation Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Ash Priors	80.26	93.64	107.02	120.40	147.16	173.92	200.68	240.80
Ashtrille	81.60	95.20	109.80	122.40	149.60	176.80	204.00	244.80
Barnhampton	82.00	96.24	110.91	123.78	151.26	178.77	206.28	247.52
Bishops Hall	86.20	100.56	114.94	129.80	158.94	190.77	225.58	268.60
Bishops Lydeard/Cathelstone	88.91	100.93	117.38	130.80	161.38	191.89	226.37	259.60
Broadford On Teme	87.38	101.94	116.91	131.07	160.20	189.33	226.14	258.14
Microbridge	92.24	107.62	122.99	138.87	169.12	199.87	230.61	276.74
Cheddon Fitzpaine	83.08	96.32	110.77	124.62	152.32	180.07	207.70	249.24
Chiptonable	84.36	100.08	117.81	130.04	162.00	191.46	220.90	265.08
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Norton Fitzwarren	91.10	106.28	121.87	136.05	167.02	197.39	227.76	273.30
Hytchhead	86.78	101.25	114.71	130.18	159.11	189.04	216.94	260.34
Oske	88.48	99.54	112.82	126.30	154.84	180.42	211.18	253.40
Otterford	77.35	80.71	103.67	114.63	142.35	168.47	194.84	232.64
Pitminster	83.59	97.52	111.46	126.39	154.28	181.10	208.38	250.78
Rushington/Thornfalcon	89.87	103.33	118.10	132.86	162.39	191.91	221.48	268.72
Sampford Arundel	100.74	117.53	134.32	151.11	184.69	218.37	251.95	302.22
Staplegrove	84.92	99.08	113.23	127.30	156.10	184.71	212.91	254.78
Stawley	83.46	97.38	111.39	125.20	153.82	180.85	209.24	250.40
Stoke St Gregory	88.44	103.18	117.92	132.44	162.14	191.82	221.10	265.32
Stoke St Mary	83.87	98.47	111.74	122.80	153.35	180.94	209.91	251.92
Tewton	78.84	82.01	104.14	116.30	145.88	170.88	197.14	236.60
Trull	82.72	96.31	110.30	124.09	151.47	178.28	204.81	248.18
Wellington	88.74	103.44	118.34	133.13	162.72	192.30	221.94	268.24
Wellington W/out	89.71	100.22	114.21	128.40	157.18	189.76	218.23	257.20
West Bagborough	92.64	108.12	123.67	140.24	170.82	198.44	228.00	274.34
West Buckland	90.30	105.36	120.40	134.48	163.85	193.23	223.75	270.30
West Hatch	87.00	101.50	116.30	130.30	159.30	184.30	217.50	261.00
West Monkton	84.68	98.49	112.78	129.49	155.39	183.28	211.44	253.74
Wiveliscombe	87.63	102.21	116.82	131.42	160.49	189.83	219.03	262.84

Being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at (ii) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 5(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands (Council Tax for Individual Parishes and the Borough).

That it be noted that for the year 2004/05 the Somerset County Council and the Avon & Somerset Police Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Somerset County Council	0.00	0.00	0.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Avon & Somerset Police Authority	0.00	0.00	0.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

102.4 That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 10.2.2 (i) and 10.2.3 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 36(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of council tax for the year 2004/05 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Valuation Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Ash Priory	769.21	896.80	1024.49	1152.78	1408.96	1665.14	1921.29	2185.54
Ashurstree	769.45	896.16	1026.47	1154.79	1411.40	1668.00	1924.83	2195.58
Bathampton	775.73	899.25	1027.64	1184.19	1411.06	1669.89	1926.89	2197.28
Bishops Cleeve	774.45	902.52	1028.62	1181.68	1419.84	1677.69	1936.13	2207.28
Bishopscote Lydeard/Dothelstone	774.78	903.91	1033.05	1162.18	1420.45	1678.71	1936.94	2204.98
Braford On Tern	772.82	904.90	1034.18	1163.45	1422.00	1680.55	1939.08	2206.90
Burrowbridge	980.49	910.58	1040.66	1170.75	1430.92	1691.09	1951.24	2241.50
Chedoke Fitzpaine	771.13	899.88	1026.44	1137.09	1414.12	1671.23	1928.33	2184.00
Clipston	776.41	906.04	1029.44	1184.92	1423.80	1682.07	1941.53	2209.84
Churchstanton	780.93	911.09	1041.24	1171.49	1441.72	1692.03	1952.33	2242.80
Coabe Flurwy	772.94	911.77	1020.59	1159.42	1417.07	1674.72	1932.44	2199.84
Compton	770.64	899.32	1027.75	1156.27	1411.22	1670.18	1927.11	2192.84
Corle	792.11	921.04	1029.78	1158.48	1415.92	1673.37	1930.75	2194.84
Creech St Michael	775.93	918.28	1034.98	1183.98	1422.84	1681.28	1939.83	2207.80
Durston	766.44	894.21	1021.95	1149.70	1405.18	1680.69	1926.18	2199.40
Fitzhead	775.53	894.78	1024.04	1163.38	1421.62	1680.32	1938.89	2206.80
Hales	774.01	912.02	1032.02	1161.03	1419.04	1677.03	1935.04	2202.86
H&O Bewdley	773.83	912.98	1031.34	1160.48	1428.37	1676.28	1934.13	2200.86
Kingston St Mary	776.23	906.45	1033.84	1156.87	1421.88	1679.73	1938.13	2205.74
Langford Bayville	771.14	899.67	1028.19	1166.72	1412.01	1670.81	1927.88	2193.44
Lydeard St Lawrence/Tollard	771.25	899.32	1028.47	1157.03	1424.12	1671.27	1928.36	2194.86
Milverton	772.89	911.81	1030.85	1159.48	1427.12	1674.87	1932.46	2194.86
Newcote	776.64	904.94	1034.25	1163.23	1422.16	1680.68	1939.21	2207.86
North Curry	777.18	906.71	1034.24	1160.80	1424.87	1683.94	1942.95	2211.80
Norton Fitzwarren	779.35	909.24	1039.14	1169.03	1429.82	1688.61	1948.38	2218.88
Pyebush	775.03	904.21	1033.38	1162.36	1420.91	1679.24	1937.59	2202.12
Gene	772.77	901.90	1028.29	1159.98	1426.68	1674.24	1931.79	2194.16
Utterford	748.06	898.87	1021.34	1148.07	1406.35	1659.69	1913.01	2188.02
Pickminster	771.04	900.46	1028.11	1157.77	1425.08	1672.84	1929.61	2194.84
Salisbury/Thornfalton	776.82	906.29	1035.77	1165.24	1424.19	1682.13	1942.04	2200.48
Sampford Arundel	780.59	920.49	1051.39	1181.49	1446.49	1708.49	1972.49	2264.98
Slapton/Over	773.17	901.94	1028.90	1159.77	1427.88	1675.23	1932.94	2194.54
Staley	911.71	904.34	1028.86	1157.88	1422.82	1672.07	1929.79	2193.16
Stoke St Gregory	776.09	904.14	1028.50	1164.24	1423.84	1682.84	1941.73	2200.08
Stoke St Mary	772.22	908.93	1029.42	1159.34	1415.75	1672.17	1936.56	2194.64
Tewkes	767.11	894.87	1022.82	1158.40	1406.38	1662.10	1917.79	2191.16
Trill	770.39	898.47	1027.87	1158.47	1413.47	1675.47	1927.44	2192.94
Wellington	777.00	898.80	1024.81	1158.81	1424.32	1683.32	1942.31	2203.02
Wellington M/out	773.96	902.86	1031.99	1162.89	1424.38	1674.89	1934.86	2201.86
West Bagborough	774.66	903.77	1032.89	1162.80	1423.23	1678.45	1934.66	2204.04
West Backland	778.55	908.11	1038.07	1167.85	1427.35	1686.87	1944.70	2210.64
West Bath	778.25	904.49	1031.67	1162.88	1421.30	1675.72	1938.15	2205.78
West Monkton	772.43	901.44	1028.45	1158.36	1418.86	1672.30	1932.39	2194.52
Wiveland	775.46	902.17	1034.49	1163.40	1422.41	1681.89	1939.48	2207.62

(f) Housing Revenue Account - Revenue Estimates and Rent Levels

The Executive had considered the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the 2004/05 financial year.

In addition to the Executive, both the Housing Review Panel and the Review Board had considered the matter. The recommendations submitted reflected the views raised at those meetings.

On the motion of Councillor Garner, it was RESOLVED that the Housing Revenue Account budget be agreed.

(g) Housing Capital Programme 2004/05 to 2006/07

The Executive had also considered, together with a draft programme for 2005/06 and 2006/07, the proposed Housing Capital Programme for 2004/05.

In addition to the Executive, both the Housing Review Panel and the Review Board had considered the matter. The recommendations submitted reflected the views raised at those meetings.

On the motion of Councillor Garner, it was RESOLVED that the Housing Capital Programme be agreed.

8. Questions to and Reports of the Leader of the Council and Executive Councillors

(a) The following question was asked:

Councillor Paul asked Councillor Mrs Lewin-Harris, Executive Councillor, Community Leadership:

“Since both Taunton Deane Borough Council and Somerset County Council have agreed to place the proceeds of the increased Council Tax on second homes at the disposal of the Local Strategic Partnership:

Will Councillor Lewin-Harris undertake to work closely with Somerset County Councillors to ensure that the LSP use this money to pursue the Corporate Priorities of the Council and the priorities of the residents who took part in the Council Tax consultation?”

Councillor Mrs Lewin-Harris replied that it had always been intended that the extra funding would be spent on the priorities within the Community Strategy

(Councillor Paul, as a member of Somerset County Council, declared a personal interest in this matter).

(b) Reports

The following reports were made to the Council on the main items of current and future business.

(i) Leader of the Council (Councillor Williams)

Councillor Williams submitted a report which highlighted the successful conclusion of the following three main projects:

- Completion of Wellsprings Leisure Centre.
- Alterations to Priory Bridge/Station Road junction.
- Setting of a sound and balanced prudent budget with under a 14p per week Band D Council Tax increase.

His report also referred to the Vision for Taunton, CPA and ongoing initiatives in Wellington. The budget setting process was now complete and was the subject of separate reports. Also covered was Town Centre Retail Redevelopment, relocation of Taunton Livestock Market and dualling of the A358.

(Councillor Prior-Sankey declared a personal interest in the Vision as a County Councillor. Councillor Meikle declared a prejudicial interest in relation to the Inner Relief Road).

(ii) Planning Policy and Transportation (Councillor Bishop)

Councillor Bishop's report drew attention to the current progress with the Taunton Deane Local Plan, the Green Apple Award for St Margaret's Leper Hospital, the Cornhill, Wellington and the quality of presentations at Planning Committee meetings. The Building Control Service had been awarded the building control contract for the new Oncology Unit at Musgrove Park Hospital. He also reported further upon Taunton Transport Strategy Review, Station Road/Priory Bridge Road and SWARMMS.

(Councillor Prior-Sankey declared a personal interest as a County Councillor).

(iii) Leisure, Art and Culture (Councillor Mrs Bradley)

Councillor Mrs Bradley submitted an update on Wellsprings, the Leisure Services Strategic Review and the Green Spaces Strategy. She also referred to Vivary Park, leisure grants, culture and the Taunton 1100 project.

(iv) Communications (Councillor Mrs Bryant)

In the absence of Councillor Mrs Bryant, Councillor Mrs Lewin-Harris submitted the report on Communications. It featured the Communications Strategy, media coverage and the Council's web site and Intranet.

(v) Economic Development and Tourism (Councillor N Cavill)

The report from Councillor Cavill referred to Asset Management, The Vision for Taunton, Broadband, TICs and the 2004 Visitor Guide.

(vi) Environmental Services (Councillor Edwards)

Councillor Edwards reported upon Kerbside Recycling, Environmental Health and litter and the street scene. He also referred to the review of public toilets and a review of the out of hours noise service.

(vii) Housing Services (Councillor Garner)

Councillor Garner's report covered the following topics:

- Housing Stock options (update).
- Housing best value review (update).
- Houses imported from Canada.
- Deane helpline.

(viii) Resources (Councillor Hall)

The report submitted by Councillor Hall referred to the Electoral Registration Service, instalment dates for Council Tax and the services to be covered by Somerset Direct. The report also covered Benefits, Personnel, Financial Services, IT and certain areas covered by Service Support.

(ix) Community Leadership (Councillor Mrs Lewin-Harris)

Councillor Mrs Lewin-Harris drew attention to the Corporate Strategy 2004 - 07, the Local Strategic Partnership, Crime and Disorder and Community Planning.

9. Freeman of the Borough

The Community Leadership Review Panel had considered recommending the Council to admit Councillor J R G Meikle MBE as an honorary Freeman of the Borough.

The appropriate legislation allowed a Borough Council to admit “persons of distinction and persons who have in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the City, Borough or Royal Borough” as Honorary Freeman.

Examples of the many initiatives that Councillor Meikle had been involved in during his 46 years as a Councillor were submitted.

RESOLVED that the recommendation of the Community Leadership Panel be agreed and that Councillor J R G Meikle be made an Honorary Freeman of the Borough in recognition of the eminent service rendered by him to the Taunton Deane community.

10. Old Market Centre Multi-Storey Car Park

Reported that the Leader of the Council, together with the Chair of the Review Board had agreed:

To suspend Contract Standing Order 13 (b) - seeking of three written quotations - in respect of permanent security fencing at the Old Market Centre car park under the urgency provisions of Contract Standing Order 14(f).

This decision was taken in accordance with the provisions of Rule 15.9 of the Procedure Rules for Review Board and Panels. It was, therefore, not subject to the Call-in procedure.

The Council’s Constitution required that decisions of this nature, taken under the “Urgency” procedure, be included for information on the next full Council agenda.

11. A Combined Management Plan and Community Strategy for the Blackdown Hill Area of Natural Beauty - Final Draft Document

The Community Leadership Review Panel had considered the combined Management Plan and Community Strategy for the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Plan had been widely consulted upon and resources to it carefully considered by the Blackdown Hills Rural Partnership. The final draft which had been circulated to all Councillor with the papers for the Community Leadership Review Panel meeting on 10 February 2004 had been amended to incorporate the resources of this Council.

RESOLVED that the final draft of the management Plan and Community Strategy for the Blackdown Hills AOMB be adopted.

(The following Councillors left the meeting at the times indicated: Councillors Ms Priscott and Bone at 8.00 pm, Councillor C Cluff at 8.25 pm, Councillor Mrs Cluff 9.25 pm, Councillor Mrs Bryant 9.30 pm, Councillor Morrell 10.15 pm, Councillor Gill 10.28 pm, Councillor Edwards 10.30 pm, Councillor Prior-Sankey 10.45 pm, Councillors Mullins, Stone and Slattery at 10.52 pm and Councillor Weston at 11.10 pm).

(The meeting ended at 11.15 pm).

PUBLIC NOTICE AFFECTING ALL PUBLIC CAR PARKS IN TAUNTON DEANE

**THE TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH (OFF STREET PARKING PLACES)
(NO. 24 AMENDMENT) ORDER 2004**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on 3 March 2004 the Taunton Deane Borough Council, acting in accordance with powers delegated by the Somerset County Council, made an Order under Section 35 (1), (3) and (6) and Part IV of Schedule 9 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act, 1984, the effects of which will be:-

TAUNTON

1. To increase the car parking tariff in the Castle Green and Whirligig 'Limited Stay Car Parks' as follows:-

<u>Car Park</u>	Up to	1 Hr	2 Hrs
Castle Green and Whirligig	Current	90p	£1.60
	Proposed	£1.00	£2.00

2. To increase the car parking tariff in the Fons George 'Limited Stay Car Park' as follows:-

<u>Car Park</u>	Up to	1 Hr	5 Hrs	6 Hrs
Fons George	Current	20p	£2.30	£2.50
	Proposed	40p	£2.50	£3.00

3. To increase the car parking tariff in the 'Shopper Group 1 Car Parks' as follows:-

<u>Car Parks</u>	Up to	1 Hr	2 Hrs	3 Hrs	4 Hrs	5 Hrs	6 Hrs	7 Hrs	10 Hrs
Canon Street, Coal Orchard, High Street, Levels 1, 1A, 2, 2A, 3 & 3A Old Market Shoppers (Paul Street) and Crescent Car Park (maximum stay 4 hours)	Current	60p	80p	£1.20	£1.60	£2.50	£3.00	£3.50	£4.00
	Proposed	60p	£1.00	£1.40	£1.80	£3.00	£3.50	£4.00	£4.50

4. To increase the car parking tariff in the 'Shopper Group 2 Car Parks' as follows:-

<u>Car Parks</u>	Up to	1 Hr	2 Hrs	3 Hrs	4 Hrs	5 Hrs	6 Hrs	7 Hrs	10 Hrs
Belvedere Road, Castle Street, Duke Street, Elm's Parade, Greenbrook Terrace, Wood Street, Levels 4, 4A, 5 and 5A Old Market Shoppers (Paul Street), Shire Hall/The Well/County Hall Car Park at the rear of Block A and 31 spaces at the front of Block A (Saturdays only)	Current	50p	70p	90p	£1.10	£1.40	£1.60	£1.80	£2.10
	Proposed	50p	80p	£1.00	£1.20	£1.50	£1.80	£2.00	£2.50

5. To increase the car parking tariff in the 'Commuter Car Parks' as follows:-

<u>Car Parks</u>	Up to	1 Hr	2 Hrs	3 Hrs	4 Hrs	5 Hrs	6 Hrs	All Day
Enfield, Kilkenny, Tangier, Priory Bridge Road and Victoria Gate	Current	40p	70p	80p	90p	£1.00	£1.10	£1.50
	Proposed	40p	80p	£1.00	£1.20	£1.50	£1.70	£2.00

6. To increase the parking tariff in the Castle Street Coach Park from £3.00 (up to 10 hours) to £5.00 (up to 10 hours).
7. To increase the Season Ticket charges in the Taunton 'Shopper Group 1' Car Parks (namely Canon Street, Coal Orchard, High Street, Levels 1, 1A, 2, 2A, 3 & 3A Old Market Shoppers (Paul Street) and Crescent Car Park (maximum stay 4 hours) from £520 to **£555**.
8. To increase the Season Ticket charges in the Taunton 'Shopper Group 2 Car Parks' (namely Belvedere Road, Castle Street, Duke Street, Elms Parade, Greenbrook Terrace, Levels 4, 4A, 5 and 5A Old Market Shoppers (Paul Street), Shire Hall/The Well/County Hall Car Park at the rear of Block A and 31 spaces at the front of Block A (Saturdays only) from £280 to **£295**.

9. To increase the Season Ticket charges in the Taunton 'Commuter Car Parks' (namely Enfield, Kilkenny, Tangier, Priory Bridge Road and Victoria Gate) from £195 to **£260**.

WELLINGTON

10. To increase the parking tariff in the South Street 'Shopper Car Park' as follows:-

<u>Car Park</u>	Up to	1 Hr	2 Hrs	3 Hrs
South Street (maximum stay 3 hours)	Current	30p	40p	50p
	Proposed	30p	60p	80p

11. To increase the parking tariff in the 'Commuter Car Parks' as follows:-

<u>Car Parks</u>	Up to	2 Hrs	3 Hrs	4 Hrs	All Day
Longforth Road and North Street	Current	30p	40p	50p	70p
	Proposed	30p	50p	80p	£1.00

12. To increase the Season Ticket charges in the Wellington 'Commuter Car Parks' from £91 to **£130**.

The Order will come into operation on **Monday 29 March 2004**. A copy of the Order may be inspected at The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton, during normal office hours.

Any person wishing to question the validity of the Order or any provisions contained therein, on the grounds that they are not within the powers conferred by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, or on the grounds that any requirement of that Act or of any instrument made under it has not been complied with in relation to the Order, may, within six weeks from 19 March 2004 apply to the High Court for this purpose.

G P DYKE
Member Services Manager

The Deane House
Belvedere Road
Taunton TA1 1HE

19 March 2004

COUNCIL MEETING - 20 APRIL 2004

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL COUNCILLOR WILLIAMS - LEADER OF THE EXECUTIVE

(a) Corporate Review and Restructure

At its meeting on 10 March 2004 the Executive agreed proposals which seek to address the issues within the Council's structure and its ability to ensure focus on the delivery of the Council's priorities.

One element of the proposals requires the agreement of Council.

The Council are RECOMMENDED that the early retirement of the Head of Performance on the terms set out in detail in the report submitted to the Executive be agreed.

(NOTE: The report circulated with the Executive papers was "exempt". It will therefore be necessary to move the "Exclusion Resolutions" if members wish to discuss the detailed terms of this proposal. Further copies of the report can be obtained from Greg Dyke, Member Services Manager).

(b) Financial Strategy

The Executive have also considered a Financial Strategy designed to allow the Council to produce a clear and sustainable medium term financial plan. The Strategy (A COPY OF WHICH IS ATTACHED TO THIS REPORT FOR THE INFORMATION OF MEMBERS) has been agreed with the exception of one aspect, which requires the approval of the Council.

In resolving some of the financial issues facing the Council it might be necessary to use some of the General Fund Reserve to fund "invest to save" type initiatives. This might mean, for a temporary period, that the level of General Fund Reserves will dip below the £1m floor.

This principle is accepted by the Council's Head of Resources provided that: -

- The "invest to save" type initiatives allow the original sum to be paid back to the Reserve over a 3-year period.
- The General Fund Reserve should not fall below £750,000 during this transition period.

Currently, all supplementary estimates require Full Council approval. This may not be a practical way forward for "invest to save" initiatives. It is proposed that, subject to the principles set out above, that the Executive be delegated the authority from Council to approve such supplementary estimates during this review period. This will allow more frequent reports to be presented to Members during the review and will facilitate the swift approval of savings proposals.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that the Council delegate responsibility for approving Supplementary Estimates during this review period to the Executive.

Councillor J R Williams

FOR INFORMATION

TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 7 APRIL 2004

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF RESOURCES

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

FINANCIAL STRATEGY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The majority of local authorities are struggling to match their spending plans to resources available. This is a national issue and not unique to Taunton Deane Borough Council.

Based on current financial forecasts, this Council is facing a funding gap of around £700k per annum (before considering development items). This clearly is unsustainable and the Council must have a strategy for resolving the underlying budget gap.

This report sets out a Financial Strategy that will allow the Council to break out of the annual cycle of budget savings rounds to produce a clear and sustainable financial plan over the medium term. This will be achieved through a series of Service Reviews (fundamental appraisals of what each service is currently doing). Some difficult choices will need to be made and existing methods and practices fully challenged.

All Members will be involved in the process over the coming months.

1. Background

1.1 The current medium term financial planning process has been in place for a number of years now, and is an essential part of the budget setting process. The Councils Medium Term Financial Plan (mtfp) provides a financial forecast of the cost of providing the Council's General Fund services, and the resources that are likely to be available, over the medium term period – thereby giving early warning of predicted "budget gaps".

1.2 The financial position of the Council has been difficult over the last few years, with each budget round bringing further service cuts, fee increases and rounds of efficiency savings. The Corporate Planning process has helped focus and redirect resources to priorities, but with increasing pressures and expectations on this Council to deliver more with less, there is a need to step back and look to the medium term financial position of the Council and work out how this can be achieved.

- 1.3 The financial model has recently been updated to reflect “inescapable” budget issues (eg pay award). Managers will be asked to provide detail of unavoidable service issues over the next few weeks to allow the model to be further refined. The fully updated model, together with details of the assumptions used, will be presented to Members in early summer of 2004.
- 1.4 Meantime, based on the limited information available, it is clear that the underlying budget problem continues – as the summary table below shows.

	2005/06 £'000	2006/07 £'000	2007/08 £'000
TDBC Forecast Budget Position	12,292	13,218	14,168
Forecast Govt Grant *	6,598	6,697	6,797
Forecast Council Tax **	4,988	5,272	5,573
Forecast Resources Available	11,586	11,969	12,370
Predicted Budget Gap	706	1,249	1,798

* Assuming a 1.5% increase in central government funding per annum.

** Assuming a council tax increase of 4.55% per annum.

The model (even with limited information) clearly shows a funding gap in future years of around £700k per annum. This is the position prior to considering any development items and clearly must be resolved.

2. The Issue

- 2.1 The Council now needs to adopt a Financial Strategy that, together with a robust medium term financial planning process, will help the Council break out of the current annual cycle of savings exercises, and help produce a clear, robust, sustainable and affordable medium term financial plan.
- 2.2 The Financial Strategy will be a key link between the Corporate Strategy, which sets the aims and ambitions of the Council, and the mtfp, which sets out the cost of what the council is currently providing. It should also link in other corporate plans such as the Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan, and longer term, develop to include HRA services too.
- 2.3 The remainder of this document is focussed on setting out the proposed Financial Strategy of Taunton Deane Borough Council. There are some very difficult issues for this Council to tackle, some of which will take many months (even years) to progress. What is clear though is that to continue providing the current level of services is not an option.
- 2.4 Each service of the Council will be subject to scrutiny – and it is important that ALL Councillors are involved in this process and in shaping the future financial position of the Council. The key message is that this Council is currently spending beyond its means and must reduce its net budget to match the resources available.

3. The Way Forward - Service Reviews

- 3.1 As a Council, Taunton Deane has choices to make over the levels of service provided to the community. The Corporate Strategy has developed to show quite clearly what the priority areas are and resources have been redirected to ensure they are delivered.
- 3.2 However, recognising that “continuing as things are now” is not a viable option, more work is needed to review the fundamentals. Currently, right across the Council, service managers are striving to achieve top quartile performance status for all their services. The basic assumption that this Council can actually afford to deliver this ambitious target must now be challenged.
- 3.3 To move forward on this challenge, Members must be provided with a basket of key information on each of the core service areas (including support services). This should include information on the types of activities carried out (and whether they are discretionary activities or not), the trend re costs and performance indicators, and some information that shows how this Councils performance and service provision compares with other authorities.
- 3.4 This information will give Members a good feel for the standard of service currently being provided at Taunton Deane (in simple terms this could be described as Gold, Silver, or Bronze). The current service standard then must be reviewed – with changes to service levels being assessed re their impact on corporate priorities, customers, partners, and of course costs.
- 3.5 Members will, following the core themes and principles set out below, be asked to review the information provided, and consider whether the service should continue to be provided, and at what level.

4. Review Principles

- 4.1 As mentioned above, the Council will be faced with some difficult choices. In order to meet the objective of having a sustainable financial plan, the reviews outlined above will need to be challenging and investigate areas that traditionally have not been subject to such an appraisal.
- 4.2 The remainder of this strategy outlines some of the key themes and principles that will be followed in achieving this objective.

5. Efficiency Savings

- 5.1 Each service should be reviewed to test whether it is possible to provide the current level of service at less cost, or an improved level of service at the current cost.
- 5.2 As part of this theme, it is proposed that the following issues will be considered over the coming months:-
- Better use of IT. (Promotion of E-Government to encourage access to services.)
 - Vacancy Management.

- More Use of Multi-Skilling.
- Increasing Productivity.
- Improving Procurement.
- More Use of Strategic Partnerships.
- Introduction Of Quality Systems (getting things right 1st time)
- Ensure We Maximise External Funding.
- Promotion of “Invest to Save” initiatives.

5.3 It may be prudent to build an annual target for efficiency savings into the mtfp, which could be cascaded down to each Directorate Plan, and individual Team Plan. This will be reviewed at the end of the service review process.

6. Alternative Service Delivery

6.1 In very simple terms, this means reviewing what Taunton Deane currently does and challenging the existing method of delivering that service. There are a wide range of options to consider - ranging from staying as they are, to creating a partnership arrangement with another local authority, to the service being entirely provided by a private company.

6.2 To challenge “why things are done they way they are” is often difficult and uncomfortable for everyone involved. However - it is important that this is progressed as it is simply ensuring that we continue to deliver best value to the community on the services we provide to them.

7. Financing of Activities

7.1 Taunton Deane does currently follow best practice by considering and approving its revenue and capital budgets together. However there are some issues that must be considered if the Council is to ensure it has sufficient resources in place to deliver its key priority – The Vision for Taunton.

7.2 The delivery plan for The Vision is being prepared but it will be some time before it is clear on the level of resources required from each partner in the project. It is likely though that the resources required will be capital resources rather than revenue resources.

7.3 It is proposed that, as a principle, over the coming years, new resources (eg underspends) are directed towards the Councils Unallocated Capital Reserve rather than the General Fund Reserve. If agreed, all future financial recommendations in reports will take this into account.

7.4 In addition, there are some other issues that will need to be reviewed over the coming months. There are some strategic choices to be made – particularly in relation to the funding of certain activities (whether they are funded from revenue or capital, or how certain government grants are used). Strategic decisions need to be taken on :-

Implementing Electronic Grant (IEG) funding (clarity needed on use of funds)
 Lease v. Buy Decisions (challenge existing practices)
 IT Development (update on IT Strategy needed)

Borrowing (new freedoms re Prudential Regime – potential use re “invest to save” type initiatives)
Use of Planning Gain (clarity needed)
Use of External Funding (Is the Council missing opportunities?)

8. Asset Disposals

- 8.1 As mentioned above, The Vision project is likely to require significant capital resources. Currently, the amount of capital finance available to this Council is fairly limited. One way of boosting this would be to dispose of surplus assets.
- 8.2 A full review of current land holdings / asset holdings is currently being undertaken. Once complete this should be matched to the aspirations set out in the Corporate Strategy. The Asset Management Plan must be reviewed at a strategic level to ensure all asset holdings are continuing to provide “adequate” return to the Council.

9. Income Generation

- 9.1 Each year fees and charges are reviewed as part of the budget setting process. The Council now needs to take a longer-term view of where it wishes to be with fees and charges and to have a clear view on the application of subsidies.
- 9.2 The work currently being done on the pricing policy review will facilitate this debate. Managers should also be encouraged to explore and exploit new business opportunities available to them. Diversification of services should not be ruled out.
- 9.3 In addition, the Council should consider areas of service provision that do not currently charge their users. The Local Government Act 2003 has given local authorities the opportunity to now charge for discretionary services. Taunton Deane must carry out a review of discretionary services and make strategic decisions regarding the way forward on each. Again, this is a difficult issue for the Council, but must be explored as a way of resolving the underlying budget problem.
- 9.4 External funding should be maximised. This is a simple statement, but is quite difficult to achieve. How does the Council currently ensure it is taking advantage of all grant-funding regimes? Is Taunton Deane missing opportunities? Could the Council develop the use of sponsorship funding to areas of its activities other than roundabouts? All of these issues will be explored over the coming months.

10. Grants & Subsidies

- 10.1 Government Grants and Subsidies are received in many different forms (Revenue Support Grant / Planning Delivery Grant / Homelessness / Benefit Subsidy).
- 10.2 Over the coming months each major central government grant will be reviewed to ensure that this Council is maximising its share of central government funding.

11. Use of Reserves

- 11.1 Traditionally, this Council has created earmarked reserves for many purposes – from the set-aside of funds for major projects, to the earmarking of funds for specific training courses. The list has been reviewed as part of the recent budget setting process and has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of earmarked reserves. The Head of Resources will keep this list under review and regularly return unused funds to the General Fund Reserve.
- 11.2 Unearmarked reserves (better known as the General Fund Reserve) have traditionally been kept above the floor of £1m. For the Council to break out of the annual savings cycle it may be necessary to revisit this floor to allow reserves to be used to promote “invest to save” initiatives.
- 11.3 It is still the view of the Head of Resources that, in normal circumstances, the level of General Fund Reserve for this authority should be no lower than £1m. This is based on an assessment of the risks facing the Council. Issues such as a small fluctuation in the Housing Benefit Subsidy budget can have a major impact on the budget position of the Council, and the unearmarked reserves are there to protect against such eventualities.
- 11.4 In resolving some of the financial issues facing the Council it may be necessary to use some of the General Fund Reserve to fund “invest to save” type initiatives. This may mean, for a temporary period, that the level of General Fund Reserves will dip below the £1m floor.
- 11.5 This principle is accepted by the Council’s Head of Resources provided that:-
- The “invest to save” type initiatives allow the original sum to be paid back to the Reserve over a 3-year period.
 - The General Fund Reserve should not fall below £750,000 during this transition period.
- 11.6 Currently, all supplementary estimates require Full Council approval. This may not be a practical way forward for “invest to save” initiatives. It is proposed that, subject to the principles set out in 11.5 above, that the Executive be delegated the authority from Full Council to approve such supplementary estimates during this review period. This will allow more frequent reports to be presented to Members during the review and will facilitate the swift approval of savings proposals.

12.0 Conclusion

- 12.1 This Strategy sets out the way forward to allow the Council to break out of the existing annual cycle of budget cuts. The task ahead is not easy and the process will require the support and involvement of all Councillors.
- 12.2 This document sets out the strategy for achieving a sustainable financial plan. If significant progress is to be made in time to influence the 2005/06 budget setting regime then the process of Service Reviews must begin shortly. The

detail of how this process will actually work, and the timetable it will follow is currently being developed by the Head of Resources and the Head of Policy and Performance and will be communicated to all Members as soon as possible.

13.0 Impact on Corporate Priorities

13.1 This Financial Strategy will provide a robust mechanism for ensuring the limited resources available to this authority are directed towards the priority areas as identified in the Corporate Strategy.

14.0 Recommendation

14.1 The Executive is recommended to:-

- (a) agree the Financial Strategy as submitted;
- (b) recommend Council that responsibility for approving Supplementary Estimates during this review be delegated to the Executive.

Background Papers

General Fund Revenue Estimates 2004/05 – Executive Feb 2004

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LEADER OF THE COUNCIL REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL – 20 APRIL 2004

Since the last Full Council Meeting we have had some notable success and without stealing my colleague's thunder would like to add my congratulations for the hard work put in by a lot of staff in respect of the following.

Firstly the Planning Delivery Grant, up from circa £75,000 last year to a massive £533,000 for 2004/05. This huge increase is because the ODPM has rated our performance highly and recognised the efforts made to improve. This is particularly significant as one of the first Government letters of complaint I had to deal with last May was from the ODPM advising that we were on a special register of Council's being monitored, because of our failure to meet specified targets within planning. A big thank you to all involved.

Secondly the Local Plan process, this has successfully passed through the Scrutiny and Executive phases and is before us tonight for final ratification before proceeding to full public consultation.

This has been a most difficult process for staff and Members alike being typical of the old adage "one man's meat is another man's poison". Wellington wanted the housing development in order to secure a bypass road away from the town centre, Norton Fitzwarren does not want the housing but wants the bypass road to give much needed relief to the existing village, so Monkton Heathfield has housing allocated it did not want! Despite the best efforts of our staff we have been driven to this conclusion because of the final recommendations of the Inspector who conducted the Local Plan Inquiry.

It is regrettable that Wellington feel so aggrieved by our decision to follow the Inspectors recommendations but very compelling reasons were given by the Inspector and we could not gain any support from the Government Office SW to challenge the directions given. I believe we would have been foolhardy, at the least, to have disregarded this and attempted to include Longforth Farm. Our Local Plan would have been seriously delayed for the whole of the Deane and this authority would likely have been subjected to time consuming and costly legal challenge from other interested parties.

It is interesting to note, this pragmatic view was shared by the cross party Scrutiny Panel that recently considered the amendments put forward and there were ten votes for and only one against. In my view it is time Wellington moved on and put their present misplaced energies into the impending Local Development Framework plan rather than advocating the high risk strategy they presently wish us to embark upon.

In respect of Norton Fitzwarren and Monkton Heathfield, we must now work with these communities to ensure that maximum benefit is gained for the existing communities that inevitably will experience substantial change with the amount of development as planned. Norton Fitzwarren will require particular attention because with the present loss of the Ford Farm development from the local plan it removes our ability to ensure completion of the relief road and the flood prevention scheme as planned. We will have to try alternative options for the flood relief work to ensure the properties at risk are relieved of the appalling stress and worry every time we have above average rainfall. With Monkton Heathfield we will work with the community to ensure as far as possible we achieve the community facilities required and most importantly the construction of the relief road in a timely manner.

Our staff have worked tirelessly in trying to resolve the different points to meet the aspirations of all, regrettably not all are satisfied, but they deserve our appreciation and sincere thanks for their effort to date. I would remind you, a timely Local Plan process is a key factor in achieving the extra funding for planning as mentioned above.

I now provide an update on some of the major ongoing projects:-

Taunton Regeneration (Vision for Taunton)

Work proceeds apace on this exciting and challenging project. It creates a huge amount of interest both locally and nationally as Taunton is, rightfully in my mind, at last being recognised as a key regional centre for the West Country.

The Urban Design Framework is now in place but we await the completion and publication of the infrastructure and feasibility studies in order that a timetable of the likely order of development can be prepared. Key to this will be the final decision regarding the inner relief road, "to be or not to be". There has been considerable effort on the part of the Highway Authority to persuade people that the inner relief road must be built. I am prepared to listen to alternative routes/method of construction provided there is a sensible solution to the traffic problems that will occur when discharging into Bridge Street. To date I have not seen any proposed solution therefore I am unable to support it as presently planned.

Key to any development of this scale is how we deal with the movement of people and the ability to have easy access with good public transport and adequate town centre parking for shoppers. Take the town centre redevelopment centred on High Street/Old Market, the present plans propose an increase in retail shopping of 300,000 square feet, enormous by any measure. Without satisfactory car park provision its appeal to business and shoppers alike, would be severely limited.

When will it happen, a question asked by many, I would anticipate the first development to take place in the Firepool and County Cricket ground areas, this of course will be triggered by the relocation of the Livestock Market hopefully within 18 months, but the Abbey Manor development of the Old Railway Yard at Firepool is anticipated to commence within twelve months. As regards other areas such as Tangier, Castle Green and the Town Centre redevelopment, these will have to be submitted for full public consultation before incorporation in our Local Plan

TDBC Landholdings

When dealing with the question of our ownership of land in and around the town centre it is apparent we do not have an easily accessible comprehensive list available. This is not to say it is not documented but we are not using available technology to provide us with the ready access that will be required to assist and facilitate the Vision process.

We are the largest single owner of land in the town centre area therefore will have a great input into the regeneration process of Taunton. It is very important that we properly document this huge landholding so that we have ready access to full and accurate information when considering its disposal or alternative use. This is particularly important in respect of any covenants that may apply to ensure these are properly dealt with when considering its future use. We are taking steps to ensure our land ownership is transferred to GIS electronic plotting and recording facility as a matter of urgency.

SWARMMS

The various studies of the alternative A358 and A303 routes have now been completed and based on both economic and environmental grounds the A358 route is a clear leader in terms of where investment should be made. This will provide the major route into Devon and Cornwall that they seek but also provide a much improved access to the national motorway network, to large areas of the South-West to the North and South of Taunton.

This will be a huge economic boost to the region, bringing much needed improvements to J25 of the M5 and an essential bypass for Henlade. This will be considered next by the SW Regional Assembly and we must endeavour to send a clear message to the Minister of State who will make the final decision. Failure to do so will more than likely result in the West Country as a whole losing out on this level of investment because the Minister will most likely redirect funds to the North where it will be deemed their plans are more carefully articulated.

Financial Restructuring

The detail of this is before us tonight but I feel it worth highlighting the importance

of this strategy in that as an organisation we have been spending beyond our means for some time now. This has to be addressed and we need to take a long hard look at what we do, do we need to do it, can we do it better and where can we improve our income earning capacity other than Council Tax. This means a long hard look at the services we provide and an acceptance by Members and Officers that change is essential. Doing nothing is no longer an option.

Leisure Trust

From when the decision was made to carry out a complete re-assessment of the services we provide and charges made, officers have been preparing a schedule of possibilities from the easy to the unthinkable! This exercise is now nearing completion and I wish to express my appreciation to officers for all the hard work that has been put into preparing this and providing a comprehensive assessment of the options available to us and likely cost benefits.

This blueprint of ideas has only recently been completed and now it is time for all Members to participate through the Review and Scrutiny process and contribute their views as to how we take our leisure services forward in a cost effective manner. This with a view to making the service financially viable and effect the transfer to a Leisure Trust that will bring further savings and allow the necessary investment in our capital assets associated with leisure.

Wellington

I am pleased to report that included in our budget is a substantial amount for the much needed improvement works required to upgrade the North Street toilets. This will be for my colleague Mark Edwards to deal with the detail but it clearly demonstrates this administration's commitment to Taunton Deane as a whole. At Cornhill improved lighting has been achieved and repositioning of signs to facilitate optimum use of CCTV should be done shortly. The actual redevelopment of Cornhill is still very much under discussion and we are pressing for this to be progressed but the rate of progress is determined by the commercial developers, not ourselves.

An update on the Tone Mill regeneration is contained in the report of Cliff Bishop and suffice to say I am delighted to see that progress continues towards preserving this unique heritage site of national importance.

Employment Land

I was extremely disappointed to read in the local press recently of two businesses that needed to relocate because of the proposed construction of the Silk Mills Bridge. Both cited the lack of available suitable employment land as the reason that one was closing altogether and the other relocating outside of the Deane. This I regard as a sad indictment of our ability to assist local business to

relocate when forced to do so and also highlights the lack of availability of land that is already included in our Local Plan for employment use because, for whatever reason, it is not being brought forward. We will be focussing on the reasons behind this problem and discussing possible solutions with Government Office SW. I am of the opinion it must be addressed in the short term if we are to change the message to business that Taunton Deane is not the place to try, because it does not have adequate employment land.

Councillor John Williams
Leader of the Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 20 APRIL 2004

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL
COUNCILLOR BISHOP - PLANNING POLICY AND TRANSPORTATION

Taunton Deane Local Plan - Proposed Modifications

At its meeting on 23 March 2004, the Strategic Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Review Panel considered the proposed modifications to the Taunton Deane Local Plan, following the receipt of the Local Plan Inspector's Report.

After careful consideration, the Review Panel recommended the Executive to accept the proposed modifications prior to requesting Council approval to place the modifications on deposit for public consultation.

The Executive felt it was important that proposals for the development of land at Longforth Farm, Wellington should be considered as part of the Local Development Framework that would have to be produced by the Council shortly.

The Council are RECOMMENDED that the proposed modifications to the Taunton Deane Local Plan be agreed and that they be placed on deposit for public consultation.

Councillor C W Bishop

NOTE: A full copy of this report was circulated to all members of Strategic Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Review Panel and the Executive. Copies have also been placed in the Member's Room and are available on the Council's web site: www.tauntondeane.gov.uk. If any member requires a hard copy please contact Ralph Willoughby-Foster, Forward Plan and Regeneration Manager.

COUNCIL MEETING - 20 APRIL 2004

Report of Councillor Bishop – Planning Policy and Transportation

The Planning Delivery Grant

I was delighted when notification was received from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister that a grant for 2004/05 of £533,068.00 had been awarded to the Council and I congratulate all staff on their performance, which helped to secure the award.

Although the grant is not ring-fenced it has been allocated on the basis that it will drive up performance in the delivery of planning functions, both in respect of development control and plan making.

The ODPM will continue to link grants awarded for 2005/06 to improved planning performance so as to act as an incentive for authorities to reach and secure the development control handling targets and produce local development documents in a timely manner. The Minister has stated, "authorities should be aware that they will need to secure improvements in these areas in order to receive money next year".

Planning Applications

The Section 106 agreement for the Abbey Manor Development at Firepool should be signed before the end of the month and the application which has been outstanding over a long period will then be cleared.

Local Development Framework

As there appears to be confusion amongst some members regarding the timescale for the LDF, the following statement from the Minister should clarify the matter:-

"All authorities are required to have the LDF in place and meet the development control target by the end of 2006/07."

Consultation concerning proposed changes to Taunton Town Services with effect from 7 June 2004 by First Somerset & Avon.

Last month I attended a meeting in Bath with the Directors of First, regarding the improvements to services and the criteria for future investment.

I was also requested to arrange a meeting with Councillors Weston and Croad, who had expressed their concern about the bus services operating in the Priorswood area. At the meeting we were informed of the details that were being given to the Traffic Commissioners regarding the proposed change to the Taunton Town Service with effect from Monday 7 June 2004.

The following report, issued at the meeting, is reproduced as it contains information, which is of considerable interest to the Council, but I must point out that publicity will be provided by First nearer the date of the proposed changes.

“From 7 June it is proposed to replace the current network of 8 town services in Taunton with 4 new routes, of which 3 will be cross-town.

The present network has been in place since April 2002 and was based on recommendations from outside consultants engaged by First to review Taunton’s bus services. Whilst these changes brought some simplifications to the network, and a stable pattern has been maintained since, efforts to promote travel on Taunton’s town buses during the intervening period have not met with much success. Notable events have included the introduction of low floor buses on services 1 and 2.

However, periods of staff shortage have made it difficult to maintain a full service and coupled with increasing traffic congestion along key corridors such as Station Road and East Reach, there has been a lack of confidence by passengers in the reliability of the network.

Our own research in September 2003 confirmed this view, particularly amongst passengers in the Priorswood area and to address this we have focussed management attention on issues such as staff recruitment and the transfer of work to depots where we can attract drivers.

We have now completed our detailed review of the performance of Taunton’s town service network, the first stage of which resulted in the deregistration of service 7 to Staplehay which had not been carrying enough passengers to be viable for us (Cooks Coaches are now providing a partial replacement, service 97, with financial support from Somerset County Council). The second stage is the revamp of the remaining town services.

- Service 1 (Parade – Ladymead Road) will be merged with service 5 (Parade – Blackbrook) and 6 (Parade – Juniper Road) to form a new cross-town service 1/1A (Ladymead Road to Blackbrook [1] or Juniper Road [1A]). The new service will be operated throughout by low floor buses.
- Service 2 (Parade – Priorswood) will be retimed so as to better fit in with services 1/1A between the Parade and the railway station. The service will be operated by conventional minibuses.
- Service 3 (Parade – Nerrols Farm) will be merged with service 9 (Parade – Bishop’s Hull) to form a new cross-town service 3, Nerrols Farm to Bishops Hull.
- Services 4 (Parade – Laxton Road) and 8 (Parade – Galmington) will be merged to form a new cross-town service 4, Laxton Road to Galmington.

Sunday services will be unchanged.

These measures are designed to: -

1. Simplify the town network to make it easier to market, via a new town map and timetable, with coloured route carried forward on to the buses themselves.

2. Address reliability issues by providing additional running time in areas where congestion is an increasing problem – e.g. Station Road. On new services 1/1A this has been found by redeploying the generous recovery time on existing services 5 and 6. Service 2 has also been given additional running time but will remain self-contained. On the cross-town services there will still be between 3 and 8 minutes' recovery time at the Parade and buses will avoid the need to pass along the same congested section in successive journeys.
3. Introduce new cross-town journey opportunities such as Ladymead Road to East Street shops and Blackbrook Sports Centre, Nerrols Farm to SCAT, Holway to the railway station and Laxton Road to Musgrove Park Hospital.
4. Even out the spread of the eight town buses each hour between the Parade and the railway station so as to provide a more convenient service.

By addressing basic issues such as reliable and robust timetabling we intend to provide a sound base upon which to move forward with our town service network in Taunton.

With housing estates generally within walking or cycling distance of the town centre, and easy access to relatively cheap car parks close to the shops, the environment for operating a successful commercial town bus service network is challenging.

We need the proactive support of the local authorities to help create the circumstances where public transport can be given its fullest opportunity to offer an alternative to the private car. We were disappointed that the congestion protocol between the two local authorities did not specifically address the issue of keeping buses moving.

We welcome the proposals featured in the current consultation on the Taunton Transport Strategy review and we shall be responding in writing to list out those roads where we feel additional bus priority measures are essential.

Our new town network in Taunton is a platform for future development. With effective promotion and good reliability, we believe we can win back lost passengers and raise the profile of public transport in Taunton. But we need the local authorities as partners in this endeavour. We welcome regular forums with user groups and tripartite meetings with the councils. If together we can grow the business, it will assist in attracting further investment from our parent group. We look forward to your support”.

Regeneration Through Heritage –Tone Mill Partnership

Tone Mill is a unique heritage site of national importance in an area of economic need. The project is particularly well placed to bring together a heritage asset with a regeneration programme to add value to the community of Wellington and can be an excellent example of heritage led regeneration.

At the meeting of the Partnership on 6 April, the members, who will act as initial Trustees, were appointed in order that an application can be made to the Charity Commission for establishment of the Trust.

A Feasability Study Brief has been prepared and most of the money is in place to appoint consultants.

Councillor Cliff Bishop

COUNCIL MEETING – 20 APRIL 2004

REPORT OF COUNCILLOR MRS. D. BRADLEY - LEISURE, ART AND CULTURE

LEISURE TRUST UPDATE

Last December the Council deferred for six months the decision to transfer its Leisure Services and facilities to Tone Leisure Limited. It also resolved to start work immediately on a medium-term strategic review of the service which would need completing before any final decision to transfer the service.

This is being undertaken in two parts. The first involves a detailed assessment of the current services being provided with a view to producing a facility-by-facility and service-by-service cost/benefit analysis. This analysis will be used to determine if it is possible to make immediate savings by reducing service levels. The second relates to the potential longer-term appraisal of the facilities themselves. It will be limited to consideration of swimming provision in Taunton, the future role and management of Vivary Golf Course and the range of opportunities to be provided at Blackbrook.

The Health and Leisure Review Panel will be overseeing the Leisure Services Strategic Review and hopefully making recommendations to the June Executive. The Shadow Board of Trustees is continuing to meet and two Trustees have been nominated to get involved with the Strategic Review, as well as attending the Health and Leisure Review Panel meetings.

LEISURE SERVICE ACTIVITIES

These have included the **Optika Wheelchair Tournament** at the Taunton Indoor Tennis Centre which was one of the most successful in the history of the Centre; 24 players from throughout the UK competed in the two-day event. Three local players, Shaun Regan, Lucy Shuker and Dave Cook, played well and showed the improvements in their games which they have been working on in their weekly coaching sessions at the Centre. Both Shaun and Lucy are working towards their goal of achieving selection for the 2008 Paralympics.

The **Tone Leisure Proactive Physical Activity Referral Scheme** has again increased significantly. Over 500 people were referred to the Deane's three main leisure facilities last year. The scheme works in partnership with Musgrove Hospital to provide individuals with the opportunity for them and their partners or friends to gain confidence as well as fitness to help them lead a fulfilling life. Tone Leisure has also been awarded a grant of £28,300 by the **Better Play Lottery Fund** to provide inclusive play opportunities for disabled children. The award will fund support workers to work on a 1:1 basis with children in all our leisure facilities, during the school holiday activities or for children who want to attend out-of-school sporting activities (eg. Swimming lessons, gymnastics etc.)

SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

Coach Education included 5 courses held at Wellsprings for local sports clubs, coaches and leisure centre staff. 61 people attended the courses which covered Good Practice & Child Protection, Coaching Disabled Performers, Motivation and Mental Toughness, Sports Facility Development, and Tri Golf Leaders. Also to come are the Badminton Leaders Award and Assistant Gymnastics Award offering 25 places in total.

Football Development provides high level coaching to talented players from across the Deane numbering 45 boys aged 7-11. In addition to fortnightly coaching they have guest coaching from Exeter City Centre of Excellence. It is hoped to link the team with future development at Castle School and Taunton Town FC.

BMX Tracks at Taunton and Wellington have been enhanced by funding from the Crime and Disorder Partnership. The Taunton Track will host a race day run by Tiverton BMX Club on 8th May for all local people to take part in which will be open to all ages and abilities. BMX bikes, pads and helmets owned by the council will be available on site for those without suitable gear.

Vibe Sport; this weekly multi-activity session at Wellsprings on a Friday evenings is again funded by the Crime & Disorder Partnership. It will be run by local youth workers and police to help tackle issues of anti social behaviour. It is one of the projects of the Diversionary Delivery Team.

Taunton Deane Triathlon is due to take place on Sunday 16 May. Over £1,200 in sponsorship has been obtained and Orchard FM is backing it and entering presenters in the race. The event is full once again with 350 entries with some travelling from Loughborough and West Midlands to attend the race and have a great weekend in the Deane. The event has become nationally recognised with a reputation for great organisation and fantastic scenery.

PARKS AND GREEN SPACES

Our Parks Service is gearing up for a busy season with several interesting initiatives underway:

Paws in the Park on 19 June 2004 in Vivary Park, is an event aimed at promoting "responsible dog ownership". Members of the public will be able to watch trained dogs from local dog clubs undertaking a variety of demonstrations; from flyball to heelwork to music. A number of stalls from various organisations and charities will also be there along with the Council's dog warden service. A companion dog show for breed and novelty classes will also be held. This event is kindly supported by West Country Feeds based in Norton Fitzwarren.

Friends of Vivary Park is now up to 80 members and holds its first AGM on 6 May 2004 followed by a tour of Taunton Deane's Nursery. The Council officers are keen to support the Friends groups and hope that they may be instrumental in accessing external funding for investment in park facilities. **Bandstand concerts** in Vivary

Park resume on June 6 with a concert by the Deane Big Band on the 60th anniversary of the D-Day landings.

The Friends of Wellington Park has a programme of summer music and events for all to enjoy this summer starting on Bank Holiday Monday - 3 May - with a Children's Festival. The AGM for this Friends group will be on May 12.

The Victoria Park Development Plan is to be presented to Members of the Health and Leisure Review Panel in June. It includes proposals suggested by the local community on improvements to encourage greater and wider community use of the park. This group and the Play Development Workers based there have made a real difference to Victoria Park in the last year.

A recent cycling awareness event was very well received. This was one of two events proposed to promote safer cycling in and around our parks and open spaces.

Following the success of the **Schools Sunflower Competition** last year, this competition will see over 700 Year 5 pupils growing sunflowers to find the 'heaviest head'. The competition engages young people in learning more about plants, how they grow and develop and why they are important to the environment. It links in with Key Stages of the National Curriculum. The competition is supported by Taunton in Bloom and Wellington in Bloom.

Taunton In Bloom and Wellington in Bloom, in conjunction with Taunton Parks Section, will hold an invitation evening celebrating the achievements of local community groups including the "In Bloom" groups on Thursday 20 May 2004.

CULTURE AND ART

Our busy Art Officer publishes the Spring / Summer **Deane Arts Update** shortly giving useful information on local arts initiatives, updates on project grants and highlights activities from key strategic organisations such as The Brewhouse, Take Art! and Somerset Art Week. It also flags up regional and national opportunities for artists and others in the arts community

The **Cultural Consortium**, which has been set up to enable partners and stakeholders to make joint recommendations to the Vision for Taunton, is investigating constitutions and modus operandi of other development agencies for making Hunts Court an art gallery and community arts space. It is talking to potential tenants.

The value of the arts to our local economy is flagged up in the interim results from the **Economic Impact Study of Creative Industries** in Somerset which reveals that the Creative Industries in Somerset are responsible for the employment of 2.3% of the total employed in the county. Taunton Deane accommodates a third of this percentage. While this is a relatively low percentage compared to the regional figure of approximately 5 % employment in the creative industries, there are indicators of significant growth in employment, turnover and business/workplace count in the 1998 – 2002/3 period as follows:-

- Overall creative industries employment growth of 13%
- Overall creative industries turnover growth of 15%
- Overall creative industries workplace growth of 11%

An **arts development grant** of £5,000 for two years awarded by the Council to Take Art! and Actiontrack , has enabled these organisations to lever in £100,000 of funding from the Youth Music organisation. This will fund an extensive programme of world music concerts and workshops for young people in Taunton Deane and West Somerset.

Other arts projects planned for the coming year include a number of **community multi-cultural events** initiated by the Afro-Caribbean Cultural Committee and the Chinese-Anglo Society, and supported by officers. South African artist, Marian Beukes, is currently Artist in Residence in Victoria Park, working with the Barnardos' Saturday Club to make a mosaic for the outside wall of the Pavilion.

Real Art is an organisation that will be developing quality summer creative activities with **people with learning difficulties and profound sensory disabilities**, providing social and educational opportunities such as visits to the park and The Brewhouse Theatre that they might not otherwise have.

The summer **Deano** will be out in the first week of June, full of activities for children over the long holiday period. It will include details of some exciting new activities for older children in the parks this summer being planned in partnership with the Sports Centre staff.

I trust that from the detail in this report it will be apparent just how extensive and wide-ranging are the activities organised by quite a small team of Taunton Deane Officers and how successful they have been in levering in funding. What is clear from all this multitude of activity is that the new way of working is by partnership. Not only does it draw down funding but it is a way of building up community involvement and encouraging responsibility and social inclusion. Many of the projects quite clearly have a role in promoting the quality of life in Taunton Deane and its overall economy. While leisure services may be discretionary they do contribute in many ways to our corporate priorities of the Taunton Vision, the economy, health and social inclusion.

Councillor Mrs. D. Bradley

Report to Full Council - 20 April 2004 Communications Portfolio

Communications Strategy 2004-2007

The TDBC Communications Strategy was adopted at the March meeting of the Executive and I thank our Officers for their contribution and hard work in putting this together.

Press Office/Public Relations

I would like to take the opportunity to welcome Becky Brown to TDBC. Becky has been manning our press office on a part-time basis. She is well qualified for this role having previously worked for another local authority. In addition, she brings to us the many skills gained from her experience as journalist and has already made a valuable contribution enabling us to maintain essential contact with our local media in this interim period of restructuring.

In the Spotlight – our Media coverage

During the past few weeks we have seen some very mixed messages in the media and there have been some instances of blatantly incorrect information being portrayed. However, I am pleased to report that we have now taken this on board and we are being much more proactive in supplying the media with information about the Council's work and aspirations. We are recognising how important it is to give the public accurate and timely information.

We have issued 4 times the normal volume of press releases resulting in excellent reporting in the local press and on the radio of our news items. To highlight just a few:-

- Wellsprings – there was a lovely article in the press on the opening (April 30) featuring Joy Boaden a regular Proactive customer at Wellsprings.
- Woodland Tree Planting at Netherclay with children from Bishops Hull Community Primary School
- The Citizenship Awards (April 23) – designed to publicly acknowledge outstanding voluntary service within the Deane.
- Taunton Vision/A358 dualling – Taunton Deane Borough Council confirmed its strong support to dual the A358 from the A303 at Ilminster to the M5 at Taunton which will help deliver the Vision for Taunton.
- Parish Projects – a one day workshop (April 28) to provide information and support for those working on community projects
- Best Value Survey – detailing how satisfied the public is with the services we offer
- Action taken on traffic congestion in Staplegrove
- Livestock Market relocation to Wellington

Weekly Bulletin

At last Full Council observations were made that the content was not as great as normal, so I would like to remind members that any of you or the panels you are members of may submit items of interest for publication in the Weekly Bulletin.

Deane Dispatch – the next issue will be published at the end of June/early July and we are now gathering material for inclusion.

Gwyneth Bryant
Executive Councillor - Communications

COUNCIL MEETING – 20 APRIL 2004

Report of Councillor Cavill – Economic Development and Tourism

Lyons report

As many of you will know the Lyons report has confirmed that the first tranche of 20,000 jobs are to be relocated from London and the South East. A considerable amount of work has now been done by the Economic Team who have been promoting our sites and the benefits of relocation to Taunton. We have been working with the RDA and GOSW who have identified us as a major site in the South West, as such they are assisting us in promotion of Taunton.

Dualling of A358

The South West Regional assembly should be making its decision at the end of the month when it finalises its views of priorities. The debate has been well rehearsed, so this is the last call, to write to the Chairman of the Assembly. He is Mr M Hanney, SWRA, Dennett House, 11 Middle Street, Taunton, TA1 1SH. Please take the opportunity to make your views known.

Taunton Livestock Market

The construction of the planning application for the new market at Chelston is proceeding apace, with all the necessary reports being assembled. This is a slow, laborious and expensive process that is nearing its conclusion.

Agricultural Officer for Taunton Deane

Our officer has recently promoted two events; one looking at how business can keep abreast of demands, and the other to further the promotion of farmer's markets. Both have been successful, and have enabled one new landscaping business to set up and assisted expansion of another. The officer is in discussion with the Taunton Deane M5 services Road Chef to see if we can set up a 'Taste of Somerset', creating a lucrative outlet and acting as a promotion centre to thousands of M5 travellers.

Taunton TIC

As a result of negotiations and constructive action, it is business as usual, subject to the formal final agreement. This should mean no reduction in the operation of the TIC. The shortfall has been covered by our Tourism Officer restructuring his section and the staff at the TIC generating additional business. Of particular interest in this respect is the ability to book trips for a day out, short stay, theatre tickets and the like all in the one stop shop. Congratulations to all involved.

Broadband

Taunton Deane has delivered a number of road shows, promoting the benefits of Broadband, which have been very well received. In most cases, both individuals and businesses will save money and have new horizons opened to them. We are now dependent upon BT for installation times.

Councillor N P Cavill

COUNCIL MEETING – 20 APRIL 2004

REPORT OF COUNCILLOR GARNER – HOUSING SERVICES

Given this is the first Full Council following the 2003/04 year end, I considered it appropriate to provide members with a summary of certain Key Performance Indicators for 2003/04 in relation to the Housing Portfolio.

The summary overleaf compares projected outcome with actual performance in the years 2003/04 and 2002/03.

My intention is to provide this information at the end of each year as it provides members with a snapshot of current performance and also re-defines the new baseline position.

Councillor Greg Garner

Key Performance Indicators - Housing

Homelessness

2002/03	2002/03		2003/04	2003/04	2003/04	2003/04	Comment
Last Est	Actual		Budget	Q1 Rev	Actual	Bud v Act	
	11	No's in Bed & Breakfast - Families			1		
	23	No's in Bed & Breakfast - Singles			32		
£178k	£332k	Bed & Breakfast Expenditure (£000's)	£243k	£293k	£234k	+ £9k	£59k less than Q1 est.
22	22	No of temporary hostels	22		22		+4 planned 04/05

Housing

2002/03	2002/03		2003/04	2003/04	2003/04	2003/04	Comment
Last Est	Actual		Budget	Q1 Rev	Actual	Bud v Act	
131)	106)	New Homes completed - Houses	131)		18	-89)	71 units delayed, start 04/05
))	New Homes completed - Flats)		24)	51 SWEB, 20 Cotford
0	0	Private leasing properties	0		5		New initiative
0	*	Lets above shops	0		8		5 pending (+10 interested)

* 9 above shop lets already in situ

RTB

2002/03	2002/03		2003/04	2003/04	2003/04	2003/04	Comment
Last Est	Actual		Budget	Q1 Rev	Actual	Bud v Act	
100	112	Properties sold - Number	90		135	+45	
£836	£1216	Properties sold – Value (£000's)	£941		£1864	+£923	

REPORT OF COUNCILLOR TERRY HALL – RESOURCES
COUNCIL MEETING – 20 APRIL 2004

1 CUSTOMER SERVICE (SOMERSET DIRECT)

At the time of writing (5 April) none of the Districts or County Council has so far been able to fully bring their systems in to use. This is a consequence of software problems, which are the responsibility of the supplier to solve. A new version of the software has been received which we will be testing on behalf of the whole partnership before Easter, and if OK we expect to go fully live after Easter.

However, all incoming calls to 356356 are being answered by the Customer Services section using the new telephony systems which enables important data regarding call arrival patterns and durations to be obtained. This will permit us to match staffing to demand more closely in the near future.

The Customer Services section through existing Deane systems is providing enquiries relating to Benefits, Council Tax and other simple elements of information. Migration of the other services to Customer Service will follow as soon as possible.

I hope to be able to give a more encouraging update at the Meeting on 20 April.

2 PERSONNEL

The installation and testing of the new HR/Payroll system has gone according to plan. Two parallel runs have been successfully completed, with the new system paying staff exactly the same as the old one. The pay staff receives towards the end of April will be the first generated by the new system alone, the old system having now been closed down. We are looking forward to using the new system to produce useful management data - particularly to help us in continuing to manage staff absences.

At the end of this month the liP Assessors return to decide whether or not the Council as a whole has achieved the Investors in People Standard. Whilst there are no guarantees of achieving the award, we hope that all of the efforts by many staff will pay off, and that we will be able to report success to the next Council.

3 BENEFITS

On 30 March 2004, we received our long expected visit from the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (BFI) for the Comprehensive Performance Assessment. While the Inspectors were only with us for the day, they set a challenging schedule

covering all areas of the Department for Work and Pensions' Performance Standards.

We expect to receive the BFI's draft report by 16 April 2004. We will then have 2 days to add any comments before returning it for submission to the Audit Commission.

Our end of year results against Best Value Performance Indicators show we worked out new claims 3 days faster than in the previous year. However, in working out changes of circumstances, our performance dropped by 0.27 days. Our Investigation Team surpassed all expectations in 2003/04; we had hoped to get £30k from the DWP for our action against fraudsters - instead we will receive over £60k!

4 REVENUES

The Revenues Team have largely been concentrating on the year-end processes over the last couple of months for the Rents, Council Tax and Business Rate systems.

Year-end has largely gone smoothly with all Council Tax/Business Rate bills and Rent notifications having been produced and issued to timetable. The timetable for Council Tax and Business Rate has been much tighter this year due to the payment date having moved forward to 1 April 2004. Savings in postage costs have been made, where possible, by issuing documents using the Post Office's walksort discount system.

The project to produce a Council Tax leaflet in conjunction with the other Somerset districts and the County Council has been successfully completed. This has resulted in our issuing a better quality leaflet, but at a reduced cost.

Figures recently produced indicate that we have increased direct debit take-up for Council Tax and Business Rates over the past year. It had been feared that bringing forward the payment date might have resulted in large numbers of people cancelling their direct debits. However, so far, this has not proven to be the case. 65.5% of Council Tax payers and 59.6% of Business Rate payers now pay by way of direct debit.

Our Council Tax in-year collection rate has again improved on previous years. At 31 March 2004 we had collected 97.92% of the charge for 2003/04. This marks our highest collection rate since the return in-house of the Revenues Service in 2000. The collection rate for Business Rates fell slightly below that for last year and stood at 98.49% at 31 March 2004.

5 FINANCIAL SERVICES

The Financial Services Unit is now working towards the speedy closedown of the 2003/04 Accounts. The outturn for the year will be reported to the Executive at the June meeting.

Work is also starting in conjunction with the IS Unit on a review of the financial systems employed by the Authority and the links with other feeder systems. It is hoped that this review will enable streamlining to take place and for more efficient use of resources.

Finally we are looking at the Financial Awareness Training that is available to Members of the Council. Revamped training sessions will take place in July, details will be available from Greg Dyke in the next few weeks.

6 MEMBERS SERVICES

A survey of councillors is currently being undertaken to ascertain which papers they would like to continue to receive as hard copies, thus reducing the amount of paperwork sent out. Any Member who has not responded to the survey is asked to do so as soon as possible.

A booklet drawing attention to the services available to Members has recently been circulated to all councillors.

Arrangements are well in hand for the forthcoming civic functions, Annual Council on 5 May , Civic Reception, Dinner and Dance at Oake Manor Golf Club on 6 May, Civic Service at St. Andrew's Church on 9 May and the admission of Councillor Meikle as a Freeman of the Borough at the Brewhouse Theatre on 10 May.

The Member Training Programme for 2005/2006 has been approved and this will include training sessions on Ethics and Probity, Interviewing Skills, Disputes and Appeals, Finance, Licensing, Overview and Scrutiny, Time Management and Personal Organisation, Chaining Skills and Dealing with Lobbying, Case Work and Advice Surgeries.

Finally, initial discussions have started regarding the setting up of individual web pages for councillors on the Council's web site.

7 INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Last week saw the main year end process for the rents system. This was the final process of what has been a pretty intense 2 months.

Supporting People - we had to make last minute changes to the system to cope with the difference between our new charges and the amount of funding that supporting people are giving us this year.

Cash Receipting - this major new system went live on 1 April. A few teething problems with telephone payments were sorted by the morning of 2 April, and the system is now running smoothly (this system is helping realise about £12,000 pa in savings)

Payroll/HR - the report generator that comes with the new system is proving less user friendly than anticipated and so we are now developing the reports down here rather than the personnel staff doing them. I should point out that this is not necessarily the fault of the system, instead it is a demonstration of the fact that any complex system will need support from the IS Unit.

E-Government

Over the last 2 months our web site had an average of 2300 page views per day, with about 20,000 unique visitors. These figures mean we are set to exceed our forecasts of visitors published in our IEG statement. The new content management software (allowing users to create and maintain their own web pages) is being used in Benefits, Planning, Building Control, Local Plan, Economic Development, Community Initiatives, Office Services (the Old Municipal Buildings site) and Heritage & Landscape. This tool includes automatic review and expiry dates of the pages.

Storage

Our 5 main data servers recently hit 1/2 terabyte of data stored collectively - We are now working hard on the storage area network procurement with some site visits being arranged later this month.

Councillor Terry Hall

COUNCIL MEETING – 20 APRIL 2004

REPORT OF COUNCILLOR MRS. LEWIN-HARRIS – COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

CRIME AND DISORDER PARTNERSHIP

The partnership recently agreed to focus funding for 2004/05 on projects to tackle anti-social behaviour and substance misuse. Examples include:-

- Night Hoops - a scheme to provide sporting activities for young people at risk of offending during the peak offending hours in specific areas of Taunton Deane
- Validate UK – proof of age cards to all new year 11 and sixth form students
- Promise mentoring scheme – support for volunteer mentors who work with young people who are at risk
- Firebreak - a scheme run by the fire brigade aimed at young people in school years 10 & 11 providing an alternative style of learning out of the classroom based on practical training in basic firefighting skills.
- Residential project – to take young people from Taunton on a residential course designed to develop team building skills and self esteem.
- Relocatable CCTV.

This is just an illustrative list. Full details of the projects can be obtained from the Community Safety Officer.

Tone Leisure has also been successful in attracting Crime and Disorder Partnership funding to pilot a multi-sports session on Friday evenings and for work on a drug rehabilitation scheme.

Audit work to inform the 2005-2008 Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy has begun. The first consultation questionnaire has been distributed and responses are coming back. The analysis of the themes and issues coming out of the responses should be available by the end of May.

BEST VALUE GENERAL SURVEY

A summary of the analysis of the results Best Value General Survey was reported in the Weekly Bulletin on March 11. This shows that in most areas the public are satisfied or very satisfied with the service they are getting from this Council. It also shows that 84% of people are satisfied or very satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live. This is good news indeed and indicates that Taunton Deane offers, on the whole, a very pleasant environment in which to live.

It is also good news, and a credit to our staff, that in a recent benchmarking exercise involving a total of 12 participating authorities, TDBC consistently

had higher levels of customer satisfaction in almost all of the service areas when compared with the group's overall averages."

However, some of the statistics relating to crime and anti-social behaviour are not so comfortable:

- 63% think that the level of crime has got worse over the past three years
- 62% think that people being drunk and disorderly in a public place is a problem
- 51% think that people using or dealing drugs is a problem
- 46% feel that vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage of property or vehicles is a problem in their local area
- 45% of residents feel unsafe in Taunton Deane after dark

These concerns back up our decision to make Tackling Anti-social Behaviour one of four major priorities in the Corporate Strategy.

LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

The Taunton Deane Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) met on 8th March 2004 – its first meeting since a fundamental review of its role and membership was undertaken.

We had a very productive meeting. Each member of the partnership provided a short summary of their organisation's priorities for the future and this led to a wider discussion about priority areas for collective action within the Community Strategy. These priority areas were:

- Inequalities and the needs of minority and hard to reach groups
- Working with others to tackle the causes of deprivation in particular areas
- Developing better ways of sharing information about local needs and quality of life trends
- Developing a stronger local economy
- Developing safer communities, with a particular emphasis on the night-time economy and anti-social behaviour.

An officer group will bring forward proposals to the next LSP meeting, outlining ideas on how partners could work together to tackle these priorities.

NORTH TAUNTON PARTNERSHIP

I am very pleased to say that, following approaches to some key members of the LSP a partnership finance package has been secured to employ a 2-year part time community development worker for north Taunton.

This worker will be employed by the Council but be directly accountable to the North Taunton Partnership. The purpose of the post will be to support the

partnership to co-ordinate the development and implementation of a Community Development programme for the area. This post will build on the strengths of North Taunton Partnership by ensuring that it acts as the hub for community activity and assist with attracting external investment into the area.

The post holder will operate mainly out of the Priorswood Resource Centre with an office base at Wellsprings Sports Centre. Interviews have taken place and it is hoped that the new worker will be in place during May 2004.

CORPORATE STRATEGY

Further work is being done across the council to clarify the position on our priorities and to ensure that all members and staff are aware of the Corporate Strategy. This strategy is structured round the ETCHED (economy, transport, crime, health, environment and delivery) themes, with objectives under each of these headings. Four have been singled out as the Council's highest priorities for 2004-7:

- Delivering the Vision for Taunton
- Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour in our Communities
- Working with the County Council and others to tackle local transport priorities
- Housing

Details of what we intend to do to achieve these priorities are contained in the Corporate Strategy.

VOICE

Councillors should all have been sent a copy of the latest (12th) issue of VOICE, a magazine produced by young people for young people and enabled by this council. May I recommend this to you as "a good read". This edition has a crime theme with an eye-catching front cover (a stark picture of a pair of handcuffs) and has been part funded by the Police. There are some good articles in it, including a description of a mock arrest, a story about a firesetter and another one on joyriding. I very much welcome the partnership with the police in the production of this edition of the magazine.

Councillor Joanna Lewin-Harris