



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 JULY 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 Meetings of the Council held on 5 and 10 May 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) Draft Performance Plan 2004/05 (enclosed)
(b) Outturn Report 2003/04 (enclosed)
8. Councillor Bishop (Planning Policy and Transportation)
9. Councillor Mrs Bradley (Leisure, Arts and Culture)
Recommendation relating to Establishment of a Leisure Trust - Tone Leisure (South West) Limited (enclosed)
10. Councillor Mrs Bryant (Communications)
11. Councillor Cavill (Economic Development, Property and Tourism)
12. Councillor Edwards (Environmental Services)
Recommendation relating to the Future of Waste Collection and Recycling in Taunton Deane (enclosed)
13. Councillor Garner (Housing Services)
Recommendation relating to Council Housing Stock Options Appraisal (enclosed)
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 July 2004

TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

At the Annual Meeting of the Taunton Deane Borough Council held in the Principal Committee Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton on Wednesday 5 May 2004 at 6.30 pm.

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

1. Prayers

The meeting was opened with prayers offered by the Mayor's Chaplain.

2. Election of Mayor

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

That Councillor Jean Margaret Allgrove be elected Mayor of Taunton Deane Borough for the ensuing year.

Councillor Mrs Allgrove signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

3. Deputy Mayor

On the motion of the Mayor, seconded by Councillor Mrs Whitmarsh, it was RESOLVED:

That Councillor Richard Lees be elected as Deputy Mayor for the ensuing year.

Councillor Lees signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

4. Councillor Andrew James Govier

On the motion of Councillor Henley, seconded by Councillor Croad it was RESOLVED:

“That the best thanks of the Council be accorded to Councillor Andrew James Govier for the manner in which he had discharged the duties of the office of the Mayor of the Borough during his term of office.”

Councillor Govier replied.

5. Past Mayor Badge

The Mayor presented Councillor Govier with his Past Mayor Badge.

6. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 20 April 2004, a copy having been circulated to each Member, were signed by the Mayor.

7. Apologies

Councillors Miss S Cavill, Garner, Guerrier, Stone, Trollope and Weston.

8. Election of Leader 2004/2005

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

9. Appointment of Executive 2004/2005

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

Councillor Williams (Leader), Councillor Mrs Lewin-Harris (Deputy Leader), Councillors Bishop, Mrs Bradley, Mrs Bryant, N Cavill, Edwards, Garner and Hall.

10. Appointment of Review Board 2004/2005

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

11 Members

6 Conservative, 3 Liberal Democrats, 1 Labour, 1 Independent.

(Note: The Review Board will be chaired by the Leader of the largest opposition political group on the Council (Councillor Henley).)

11. Appointment of Regulatory Committees and Boards

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

18 Members

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

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

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

12. Appointment of Review Panels

In accordance with the terms of the Council's Constitution the Chairs of the Review Panels had been nominated jointly following consultation between the leaders of the political groups.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

13. Standards Committee 2004/2005

The appointment of a Standards Committee for the ensuing year was agreed with membership to consist of 7 independent members of the public (already appointed) and 4 Councillors (1 from each Group) and 2 Parish members from whom Panels would be selected when necessary.

14. Intercessional Prayer

The meeting was closed at 8.00 pm with prayers offered by The Reverend Julian Smith.

TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

At a special meeting of the Taunton Deane Borough Council held in the Brewhouse Theatre, Coal Orchard, Taunton, on Monday, 10 May 2004 at 10.45 am..

Present: The Mayor (Councillor Mrs Allgrove), The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Lees)
Councillors Beaven, Bishop, Mrs Bradley, N Cavill, Davies, Denington, Durdan, Edwards, Floyd, Govier, Guerrier, Hall, Mrs Hill, Hindley, House, Mrs Lewin-Harris, Ligo, Meikle, Morrell, Mrs Nixon, Ms Peppard, Stuart-Thorn, Vail, Wedderkopp, Mrs Whitmarsh and Williams.

1. Apologies

Councillors Bone, Bowrah, Mrs Bryant, Miss S Cavill, Croad, Garner, Gill, Hayward, Henley, Mullins, Phillips, Prior-Sankey, Slattery, Mrs Smith, Stone, Trollope, Watson, Mrs Wilson and Weston.

2. Presentation – Aspects of Taunton Deane 1950 – 2004

The Mayor (Councillor Mrs Allgrove), together with Councillor Meikle and assisted by 12 specially selected Tauntonians made a presentation to the Council and guests on key development that had taken place over the past 50 years.

3. Freedom of the Borough – Councillor J R G Meikle MBE

On the motion of Councillor Williams and seconded by Councillor Floyd it was RESOLVED:-

- (1) that the Honorary Freedom of the Borough be conferred upon Councillor J R G Meikle MBE in recognition of the eminent service rendered by him to the Taunton Deane community over a period of forty-six years.
- (2) that a certificate of Admission to the Honorary Freedom be signed by the Mayor and Chief Executive and be presented to Councillor Meikle.

The Certificate of Admission was read by the Mayor, Councillor Mrs Allgrove.

The Mayor congratulated Councillor Meikle.

Councillor Meikle addressed the Council and thanked it for admitting him as a Freeman of the Borough.

(The meeting ended at 12.15 pm with the singing of the Taunton Anthem “Defendamus”.)

COUNCIL MEETING - 20 JULY 2004

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

(a) Draft Performance Plan 2004/05

Councils are required by legislation to produce an annual Performance Plan. This year's draft Plan has been considered by the Review Board at its meeting on 9 June 2004. Much of the information and data required to produce the Plan had not been available until after the year-end 31 March. It then had to be both analysed and summarised. Additionally the recent CPA inspection had had a considerable impact on the resources available to produce the Plan. As a consequence, the Review Board were unable to approve it as the version they considered was not complete at that time.

An updated version was considered and approved by the Executive at its meeting on 23 June 2004. A copy of the Plan has been sent to all Members.

The Performance Plan will become the focus of the Council's improvement planning by articulating priorities for improvement, including how weaknesses will be addressed, opportunities exploited and better outcomes delivered for local people. It will set targets for improved future performance.

It is, therefore, RECOMMENDED that the draft Performance Plan 2004/05 be agreed and that Council be recommended to give it retrospective approval.

(b) Outturn Report 2003/04

The Executive has considered, noted and agreed the Council's General Fund and Housing Revenue Account outturn for 2003/04.

The report contained details of the major spending and income variations and there were two issues that need to come before Council.

In April 2004, it was reported that £97,000 of monies set aside for the repayment of VAT would no longer be required. The Executive had previously agreed to transfer these monies to unallocated capital resources and a Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay had been created in 2003/04 to reflect this. However, this will require the approval of a virement by Council.

The current budget requires a total of £1,031,806 from the General Fund Reserve to support expenditure, the under spend shown in the report would now reduce this to £791,671. In order to increase the level of capital resources available, it is proposed that this underspend of £240,135 be transferred via the Revenue Account in 2004/05 to unallocated capital resources. This will require approval by Council of a Supplementary Estimate.

It is, therefore, RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) £97,000 of monies previously set aside for the repayment of VAT be vired to unallocated Capital Resources.
- (ii) A Supplementary Estimate be made in 2004/05 of an RCCO for the 2003/04 General Fund underspend of £240,135.

COUNCILLOR J R WILLIAMS

COUNCIL MEETING – 20 JULY 2004

REPORT OF COUNCILLOR JOHN WILLIAMS – LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The period since the last Full Council on 20 April has been very full with much happening.

We have gained Investors in People status which is a huge achievement and may I say a public thank you to all staff who worked so very, very hard to ensure we secured this.

Our new Mayor Councillor Mrs Jean Allgrove has been installed together with Deputy Mayor Councillor Richard Lees and I am sure you will all join with me in welcoming them to this, the first scheduled Full Council meeting since the installation. As usual the Mayoral duties are many and varied and it is so good to see that here in Taunton Deane we are able to maintain such a wonderful tradition which is part of our rich heritage and which is so appreciated by our electorate.

In an extremely well organised and moving ceremony the Freedom of the Borough was granted to Councillor John Meikle in recognition of his very long and valuable service to the people of Taunton Deane. This was a well deserved honour and I am delighted we were able to bestow this, the highest honour we are able. A fitting tribute in my view.

We have completed our Comprehensive Performance Assessment inspection, four inspectors visited and stayed for one week thoroughly testing our own self assessment and challenging the substance of the claims made within it. This was an extremely testing time for both officers and Members alike with the many intensive question time sessions when the detailed substantiation was sought. Despite the challenging time, morale across the Council remained high and it is a credit to all, irrespective of final outcome, that the very hard work of preparation and detailed gathering of evidence to support our claims clearly demonstrated that we are a good Council. Our external partners were also involved in the information gathering exercise when interviewed direct by the Inspectors and my sincere thanks goes to all who participated for giving of their valuable time. This may seem strange as I have no knowledge of what their answers were to the Inspectors but it would have been far worse if our partners had declined to participate! As to outcome, who can say, this will not be announced until September but I can say I came out of the process feeling more positive than negative, let us hope that my feelings are correct. I would also extend appreciation to the team of inspectors whose duty it was to challenge us, they carried out their duties in an even handed courteous manner which I believe was greatly appreciated by all. My thanks to them.

Subject to approval at this meeting we have now agreed our waste collection strategy in order to meet the stringent targets set for recycling of waste, I will not go into the detail of this but deal more with the economic aspect. Yet again we have Government imposed targets that we have to meet without any additional funding to achieve it. The capital cost of implementing the waste strategy agreed, even after central Government help, is in

excess of £600,000 which has to be found from this Council's reserves. The ongoing revenue costs will reach almost £300,000 – every single year from now on ! This item alone if fully funded from Council Tax would add over £7 to the average tax bill and this would then be decried by central Government as an unacceptable increase.

Consultation Document – Somerset and Exmoor National Park Structure Plan Alteration

We have received for consultation the Deposit Draft of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Alteration, 1996 to 2016, this is a very important document as it could have a huge affect on our future development proposals. Taunton Deane is recognised as having experienced the greatest rate of economic and employment growth since 1971 and this is expected to continue, clause 5.18. The Plan recognises the need for significant levels of new development but, in my opinion, does not fully address the need for improved infrastructure to accompany this development because there is no indication how this is to be achieved. The recommendation is for a huge increase in housing numbers, 10,500 net additional homes and to increase significantly the amount and variety of employment opportunities. The latter I subscribe to wholeheartedly but have great reservations about the housing numbers being promoted. As an illustration of the farcical nature of the housing numbers being imposed, in table 6.1 showing phasing, Taunton Deane is shown as completing houses at the rate of 650 per annum for the period 1996 to 2006, 6,500 houses total. We have not achieved that rate of build in recent times and in order to meet the total target would have to build at the rate of in excess of 800 houses per annum for the two years remaining of the plan period. I would say this is physically impossible to achieve as a target, yet it is being promoted.

The expectation is that the town's growth will continue beyond the plan period to 2016, (clause 3.26) with an urban extension to the North East. This in my view makes a mockery of its exhortations that developments should be well related with improved access to and within the town centre, when major development is proposed beyond Langaller towards Walford Cross to accommodate future growth. I see nothing in this plan which gives me even a glimmer of hope that the real serious traffic congestion problems presently experienced, even without the growth proposed, are being addressed. I have likened the proposed development of Taunton to being a sausage, long and thin, instead of creating a dumpling, cohesive and round! In my view the least sustainable form of development but I accept this is a draft for consultation. If we have to develop we must engage with the people of Taunton Deane to provide a much more sustainable solution than presently on offer. Clause 7.2 acknowledges that increasing level of car ownership is linked to economic growth and this growth is likely to continue, it is essential that a basket of solutions is developed to deal with this problem of which I am firmly of the opinion that an alternative route around Taunton has to be one.

Policy 45 states that bus services and facilities should be improved but regrettably this is not borne out by reality when we have recently experienced county wide bus cuts because of reduction in support by the County Council for rural bus services. The service within Taunton Deane also suffers from infrequent services, poor coverage and inconsistent

punctuality. This does not auger well as a service that will provide a decent public transport system in the future.

It also concerns me that the plan maintains a strong presumption against permanent development on the best and most versatile agricultural land (Policy 7). This could create severe difficulties for Wellington and the strong local aspiration for a relief road. I fully support in principle the preservation of good agricultural land but Wellington is virtually surrounded by good quality land so this presumption against is likely to be a major handicap. It is almost as bad as saying to Bridgwater they cannot build on the flood plain!

I welcome Policy 16, Land for Industrial, Warehouse and Business Development which states that as an authority we should ensure there is an adequate supply of land offering a range of employment sites. Taunton Deane has an acute shortage of suitable employment sites but this policy can only be implemented if the plethora of other agencies involved genuinely allow us to sensibly allocate land for employment. All of my previous comments regarding the present lack of infrastructure also apply because without improvements we will be prevented from allowing further development near strategic routes.

LGA Annual Conference

During week commencing 5 July the Local Government Association Annual Conference was held in Bournemouth which I attended. It is a useful and enlightening experience to be bombarded with all manner of information in plenary sessions, breakout sessions and fringe meetings. But the most useful element is the meeting with like minded people from all different areas and organisations to share ideas and good (and bad) practice. The main themes of the conference in my view were;

New Localism

Value for money services

Small government, greater individual choice

In some respects I do believe the quest was similar to seeking the “Holy Grail” in that central government are seeking to devolve powers but not really looking to democratically elected and accountable local authorities to take on the responsibilities they are seeking to devolve. Alternative organisations were being sought such as the many unelected organisations (quangos) that could receive and administer the resources and policies being devolved. I believe it fair to say that a resounding message was given by delegates that central government had available to them the tremendous resources of local government. They had the established procedures to maintain probity and accountability, they should be trusted, not sidelined for unelected and democratically unaccountable bodies.

The message was clear in my view, we do not require “new localism” we already have existing local government therefore ease the shackles and allow us to govern.

Equally delegates were direct in their response to government protestations that local government had seen a net increase in funding of 30% since 1997. Speakers were quickly and forcibly reminded of all the government inspired initiatives that had been thrust upon local government without any funding to finance it.

As would be expected the means of funding local government was a hot topic during the whole conference and although a “review of funding” is expected to be published shortly, strong indications were given that the major element of local government collected taxation would remain as a property based tax. It is, after all, simple to administrate, does not move, is economical to collect and achieves the highest collection rate of all taxes imposed, it appears common sense will prevail. This is not to say that the view as strongly articulated at the conference is that the level of Council Tax as now imposed is unsustainable. It is a great burden to those on fixed incomes experiencing the dramatic increases that have occurred since 1997. The way central government has imposed duties on local government without providing funds has been a stealth tax by reducing support which forces up local taxes if services are to be maintained. The message was sent that we need sensible funding policies, not the short termism of challenge funding or bidding which is so prevalent now, we can only wait and see if it was heard.

Above all there was a plea to allow us to just get on with the job and run our council’s in a manner best for the area we were in, remove the command and control regime that has now become all pervasive and allow us to do what we are good at, provide good local services that people tell us they want. This will go against the governments idea of uniformity of services for all areas but we are far better placed to provide services that are wanted rather than dictated from Whitehall. This would also, of course, involve the removal of the many layers of inspection and monitoring that have built up over the years, I am pleased to say even James Strachan, Chairman of the Audit Commission, said “it is time central government let go, let local authorities get on with what they know best”. We have, in my view, the ultimate check which is an annual audit of our affairs by the Audit Commission. This should be sufficient to establish our performance when measured against other authorities thus releasing us from the huge drain on our resources as caused by the plethora of checks and inspections now required.

Taunton Regeneration (Vision for Taunton)

I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without an update on progress which I have to say, for various reasons outside of our control, has been disappointing because the anticipated reports on infrastructure, feasibility and viability have only just become available. These were due some months ago but because of the sheer scale of the development as proposed have taken longer to prepare than envisaged. In addition there are the complications of assessing if the inner relief road is right for Taunton with the development as presently proposed. The viability studies will be presented to us shortly but the final infrastructure report will not be available until September at the earliest.

However, much work has been continuing within our own organisation to ensure that the correct building blocks are in place to allow development to proceed once we have assessed the vital reports that are now available but to be assessed. For instance the work towards relocating the livestock market for which a planning application has now been received for its proposed site at Chelston, Wellington, which is an essential precursor to freeing up the site at Firepool. Substantial work has also been carried out on mapping all of our landholdings, which are substantial, within Taunton Deane and particularly within the regeneration area, to ensure we are fully appraised of any conditions or covenants that may prevent redevelopment as proposed. A vital part of the preparation work.

Discussion has been ongoing with the Somerset County Cricket Club and how we may assist with their aspiration to achieve hosting of international matches which is essential to their long term economic viability. The Taunton Vision document refers to the Cricket Club as being the “jewel in Taunton’s crown” we must, in my view, do all possible to ensure that the jewel remains within our midst. Coupled with this is the need to review our leisure facilities that could be affected and the primary one is the Brewhouse Theatre which has to be maintained as the pre-eminent producer of culture and theatrical productions for Taunton Deane.

Leisure Trust

This is before you tonight with proposals that have been fully discussed at Scrutiny and Executive and I thank officers and Members for the tremendous amount of work and commitment given to develop the proposals as before you for approval. I commend these to you as being the sensible way forward to ensure that we continue to deliver first rate leisure facilities at an affordable price to the taxpayer of Taunton Deane.

Housing Stock Options

This is before us tonight for consideration as to the way forward. I would stress, as I am sure Councillor Garner will reiterate, we are only asking for a decision tonight to consult with our tenants. The case has been adequately made to all, by our independent consultants, that “do nothing” is not an option, to remain as we are would almost inevitably result in a severe degradation of our present generally high quality service to our tenants. It is therefore imperative that we allow our tenants the opportunity to choose, that is all we are seeking tonight. It can only be regarded as unfortunate that some Members could not see their way clear to support the recommendation previously as in essence all they are doing, if they were to be successful, is denying the tenants the right to determine their own destiny, the right to choose. Prevarication, if continued, could cause uncertainty when it comes to voting and if this resulted in a vote against the recommendation of the Tenants Forum and this Council it would be at great cost. In the order of £500,000 would have to be found from Council (taxpayers) funds to cover the cost of the failed exercise which in turn would divert much needed funds from our efforts to improve our social housing. I would ask that careful thought be given as to voting

intentions and reasons why, with the serious consequences that will result that lack of support will cause.

Councillor John Williams
Leader of the Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 20 JULY 2004

REPORT OF COUNCILLOR BISHOP - PLANNING POLICY AND TRANSPORTATION

MONKTON HEATHFIELD DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

The emerging Taunton Deane Local Plan proposed a mixed use development at Monkton Heathfield , consisting of housing, employment and local community facilities. The Local Plan Inspectors report recommended in favour of this development. The Council has given a commitment to prepare a development guide.

Following the Strategic Planning and Economic Development Review Panel's consideration of the draft Monkton Heathfield Development Guide at the meeting of the Panel in April 2004, Officers have held a series of Parish Council briefings and community consultations over the May and June period.

The consultations were advertised in Parish magazines, with notices within the village and where known, by letter to individuals who had previously expressed a desire to be kept informed of issues surrounding the proposed development of these lands. Copies of the draft development guide and comment forms were available on the Councils web site, West Monkton Post Office and Monkton Heathfield village stores.

The public consultation meetings were held on Friday 11 June (evening) and Saturday 12 June (all day). Planning Officers and County Highway Officers were in attendance on both days as well as Borough, County and Parish Councillors in order to answer the public's questions on the development. A public meeting was also called by the Parish Council on 14th June and I agreed to chair this well attended meeting where a variety of comments were received and answered.

The consultation was very well attended throughout and much useful opinion and local knowledge was gained. Approximately 100 comment forms were returned by members of the public as well as responses from local interest and residents groups, the anticipated developers and service providers such as the Environment Agency.

The full range and extent of comments have yet to be collated. However, the main issues verbally raised at the public meetings were as follows:

- Concerns with the timing of the relief road and the congestion and noise problems if it were required to late into the development;
- Knock on effects of increased traffic at Bathpool/Creech Castle and Obridge/Priorswood junctions;
- Concerns from Farriers Green residents that the existing junction with Milton Hill was poor and upgrading Milton Hill would exacerbate existing problems on this road;

- The need to ensure that the provision of social and physical infrastructure (eg school, roads, community facilities etc) keeps pace with the speed of housing development (ie “we don’t want another Cotford St Luke”);
- Development should not commence until the Council is thoroughly satisfied that the whole site is legally secured to ensure comprehensive and coordinated delivery;
- Housing design was very important. Residents were very keen to see a locally sympathetic solution and quality such as Hillyfields ;
- There were localised surface water flooding problems which need to be addressed;
-

All comments will be considered by the relevant sections and external organisations and where relevant, amendments made to the development guide, prior to adoption. It is anticipated that a report will be presented to SPTED in either August or September containing a list of all comments and the Councils response, together with an amended version of the development guide for final approval.

The document will then be used to assess the appropriateness of any planning application for development within the allocated lands. The Councils position to the developers, including through the Local Plan text, is that a coordinated and comprehensive development is required. A piecemeal approach is not acceptable. A hybrid outline planning application (with road details) must firstly be submitted on all of the allocated lands and a S106 signed to this effect covering delivery. Without this there is no guarantee that the site will be sustainably developed.

PLANNING WEBSITE

It’s been a HIT !!! .

During the period 4th June 2004 to the 4th July 2004 there were 4829 hits on all pages in the Planning site. Of those hits 1389 were on planning applications and 283 were on the details pages of applications. In the same period The Local Plan Site had 807 and of those the Local Plan for Taunton Deane had 253 hits.

I would like to congratulate all the Officers involved in the development of the sites.

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE EXTENSION TO RETAIL STORE AT ASDA.

The First Secretary of State has decided to call in this application as he is of the opinion that the applications are ones that he ought to decide himself because he considers that the proposals may conflict with national policies on important matters.

A local inquiry will be held commencing on 1st March, 2005 and three days have been set aside for the inquiry.

PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT

The Act received Royal Assent on 13th May .The Government intends to bring the provisions of the Act into force over the coming months through a series of commencement orders. The first commencement order will bring the enabling powers

to make subordinate legislation into effect, and it is intended that this order will be made in the second half of July..

It is intended that commencement orders for Regional Planning (Part 1), Local Planning (Part 2) and Development Plan and Sustainable Development (Part 3) will be introduced in September 2004. Development Control (Part 4) will introduce some of the changes that have already been subject to public consultation in September 2004 but where regulations or GDPO changes have not yet been subject to consultation, that will take place in the Autumn, it is not anticipated that the provisions are expected to come into effect until early 2005. Regulations on Planning Obligations will not be made until early 2006.

PLANNING APPLICATION LAND ADJACENT TO CHELSTON MANOR , CHELSTON, WELLINGTON.

In July 2003 the First Secretary of State, called in the above application for determination and on 13th May, 2004 we were informed that the Secretary of State had accepted the Inspector's recommendation and granted planning permission for the development.

I am particularly pleased with this decision because this is the second call in recently where our views have been confirmed. This decision will allow much needed employment land at Chelston to be developed quickly.

SOMERSET and EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK JOINT STRUCTURE PLAN ALTERATION.

The consultation for a period of six weeks commenced on 19th June and we shall be responding to the consultation. The Alteration is a limited review of the Structure Plan, with the primary purpose of accommodating the implications of the revised strategy and rolled forward development allocations of the Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10), September 2001.

I anticipate that we shall be making comments, in particular, regarding the proposed housing allocations.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

The Taunton Transport Strategy Review consultation responses showed broad agreement with stated objectives / individual proposals (although recognised need for continued negotiation on sensitive issues such as extension to East Reach Urban Clearway, Inner Relief Road etc). SCC are currently putting together a report that provides the detailed analysis of the consultation response. The issue of Inner Relief Road / 3rd Way will be resolved during September and it is likely that Members will consider The Urban Development Framework and Urban Extension Study proposals during October.

Work will commence shortly on the Local Transport Plan 2 and it is likely that this will be a resource intensive project.

A decision is awaited from the Secretary of State on the dualling of the A358 but in view of conflicting information that has been received from different sources I think it would be better for me not to give any indication of a likely time for the decision.

The County Council have recently issued a press notice regarding the North West Taunton Package and indicated their views on the likely costs, resource implications and the timescale for the scheme

Councillor Cliff Bishop

COUNCIL MEETING - 20 JULY 2004

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL **COUNCILLOR BRADLEY – LEISURE, ARTS AND CULTURE**

Establishment of a Leisure Trust – Tone Leisure (South West) Limited

The Executive have considered a report, which recommends the transfer of the Council's leisure facilities and its health and sport development services to Tone Leisure (South West) Limited. The report revisited the issues outlined in a report submitted to the Executive on 22 December 2003, when the decision was made to defer transfer for a period of six months.

In October 2002 the Council approved in principle the establishment of a Leisure Trust to operate its leisure centres, development services and Vivary Park Golf Course. However there were a number of outstanding issues at that time and it was subsequently agreed to defer the decision for six months. We have now been informed of the progress that has been made on the issues that led to the decision to defer the Leisure Trust six months previously.

The formation of a Leisure Trust will allow the Council to generate tax based savings through reduced NNDR costs and through an improved VAT recovery regime, which the Trust is able to take advantage of. Details of the financial issues surrounding the proposal are contained in the report.

The Council's consultants, Strategic Leisure Limited, has been involved in this project since its inception and submitted their objective assessment on the proposed transfer. Strategic Leisure believe that sufficient progress has been made on the unresolved items to unequivocally recommend that the transfer should proceed.

Now that the majority of outstanding issues have either been resolved or are likely to be resolved in the near future, the point has been reached where a transfer can be recommended. It is recognised that the Council must continue to develop its leisure strategy and its ability to monitor the financial and operational efficacy of the Trust to ensure its corporate vision and desired outcomes for the service are delivered. Equally this will require that the Council allocates sufficient revenue and capital support to ensure the Trust remains viable subject to it meeting the agreed targets.

Full details of all the issues surrounding this proposal are contained in an exempt report which was circulated to all Councillors with the agenda for the Executive meeting on 23 June 2004. Further copies of the report can be obtained from the Member Services Manager if required.

The Leisure Trust remains the best value method of service delivery and the last six months of negotiation, especially around the leases, pensions and service review, have significantly reduced the risks to the authority.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) the Council's leisure facilities and its health and sport development services be transferred to Tone Leisure (South West) Limited on the terms described in the report and as set out in the associated documentation;
- (ii) the level of deficit funding required for Tone Leisure to operate the services (excluding Blackbrook) for the first 8 months at £452,000 be agreed;

- (iii) Standing Orders be suspended to enable the Council to enter into an 8 month management contract with Tone Leisure in relation to Blackbrook and the management fee for the first 8 months be £535,000. The income from this arrangement to be returned to the Council's General Fund budget;
- (iv) Somerset County Council be provided with a Pensions Guarantee;
- (v) the residual savings, including reduced costs, NNDR and an improved VAT recovery regime, generated by the formation of the Trust be ring fenced for reinvestment in the facilities managed by the Trust;
- (vi) an interest free loan of £50,000 be made to Tone Leisure, subject to the loan being repaid over the following 6 years with the first payment taking place in August 2006;
- (vii) the appropriate officers be thanked for their hard work in reaching this position and the Health and Leisure Review Panel be thanked for its constructive contribution to the process.

COUNCILLOR MRS D BRADLEY

COUNCIL MEETING 20th JULY 2004

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

SPORTS DEVELOPMENT: The Taunton Deane Triathlon took place on May 16th with 350 participants. Again this was a happy and successful event and our thanks go to all the staff who worked so hard headed up by Dan Webb and Clare Morgans.

LEISURE SERVICE ACTIVITIES

Tennis – Doubles Series 2004: this is currently running most successfully at the Tennis Centre and is aimed at young casual players who wish to play competitive tennis but not to train to a high level. Players at 14 years and under and 11 and under have so far competed in two tournament since March. A final tournament takes place in July preparatory to the “Grand Finals” in September. This series is attracting a large number of players who would normally not consider playing competitive tennis.

Play Tennis 2004. Two open days have been run this year by the Tennis Centre in partnership with Taunton Tennis Club as part of the national Play Tennis initiative. Over 100 newcomers attended free session and tested their skills in Mini Tennis and full court tennis for adults.

Childrens’ Holiday Activities: as usual an extensive programme of activities and summer camps will take place at the Blackbrook, Wellington and Wellsprings Centres. Tone Leisure also offers a total of 300 childcare places on a daily basis and is able to provide support for disabled children and those with particular needs.

Vibe Sport is a new initiative funded through the Crime & Disorder Partnership. Leisure staff and Youth Workers have been working jointly since 18th June on Friday nights and numbers have already reached 10 per session.

Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership (SASP) comprise local authorities and a wide range of other agencies, all of which may utilise physical activity and sports in achieving their sometimes diverse objects. Its mission is “to create a healthier and more active community in Somerset”. Taunton Deane has play a valuable role in contributing to SASP’s 3-year strategy which is influenced by national and regional objectives in particular the target of mass participation in physical activity (5 a day!)

On Saturday 11th July the **Somerset Partnership Youth Games** took place at Millfield organised by SASP and manned by officers from the participating districts. The Taunton Deane schools and clubs emerged with huge success laden with medals. These games are open to all except those who area already playing for the County.

Health: the Proactive Physical referral Scheme continues to grow and to expand its range of activities to include fitball, gym, aqua and relaxation. The **Visually Impaired** now have a range of activities including circuits, gym and fitball set up by Tone Leisure and the Somerset Association for the Blind. **Cardiac Rehab.**

continues at Wellsprings. Following rehabilitation clients continue to develop their fitness and confidence in twice weekly sessions. Refreshments at the end give an opportunity for individuals to discuss lifestyle issues.

From this it is clear that while leisure services may not be a statutory duty for us, they nevertheless lead in contributing to community well-being and social inclusion.

PARKS & GREEN SPACES

Paws in the Park went off very well and both owners and dogs had a good day and our thanks go to Steven Cuthill who organised the event.

The Friends of Vivary Park are now up and running and former councillor Adrian Prior-Sankey has accepted the chair with Shaun Cregan as his deputy.

Parks Activity Coordinators: in response to the feedback from our consultation we are piloting a scheme in the school summer holidays aimed at providing free informal activities for young people in our parks. Two Parks Activity Coordinators in blue shirts and base ball caps will work one day a week in each of the 5 parks in Taunton. They will provide a staff presence, organise informal activities and games, and interact with the young people to gauge their opinions about the parks and about the type of changes or additions they would like to see for them. They will work Tuesdays to Saturdays from noon until 7 pm. If the project is successful in engaging with young people, we will seek external funding and partners to extend the scheme next year to key parishes and towns.

Taunton Flower Show; the Chelsea of the South West takes place in Vivary Park on Wednesday 4th and Thursday 5th August. Taunton Deane Horticultural & Floricultural Society itself a voluntary association welcomes volunteers to help on these two days with such matters as stewarding. May I commend to you all this splendid event that really does have something for everyone and makes a very happy family day out as it includes the Model Railway!

CULTURE AND ART

The Cultural Quarter Consortium continues to meet. It embraces both officers and councillors from the Deane and the County and more importantly key stakeholders such as the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society which was formed in the C19th with the specific aim of acquiring Taunton castle not only to preserve it but also to display and add to its collections. These are now looked after by the County Heritage Service which runs the SCC Museum. Other partners are the Somerset Art Gallery Trust working to provide exhibition space, the Brewhouse Theatre and Arts Centre, SCAT, Richard Huish College, the Town Centre Partnership, the Chamber of Commerce, the Hydrographic Office and Taunton Cultural Provision Group. They are together endeavouring to flesh out the concept of a cultural Quarter around Castle Green as put forward in the Taunton Vision which will benefit residents and visitors alike.

Blue Stick Garden and Somerset Arts Week: with Cllrs Guerrier & Cavill, I recently attend the launch of the internationally renowned Blue Stick Garden at

Hestercombe , a modern design by Quebec Canadian landscape architect Claude Cornier which uses rows of blue painted sticks of varying heights to create a herbaceous effect inspired by the designs of Gertrude Jekyll and the colour spectrum of the Himalayan blue poppy. This international art experience will be followed up over 11-26 September with the Somerset Art Weeks, (celebrating the visual arts in Somerset) which draw people from all over the country down to Somerset and its artists: www.somersetartweek.org.uk - 01460 259324.

NETWORKING

ILAM

I have just returned from the annual conference of the Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management. The keynote theme was the Health Agenda. As we are by now all aware the government is getting extremely concerned about the size of the NHS bill. On the basis that prevention is better or cheaper than cure it is looking to all of us, especially councils, to promote healthy living. I concentrated on the Contribution of the Parks to the Health Agenda, Knowing Parks and Improving Health. The latter involved a tour of sports facilities. One was entered direct from the street, with library to the left, swimming straight ahead and the IT suite upstairs and the drink machines on the landing. The library had seen a 70% increase in visits. The conference took place in the Royal Concert Hall, Glasgow; European Capital of Culture.; cultural regeneration still features highly in Glasgow's development agenda. I now hope to obtain supporting documentation on the economic aspects.

SWMLAC

I attended a seminar run by the South West Museums Libraries and Archives Council to launch the report entitled Making a Difference – the impact of museums, libraries and archives in the South West. SWMLAC is a quango set up to map out what is in the region and what is happening. Its job is to try and sort out priorities and help with individual strategies for the museums and archives in the South West. The author of the report Colin Mercer then made a very convincing case for the value, economically, socially and culturally of the museums, libraries and archives service. This argument is important as I believe it can be extended to the arts and culture in its widest definition of bringing people together in any joint creative activity.

Taunton Male Voice Choir; I recently attended their annual concert at the Tacchi-Morris Centre which I always enjoy. They have received a small arts development grant from Taunton Deane which has enabled them to pull down quite a substantial sum of money to run free “Male Choral Workshops” for voice and choral training on Saturday 7th August, Wednesdays 11, 18 & 25 August and Saturday 4th September. Contacts are Tony Slavin on 01823 283681 and Brian Reynolds on 01823 276326.

Youth Celebration took place at the new SCAT Conference Centre on 10th July. It showcased the Youth Organisations of Taunton Deane and celebrated young peoples' achievements. It is quite clear that there is a lot of commitment from many people including the churches to the youth of Taunton.

Councillor Mrs D. Bradley

COUNCIL MEETING – 20 JULY 2004

REPORT OF COUNCILLOR MRS BRYANT - COMMUNICATIONS

Press Office/Public Relations

We have increased coverage in our press office. Becky Brown, our temporary Public Relations Officer, now works daily between 10am and 2pm.

The full time post of Media and Public Relations Officer has been advertised and the interviews take place at the end of this month. When this post is filled we aim to review the Media Protocol including the circulation of press releases. In the meantime these are posted for all to see and download on the Council's web site.

In the Spotlight – our Media coverage

We have issued a number of press releases during May/June and July on a variety of subjects including:

- 4 new sites designated as Local Nature Reserves to celebrate Local Nature Reserve week (July 14-25). These are South Taunton Streams, Netherclay Community Woodland in Bishops Hull, Hurstone at Waterrow and Swains Pond in Wellington.
- In addition, we have been working with Big Green World to run nature workshops for children and students during Nature Reserve Week. Today students have visited the Children's Wood and Hankridge Riverside Local Nature Reserve.
- Glowing hands – children in local schools have had a great time learning about hand washing with the aid of 'glow boxes' (UV light chambers) and glitter gel that shows up as 'bacteria' on their hands. They can actually see how much gel they remove when they've washed.
- Paul Street Car Park – the work to install safety fencing has now been completed.
- Clean air – announcement of public meeting to consult with the public on ideas to help improve air quality in Henlade and East Reach.
- National Child Safety Week and our involvement in ensuring that children employed in businesses within the Deane are over 13 years old and have a suitable and safe environment in which to work.
- Last, but not least in this list, our achievement in gaining the Investor In People Award. Well done.

Internal Communications

In 2003 a staff survey highlighted weaknesses with internal communications and one solution suggested by a number of staff was a staff newsletter. Staff were invited to volunteer to be on the editorial team and the first issue of the newsletter, *Fizzooh*, went out in June. My congratulations to the editorial team who have done an excellent job with the first issue of what will be a monthly newsletter. It will be evaluated in January.

Deane Dispatch

The summer 2004 edition of Deane Dispatch has been produced and distributed to all households.

Weekly Bulletin

I would thank everyone for the increased volume of articles for this publication. To make it easier to send your contributions we have set up a dedicated email address: weeklybulletin@tauntondeane.gov.uk, so please keep them coming in.

Councillor Gwyneth Bryant

COUNCIL MEETING 20TH JULY 2004

REPORT OF COUNCILLOR CAVILL **ECONOMIC, ASSET MANAGEMENT AND TOURISM**

Vision for Taunton

We have now received the final draft of the UDF Vision reports. The Draft UDF report has a series of technical appendices and two viability reports (retail and UDF). These reports will go through final checking before being presented to the Vision reference group. This should enable the Draft UDF report to be presented to the October meeting of the Executive.

Conjoined with the UDF, is the outcome of the Taunton Transport Strategy of which we should have some decision on the 'third way' this September.

Business Survey

By the end of this month businesses within TD will have received a survey asking questions, about their future employment land and premises needs. I hope you will promote and encourage a full response to this survey, as the results will inform our future employment land requirement.

Taunton Town Centre Partnership

This partnership works very closely with many sections of Taunton Deane. No sooner it seems have we finished the planning and running of the '1100' celebrations, than we are planning for the celebration of Somerset Food, to be held on 10th and 11th September in the centre of Taunton.

You will see a new rotunda supported by Eldridge Pope going up in the centre of town, not far from the former 2SL shop. This rotunda is to support the nighttime economy and like the other two existing ones is an attempt to reduce fly posting. Whilst mentioning the night time economy, it is interesting to report that the Police have been using their ioniser machine at two clubs for one evening and tested positive 15 young people, all but two were cocaine. Resulting from action that night, word rapidly went around the other clubs. The police intend to revisit as and when they can.

Asset Management Plan

The AMP has been re-appraised and updated. DDA assessments of our properties are complete, to meet the October 2004 deadline. It is now a process of prioritising work to comply with the legislation.

Valuation

For many years Taunton Deane has had its property registered on Terrier maps. Whilst these documents are excellent in the detail they keep, they have not been able to give us one comprehensive overview. We have embarked on a process of GIS and whilst producing the first maps is comparatively quick, the checking of them is a very slow and laborious process. The maps have proved to be a tremendous boon, and the checking process will be expedited.

Another project, nearing completion, links in with 'Crisp and Clean', namely the improvement of the Station steps, at Kilkenny car park. This has taken a time due to the protracted negotiations between the various parties. Agreement having been reached, work has started. Within the next couple of weeks you will be able to see a stainless steel handrail fixed on revamped posts, new stair treads. The banks either side will be tended by TDBC Parks department.

Tourism and the TIC

A new Heritage Trail leaflet has been designed, with a launch planned at the Flower Show in August. The new trail has nearly doubled in length.

Having installed Tourist Information points in Taunton, Wellington, Wiveliscombe and Nynhead, there are two left to install, one in Hestercombe, the other at the West Somerset railway. Increasing business is going through TIC, as is shown by the monthly returns. They are dealing with more and more enquiries and bookings.

The 'Towards 2015' strategy and regional tourism delivery plan has been endorsed by SWRDA. The next stage in the process will be to develop the actions outlined in such a fashion as to enable SW Tourism to submit a funding application. All in all this seems to be a lengthy process but it is hoped that such an approach will produce a result that will benefit the region and its business for years to come.

David McGubbin, our Tourism Officer is working on behalf of the Somerset Tourism Partnership with Bristol airport, supporting their Project USA (direct flights out of Bristol to New York).

There are a number of other ongoing projects, particularly the Wellington 'specialist shops' leaflet, put together in conjunction with Wellington Chamber of Commerce as a result of an initiative from Wellington Economic partnership.

I cannot leave this section of tourism without drawing your attention to a recent edition of West Somerset Free Press in which a full page of adverts and editorial with images were written and supplied by our officer. This excellent promotion on local attractions, activities, farmers markets, shopping in Taunton, the surrounding countryside and Taunton TIC was covered by the advertising.

Broadband

As more and more of the Deane becomes ADSL-enabled, the challenge is to get people to take it up. Promotions will take place, organised by a partnership of the County Council, District Council and other bodies. SWRDA has reserved funding for the County to access, once they have co-ordinated the action plan.

Rural Renaissance

A considerable amount of work has been done on the rural web page. I would encourage you to visit it. You will find information there about village population statistics, regeneration schemes, events, community planning, business links, and much more.

TDBC Agricultural Development

Our officer has been very active in promoting awareness and concerns on the Mid Term Review, as reported in the Weekly Bulletin.

Councillor Norman Cavill

COUNCIL MEETING - 20 JULY 2004

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL **COUNCILLOR EDWARDS – ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

The Future of Waste Collection and Recycling in Taunton Deane

A joint meeting of the Executive and the Health and Leisure Review Panel held on 30 June 2004 considered proposals for changes in the methods of collection of household waste for disposal and recycling. The proposals concern the introduction of services that will achieve the statutory recycling/composting targets in 2005/06. In addition to this joint meeting this matter was also considered by the Health and Leisure Review Panel at its meeting on 1 April 2004.

Consideration, in some detail, was given to the options, issues and implications of the service developments necessary to deliver the statutory recycling targets for 2005/06 and beyond.

Plans are already in place to expand the dry recycling collection service. However, collection services for food and garden wastes need to be developed and residual wastes minimized if the Council is to achieve the next targets.

The Council have previously endorsed the introduction of wheeled containers as part of the waste services Best Value Review. Wheeled containers will provide a mechanism for controlling residual waste arisings and offer a means of limiting cost increases by reducing collection frequencies.

In order to achieve the level of performance required for 2005/06 it will be necessary to:

- Provide a multi material collection service including glass to all the main residential areas of the Deane.
- Increase access to, and participation in collection services for garden and food wastes.
- Constrain waste arisings through enforcement of a waste minimisation/collection policy and by the provision of containers for wastes.

These requirements have been the subject of several reports to the Health and Leisure Review Panel over the last two years.

The performance of recycling services is driven by the level and quality of participation by the customer. If the challenging targets imposed by the Government are to be achieved the services must overcome the initial perceived barriers to participation by being convenient, easy to use and reliable to initiate householders into recycling and for the services to become habitual.

Frequency of collections is a key element in the convenience of the service. Regular weekly collections are more likely to encourage the recycling habit because collection days are easier to remember and storage of materials is less of an issue.

Of the various options for delivering the services Option 8, as set out in the report to the Joint meeting on 30 June 2004, most closely fits these determinants of recycling behaviour. It delivers a weekly recycling service that includes food waste each week. This overcomes

many of the participation barriers associated with fortnightly refuse collection services and uses the reduced frequency to drive use of the recycling services. Alternating collections of garden and residual wastes are a major factor in controlling the costs of the combined waste services. It is considered that this apparently radical approach to configuring the services will ultimately change the perceptions or "mindset" of the customer from "rubbish" to "recycling".

Option 8 has the potential to provide the basis for waste collection services in the borough for at least the next ten years and is the preferred option.

Attached as an Appendix is a summary of the costs associated with each of the service delivery options that were considered. Also attached are the projected costs of implementing the preferred Option 8 over the next 4 years.

The full detailed report on this matter was circulated to all Councillors with the agenda for the Joint Health and Leisure and Executive meeting held on 30 June 2004. Further copies of the report can be obtained from the Member Services Manager.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that:

(a) Supplementary Estimates be made in 2004/05 to implement Option 8 as shown in the report to the Joint Executive/Health and Leisure Review Panel at its meeting on 30 June 2004:

- from unallocated Capital Resources £622,290
- from General Fund Reserve £9,113

(b) the ongoing reserve costs associated with Option 8 (as shown in the report) be included in the Authority's Medium Term Financial Plan and future years' budgets (ongoing eventual costs of £294,947).

COUNCILLOR M EDWARDS

APPENDIX 2

SERVICE DESCRIPTION	Option 1	Option 2a (Bins)	Option 2b (Sacks)	Option 8	Option 9	Option 10
Recycling	Fortnightly Box	Fortnightly Box	Fortnightly Box	Weekly Box	Weekly Box	Fortnightly Box
Food Waste	Weekly With Refuse	Weekly With Refuse	Weekly With Refuse	Weekly Bin with Recycling	Weekly Bin with Recycling	Alternates With GW or Refuse
Garden Waste	Fortnightly Wheeled Bin/Sack	Fortnightly Wheeled Bin/Sack	Fortnightly Wheeled Bin/Sack	Fortnightly Wheeled Bin	Fortnightly Wheeled Bin	Fortnightly Wheeled Bin
Refuse	Weekly Sack	Weekly Wheeled Bin	Weekly Sacks	Fortnightly Wheeled Bin	Fortnightly Wheeled Bin	Fortnightly Wheeled Bin
OPTIONS COSTS SUMMARY	TOTAL FULL YEAR					
CAPITAL COSTS	Option 1	Option 2a (Bins)	Option 2b (Sacks)	Option 8	Option 9	Option 10
COMPOSTING						
Vehicles	£ 250,000	£ 625,000	£ 625,000	£ 368,000	£ 743,000	£ 625,000
Bins	£ 106,800	£ 712,000	£ 712,000	£ 338,200	£ 943,400	£ 765,400
RECYCLING						
Vehicles	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 211,000	£ 211,000	£ 118,000
Boxes	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 26,700	£ 26,700	£ 17,800
REFUSE (Wheeled Bins)	£ -	£ 712,000	£ -	£ 712,000	£ 712,000	£ 712,000
TOTAL CAPITAL	£ 356,800	£ 2,049,000	£ 1,337,000	£ 1,655,900	£ 2,636,100	£ 2,238,200
REVENUE COSTS						
COMPOSTING						
Staff & Operational Costs	£ 162,930	£ 528,810	£ 531,480	£ 369,453	£ 703,631	£ 528,276
Promotion	£ 22,250	£ 22,250	£ 22,250	£ 11,125	£ 11,125	£ 11,125
Customer Care & Enforcement	£ -	£ 17,500	£ 17,500	£ 17,500	£ 17,500	£ 17,500
RECYCLING						
Staff & Operational Costs	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 327,628	£ 327,628	£ 166,651
Promotion	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 11,125	£ 11,125	£ 11,125
INCOME						
Additional Recycling Credits (05/6)	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 51,387	£ 51,387	£ 50,942
Performance Reward (Min Forecast from 05/6)	£ 49,248	£ 49,248	£ 49,248	£ 49,248	£ 49,248	£ 49,248
REFUSE SAVINGS						
Alternating Collections	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 248,088	£ 248,088	£ 248,088
TOTAL NET REVENUE	£ 135,932	£ 519,312	£ 521,982	£ 388,108	£ 722,287	£ 386,400
CAPITAL COSTS LESS FUNDING	Option 1	Option 2a (Bins)	Option 2b (Sacks)	Option 8	Option 9	Option 10
POTENTIAL DEFRA III CAPITAL FUNDING	£ 350,800	£ 822,647	£ 822,647	£ 1,033,610	£ 1,100,610	£ 1,028,610
NET CAPITAL COST TO AUTHORITY	£ 6,000	£ 1,226,353	£ 514,353	£ 622,290	£ 1,535,490	£ 1,209,590
OPTION PERFORMANCE	FULL COVERAGE					
ADDITIONAL TONNES	Option 1	Option 2a (Bins)	Option 2b (Sacks)	Option 8	Option 9	Option 10
RECYCLING (Mid-Projection)	-	-	-	1,647	1,647	712
COMPOSTING (Mid-Projection)	2,003	10,235	10,235	5,340	13,573	12,460
RECYCLING RATE (Mid-Projection)	22%	37%	37%	35%	48%	44%
RECYCLING RATE (High-Projection)	23%	40%	40%	47%	59%	51%

This Table shows on-going annual revenue costs for established fully rolled-out services (excludes bin & box delivery except for charged GW collections, which are included) and each option

DEFRA III PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

SOMERSET WASTE PARTNERSHIP

Integrated Collections Project

TAUNTON DEANE

Comparing Option Budgets & Performances

NOTES

- 1) This workbook uses the same assumptions and cost factors as used in the SWP DEFRA III Costs workbook.
- 2) The budgets in this workbook do not include DEFRA III funding (except where stated). This can only be calculated by taking all Somerset District options into account and so is only shown in the SWP DEFRA III Costs workbook.
- 3) Total full year costs and performance are shown in the 'Summary (Full)' sheet to compare option costs regardless of roll-out timetables. These include total capital costs, which would not actually be incurred in a single year by the local authority because they will be funded by DEFRA or their cost spread over a number of years through leasing or inclusion as part of a long-term contract.

Option 1	District Households	45630
NB Only adjust data in blue	05/06 TARGET	34%

ROLL OUT IN 2005/06
Roll-Out
Month
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec
Jan
Feb
Mar
TOTAL HOUSEHOLD
FIRST YEAR CONTRI

YIELD ASSUMPTIONS (KG/HH/YR)	Current Kerbside	Composting Yields	
Paper	70	Mid-Projection	High-Projection
Glass	35		
Cans	5		
Textiles	1		
Organics Kerbside	NEW Option 1	30	30
REDUCTION in WCA waste by restricting garden in refuse (kg/hh)		0	

PARTIAL YEAR ROLL-OUT EFFECTS		
COMPOSTING Service Effect in 2005/06 (some households only have service for part of year)	79%	SEE RIGHT

SERVICE ROLL-OUT NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE 05/06 TARGET

HOUSEHOLDS SERVED	NOW	2004/05	2005/06	FULL COVERAGE
KERBSIDE Standard Materials	44500	44500	44500	44500
KERBSIDE Glass	15000	44500	44500	44500
KERBSIDE Composting	44500	5000	42000	44500

TONNES	CURRENT ANNUAL	Mid-Projection 2005/06	High-Projection 2005/06	Mid-Projection FULL COVERAGE	High-Projection FULL COVERAGE
Bring Banks					
Paper	848	473	473	473	473
Glass	1018	308	308	308	308
Cans	36	24	24	24	24
Plastic	102	104	104	104	104
Textiles	0	1	1	1	1
Third Parties	182	91	91	91	91
Kerbside Recycling					
Paper	2482	3115	3115	3115	3115
Glass	497	1558	1558	1558	1558
Cans	129	223	223	223	223
Textiles	88	45	45	45	45
Kerbside Composting	1191	1029	1029	1335	1335
TOTAL RECYCLING*	6573	6969	6969	7275	7275
TOTAL WCA WASTE*	37423	37423	37423	37423	37423
RECYCLING RATE	17.6%	19%	19%	19%	19%

* No waste growth shown as assumed to apply equally to recycling and residual totals

Option 1

Recycling	Fortnightly	Box
Food Waste	Weekly	With Refuse
Garden Waste CHARGED	Fortnightly	Wheeled Bin/Sack
Refuse	Weekly	Sack

TOTAL District Households	45630.00
Current Refuse Costs/Household	£ 22.30
COMPOSTING COLLECTIONS	
Houses served per vehicle	46000.00
Exact Number of Vehicles Required	1.0

			ROLL OUT				
YIELDS (KG/HH/YR)	Typical	Maximum		2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Garden Waste	40	50	COMPOSTING Houses Served	5000.00	42000	44500.00	44500.00
Food Waste	0	0	ALTERNATING Houses Served	0	0	0.00	0.00
Cardboard	5	5	% of Year Served	50%	100%	100%	100%
TOTAL COMPOSTING	45	55	Composting Vehicles	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
ADDITIONAL DRY RECYCLING (1)	0	0	Recycling/Food Vehicles	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
TONNES PER ANNUM (All Houses)	Typical	Maximum	Recycling Vehicles	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Garden Waste	1825	2282	Recycling Credits	£ 28.21	£ 31.21	£ 34.21	£ 37.21
Food Waste	0	0	Garden Waste (Tonnes)	100	1680	1780	1780
Cardboard	228	228	Food Waste (Tonnes)	0	0	0	0
TOTAL COMPOSTING	2053	2510	Cardboard (Tonnes)	13	210	223	223
DRY RECYCLING	0	0	TOTAL COMPOSTING	113	1890	2003	2003
			MAX COMPOSTING	138	2310	2448	2448
			ADDITIONAL RECYCLING	0	0	0	0

COMPOSTING							
CAPITAL	Unit Costs	Number	TOTAL FULL YEAR	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Composting Vehicles	£ 125,000.00	1	£ 125,000	£ 125,000	£ -	£ -	£ -
Bin-lift Modification to RCV	£ 20,000.00	0	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Recycling Vehicles (for Food Waste)	£ 46,500.00	0	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Recycling Vehicles (Food Waste Mods)	£ 3,000.00	0	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Roll-on/off Food Bulking Containers	£ 3,500.00	0	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Wheeled Bins (assume 10% take up & 2% new/yr)	£ 16.00	4450	£ 71,200	£ 8,000	£ 73,440	£ 18,240	£ 14,240
MiniMax Bins	£ 4.00	0.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Kitchen Caddies	£ 1.20	0	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
TOTAL CAPITAL			£ 196,200	£ 133,000	£ 73,440	£ 18,240	£ 14,240
REVENUE							
Composting Crew (2.75)	£ 20,000.00	2.75	£ 55,000	£ 3,090	£ 51,910	£ 55,000	£ 55,000
Recycling Crew (2.5)	£ 20,000.00	0.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Crew Cover (20%)	£ 20,000.00	0.6	£ 11,000	£ 618	£ 10,382	£ 11,000	£ 11,000
Composting Vehicle Operating Costs	£ 17,500.00	1	£ 17,500	£ 983	£ 16,517	£ 17,500	£ 17,500
Recycling Vehicle Operating Costs	£ 10,500.00	0	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Depot Costs (£3,500/New Vehicle)	£ 3,500.00	1	£ 3,500	£ 3,500	£ 3,500	£ 3,500	£ 3,500
Food Waste Bins Delivery	£ 0.50	0	£ -	£ 2,500	£ 18,500	£ 1,250	£ -
Garden Waste Bin Delivery (10% take up)	£ 1.00	4450	£ 4,450	£ 500	£ 4,590	£ 1,140	£ 890
Supervisory Ratio (£6,000/New Vehicle)	£ 6,000.00	1	£ 6,000	£ 3,000	£ 6,000	£ 6,000	£ 6,000
Administration Costs (Charged GW Bins/Sacks)	£ 1.50	4450	£ 6,675	£ 375	£ 6,300	£ 6,675	£ 6,675
Promotion	£ 0.50	44500	£ 22,250	£ 1,250	£ 21,000	£ 22,250	£ 22,250
Bin Survey, Customer Care & Enforcement	£ 17,500.00	0	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Overhead & Contingency (12% of Revenue)	£ 126,375.00	12%	£ 15,165	£ 1,898	£ 16,644	£ 14,918	£ 14,738
TOTAL REVENUE			£ 141,540	£ 17,714	£ 155,343	£ 139,233	£ 137,553

RECYCLING (Weekly & Alternate Addition)							
CAPITAL	Unit Costs	Number	TOTAL FULL YEAR	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Boxes	£ 2.00	0	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Forklift	£ 25,000.00	0.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Recycling Vehicles	£ 46,500.00	0.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
TOTAL CAPITAL			£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
REVENUE							
Recycling Crew (2.5)	£ 20,000.00	0.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Crew Cover (20%)	£ 20,000.00	0.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Recycling Vehicle Operating Costs	£ 10,500.00	0	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Depot Costs (£3,500/New Vehicle)	£ 3,500.00	0	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Supervisory Ratio (£6,000/New Vehicle)	£ 6,000.00	0	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Promotion	£ 0.25	0	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Overhead & Contingency (12% of Revenue)	£ -	12%	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
TOTAL REVENUE			£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -

REFUSE (Wheeled Bin Costs)							
CAPITAL	Unit Costs	Number	TOTAL FULL YEAR	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
TOTAL CAPITAL: Wheeled Bins	£ 16.00	0	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
TOTAL REVENUE: Bin Delivery	£ 1.00	0	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -

SERVICE DESCRIPTION	OPTION 8			
Recycling	WEEKLY BOX			
Food Waste	WEEKLY BOX WITH RECYCLING			
Garden Waste	FORTNIGHTLY CHARGED 180 WHEELED BIN AND SACKS			
Refuse	FORTNIGHTLY 180 WHEELED BIN			
ROLL OUT				
Number of properties served	5000	42000	44500	44500
Alternating properties served	5000	42000	44500	44500
% of year served	50%	79%	100%	100%
OPTIONS COSTS SUMMARY				
CAPITAL COSTS	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
COMPOSTING				
Vehicles	£ 178,000	£ 190,000	£ -	£ -
Bins	£ 38,000	£ 281,200	£ 19,000	£ -
RECYCLING				
Vehicles	£ 46,500	£ 164,500	£ -	£ -
Boxes	£ 3,000	£ 22,200	£ 1,500	£ -
REFUSE (Wheeled Bins)	£ 80,000	£ 592,000	£ 40,000	£ -
TOTAL CAPITAL	£ 345,500	£ 1,249,900	£ 60,500	£ -
REVENUE COSTS				
COMPOSTING				
Staff & Operational Costs	£ 47,340	£ 278,831	£ 339,524	£ 335,419
Promotion	£ 625	£ 8,313	£ 11,073	£ 11,125
Customer Care & Enforcement	£ 13,125	£ 17,500	£ 17,500	£ 17,500
RECYCLING				
Staff & Operational Costs	£ 42,271	£ 254,407	£ 326,273	£ 327,628
Promotion	£ 625	£ 8,313	£ 11,073	£ 11,125
REFUSE				
Bin delivery	£ 7,500	£ 55,500	£ 3,750	£ -
INCOME				
Additional Recycling Credits (05/6)	£ 2,609	£ 38,396	£ 56,063	£ 61,266
Performance Reward (Min Forecast from 05/6)	£ -	£ 49,248	£ 98,496	£ 98,496
REFUSE SAVINGS				
Alternating Collections	£ 13,938	£ 185,369	£ 246,926	£ 248,088
TOTAL NET REVENUE	£ 94,939	£ 349,851	£ 307,708	£ 294,947

TOTAL COSTS LESS DEFRA III FUNDING	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
POTENTIAL DEFRA III CAPITAL FUNDING	£ 216,000	£ 817,610	£ -	£ -
NET CAPITAL COST TO AUTHORITY	£ 129,500	£ 432,290	£ 60,500	£ -
POTENTIAL DEFRA III REVENUE FUNDING	£ 85,826	£ -	£ -	£ -
NET REVENUE COST TO AUTHORITY	£ 9,113	£ 349,851	£ 307,708	£ 294,947

COUNCIL MEETING 20 JULY 2004

REPORT OF COUNCILLOR MARK EDWARDS – ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

It has certainly been a very busy period for my portfolio and a great deal of progress has been made. I apologise for the length of my report but with so much being achieved this is the result.

WASTE SERVICES

Street Scene

A number of new initiatives have been introduced to ensure that the Deane looks at it's best.

- 24 new high capacity litterbins with ashtrays are being installed in the pedestrianised areas of the town centre.
- chewing gum removal is taking place from the pavements of High Street, parts of Fore Street, Paul Street and Cheapside.
- 30 cubic metres of rubbish including shopping trolleys, trees and old motorbikes were removed from the River Tone during the first clean up of the river organised by the River Tone Partnership. Work is underway to bring other businesses with links with the river into the partnership to fund further clean ups and generally promote the river as a key feature of the town centre.
- The railings outside "Pound stretcher" have been repainted.
- In Wellington Cornhill is being pressure washed.

The waste Services Unit now has to keep detailed records of incidents of flytipping in order to meet new government requirements. In the first quarter commencing in April 68 deposits of fly-tipped waste were removed at a cost of £4600.

Waste Collection and Recycling

It was agreed at a special Executive meeting at TDBC on the 30th June 2004 to make the first change in twenty years to the waste collection service. The change has been brought about to increase recycling rates to achieve challenging government targets and to reduce the amount of rubbish committed to landfill. The new system will involve the introduction of the wheeled bin in Taunton for the first time.

The structure of the new collections will be:

- Alternate weekly collection of residual waste
- Option of chargeable garden waste collection
- Weekly collection of recycling waste
- Weekly collection of food waste

There will be a promotional campaign to explain the new service and a full survey to assess suitability and fully explore any objections that might exist in some more difficult to access areas of the district. It is also planned to trial the service in 5000 houses in Taunton and Wellington later this year to make sure the service works as planned with a full roll out in 2005.

The first phase of these developments is the expansion of the existing service for the collection of dry recyclable materials to all areas of the Deane. All properties included in the service will be sent a new leaflet and calendar of collection days in time for the first collections in mid August. The range of materials that can be recycled has also been increased to include yellow pages, motor oil and car batteries.

CEMETERIES & CREMATORIUM

Enlarged Waiting Room/Upgraded Office

Plans have been prepared to enlarge the Crematorium waiting room and upgrade the office. It is hoped that building works will start later this year to more than double the existing waiting room space and provide two new public toilets. The building is 'listed' and a great deal of thought and effort has been applied to keep all alterations within keeping.

The office improvements will include better access for disabled persons, an extension for use by the bereaved requiring personal and private attention by our staff and a more friendly and modern working environment.

Probes

New probes have been fitted that accurately measure emissions from each Cremator. The data from the probes is downloaded onto the Crematorium computers so that any problems can be swiftly identified and action taken to remedy the situation. The accuracy of the readings are sufficiently high that they may eventually lead to a reduction in the requirement for regular independent testing of the crematory equipment, thereby reducing expenditure in the long term.

Taunton is the first crematorium to install these probes following their initial testing at Manchester Crematorium. We managed to negotiate a favourable price on condition that we demonstrate their operation and accuracy to crematory operators.

HIGHWAYS D.L.O

Abandoned Vehicles

At the 31st March we will have completed 2 years of pro-active working as part of the Somerset Waste Partnership Best Value Review. Attached are charts showing the level and trends. It is now widely acknowledged that our rapid removal and disposal in conjunction with the police has greatly reduced the number of burnt out vehicles with the resulting saving of budget for the Fire Brigade and the improvements in quality of life for residents in the areas previously dogged with arson attacks.

**TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL
ABANDONED VEHICLES 2002-2003**

	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	TOTAL
Reports	81	72	54	92	70	53	77	62	55	65	51	56	788
Scrapped	34	28	33	45	35	27	35	33	26	34	31	34	395
Stored	8	6	3	9	5	3	2	3	1	0	1	1	42
Total removed	42	34	36	54	40	30	37	36	27	34	32	35	437
405	1	8	5	4	2	2	1	3	2	16	14	15	73
Burnt	2	4	4	6	5	3	10	7	2	6	5	7	61

**TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL
ABANDONED VEHICLES 2003-2004**

	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	TOTAL
Reported	53	46	60	68	50	50	84	44	46	43	39	41	624
Scrapped	34	18	27	39	34	28	57	27	33	25	14	15	351
405	14	9	11	13	14	18	31	10	16	18	7	8	169
Burnt	1	0	3	3	6	2	2	2	4	3	0	1	27
Stored	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	3	0	0	0	5
Total removed	34	18	27	39	34	29	57	28	36	25	14	15	356

CLEANSING DLO

Street Cleansing

The aging Johnson mechanical road sweeper has been renewed it is now more efficient and reliable, and with much improved weed spraying equipment. In addition a new Taunton Town centre cleansing regime has been introduced with an extra Town Centre Caretaker. This allows seven day working with greater presence in the Town Centre concentrating on peak times and high usage areas.

Public conveniences

Deane DLO is now providing the public convenience cleansing service. The transfer of the staff to the direct control of the Council has resulted in a distinct improvement in service quality. The judges who recently assessed Wellington Park for a green flag award specifically noted the high quality of cleaning in the park toilets.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Environmental Protection

Odour Problem. An end may now be in sight now for the long-standing odour problem arising from the Wyvern Waste composting site at Priorswood, affecting residents on the Maidenbrook Estate.

Complaints began in 2000 and investigations have been going on since that time. The longer than usual timescale for solving the problem has been due to:

- a) Difficulties in establishing a statutory nuisance, despite officer attendance at short notice whenever complaints were received
- b) Lack of information on the best practice treatments for composting sites
- c) Enforcement powers split between ourselves and the Environment Agency, who are responsible for issuing the site Licence and enforcing the Conditions imposed.

The Team sent representatives to the quarterly Liaison meetings held between Wyvern Waste and residents and the strength of local feeling became very evident.

It was finally possible to establish nuisance in October 2003 and an Abatement Notice was immediately served. The Notice required, among other things, that:

- a) Compost should not be turned whilst a South Westerly wind was blowing
- b) The amount of compost entering the site would be significantly reduced, with much being diverted for treatment on licensed farms.
- c) A biological dressing would be added to the raw compost to speed up the composting process
- d) Misters should be used on the boundary between the site and residential premises to contain odours.

There appears to have been full compliance with the Notice and the results are already apparent, with the majority of residents noting a significant reduction in the problem.

In the longer term, we are supporting a Planning Application by Wyvern Waste for an enclosed area for composting, which is more distant from local homes than the existing site.

Private Water Supplies. A project to sample for the presence of Radon and Uranium has shown that there are no health risks from these natural contaminants associated with drinking the water from privately owned sources.

38 of the most vulnerable supplies within Taunton Deane were sampled and the results in every case were well within recommended limits. It is thought to be the first time that such a project has been undertaken in Somerset.

Dog Fouling. Progress on plans to reduce dog fouling is as follows:

- a) Investigation into a long-term measure to provide Dog Tracks in Parks areas has been included in the Green Spaces Strategy. If implemented, hard surfaced tracks around the periphery of parks would be constructed specifically for use by people walking their dogs, who would not be permitted to take their animals into other areas of the park.
- b) Ten additional dog bins have been purchased and will be located in those areas most in need of them, following a simple scoring exercise.
- c) The extension of authorisations for the service of Fixed Penalty Notices is being examined as part of the Street Scene initiative.
- d) Dog bags are now issued free of charge to members of the public.
- e) Parks staff keep a supply of dog bags to pick up and dispose of mess that they see and to hand out to dog owners.
- f) Covert anti-fouling patrols have been increased and will be adjusted for time of day, day of the week and location, in response to information received from members of the public. This approach has led to a successful prosecution.

Food Safety

Educational Initiative The team has been successful in a competitive bidding process, and as a result has secured a grant of £10,000 from the Food Standards Agency to develop an educational game, in conjunction with a commercial partner. This is a board game to be used within local schools, youth groups, etc, focussing on a number of key hygiene issues, such as cross contamination and hand washing.

The aim of the game is to identify how and where a food poisoning outbreak occurred, thus raising awareness of how poor hygiene practices can have serious public health consequences.

The target audience for the proposal is children within Key Stage 2 and local community groups and in particular children from deprived wards within the Borough.

Schools and other groups will receive an attractive package, comprising a full teaching pack and board game. It is intended that the Campaign will be informative and educational, but above all fun. The use of a game format should encourage target groups to engage with the subject.

This project will build on our current work with schools and form an important part of food hygiene awareness work in the future. The game may also be developed for use on food hygiene training courses.

Health and Safety

Child safety. Officers visited a range of businesses during National Child Safety Week, checking for children at work and ensuring that they have work permits from the County Council, and that the employer is complying with child employment and health and safety laws.

Licensing

Licensing Act 2003 The Licensing Unit continues to prepare for the implementation of the Licensing Act 2003. Current indications are that the first appointed day will be in February 2005.

Councillor Mark J Edwards

COUNCIL MEETING - 20 JULY 2004

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL **COUNCILLOR GARNER - HOUSING SERVICES**

COUNCIL HOUSING STOCK OPTIONS

The Council is required to carry an Options Appraisal of its housing stock and consider the best option for the stock within its over arching Housing Strategy.

The Stock Option Appraisal began in 2003 with the first report to Members being submitted in August, providing a detailed overview of the work required. Since then there have been regular updates to every Tenant's Forum and Housing Review Panel of the work being undertaken and the progress being made.

The Appraisal process was split into two main parts being:

Phase A - Financially based. Officers and the Council's Specialist Help - PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) led on this process and this was completed in December 2003. Subsequently PWC have undertaken further work primarily to:

- a) Amend the financial model to take account of the external stock validation survey work undertaken;
- b) To consider the impact on non-housing services within the Council if some form of externalisation took place;
- c) Examine the experience of other Councils who have undertaken an Options Appraisal;
- d) Undertake a Risk Register for all the four options;
- e) Provide an updated briefing session to Members in April of this year to take account of b) to d).

Phase B - Consultation based. Officers and the Independent Tenants Advisor TACT@DOME Consultants (DOME) led on this process. A fundamental element of DOME's work was facilitating the Insight Group - a working group of tenants. An Interim Report was presented to the Housing Review Panel in June and their work has now reached a conclusion.

Key to both Phase A and B, has been the involvement of the Officer Working Group and the Steering Group. Their main purpose has been to guide, steer and approve the work being undertaken and pass their recommendations onto the Tenants Forum and Housing Review Panel, which in turn feeds into the Executive and ultimately Full Council.

Throughout this entire process Officers have liaised with the Community Housing Task Force and the Government Office South West.

The stage has now been reached where the final pieces of information have been provided that will enable an informed choice to be made for the preferred option for the future management of the Housing Service.

A full report, circulated to all Members, was considered by the Housing Review Panel at its meeting on 6 July 2004. Both the Tenant's Forum and the Housing Review Panel have recommended that a "Whole Stock Transfer" solution be investigated now, leading to a tenants ballot.

The Executive will not meet to consider this matter until 13 July, which is after the publication of Council Summons. The recommendation of the Executive will therefore be circulated separately to members.

It is therefore **RECOMMENDED** that Council consider the various recommendations made and make a choice for its preferred option for the future management of the Housing Service.

Councillor G Garner

COUNCIL MEETING – 20 JULY 2004

REPORT OF COUNCILLOR GARNER – HOUSING SERVICES

Members will be aware of the very busy time in housing over recent months including Housing Best value Review, CPA and Housing homeless families. Your Council has performed well in all of these areas and rest assured, these successes will continue to be monitored and built upon.

The Housing Stock Options Appraisal has now reached a crucial stage and is the subject of a separate section within this Council document. Tonight members will be asked to decide whether or not we move to the next stage which will be to undertake a major consultation exercise involving all of our tenants leading to a tenants ballot, the tenants will therefore decide who they want their landlord to be. Given the scale and importance of this exercise, arrangements will have to be made to organise such a large scale, in depth consultation process. The tenant consultation proper will therefore not start until 2004 and will take about twelve months.

On a lighter note, members will also be aware that I like to take advantage of being able to inform them of activities within housing that I hope are of general interest:

DEANE DLO helping youngsters choose their career.

For several years now Deane DLO has been pleased to be able to offer placements for Work Experience, over one or two weeks duration, to many pupils of local schools and one day-a-week basis to some college students from both SCAT and Bridgwater College. The placements are offered within all of the building trades (Bricklaying, Carpentry & Joinery, Plumbing, Painting and Electrical) as well as some benefiting from placements within the Horticultural and Nursery Sections.

The pupils are required to write to their chosen “employer” requesting the placement and are then “interviewed” before they commence, where it is explained to them that they will be required to satisfy certain conditions including starting earlier than school times, working a full day and bringing their packed lunches which is in itself a challenge to many!

This experience allows the pupil to decide whether or not their chosen career is the right one for them. The majority of the pupils have ended their week or fortnight experience with us saying that they had enjoyed themselves fully, gained a lot from the knowledge of the workforce and did not realise the extent of the works undertaken by the Council. Most important of all though is the fact that they felt happy with their choice of career.

However, a few have left saying that they did not realise what was really involved in their choice and didn't fully enjoy the experience. We are always quick to advise them that it is better to realise that their choice is possibly wrong at an early stage and change their minds accordingly, so, either way, it is usually a positive outcome at the end of the Work Experience.

Whilst we tend to receive more boys than girls, particularly in the Building Section, we have had a few girls attend for Work Experience in the Horticultural Section and they find the Nursery a very interesting place to work.

It is very rewarding when, a couple of years later, you may find yourself interviewing & selecting one of the pupils you gave work experience to; in fact we currently employ ex placements in our Building Section.

We have received many Work Experience “Certificates of Appreciation” from the various schools and pupils, and we hope that the little part we have played in their career path has helped them on their way.

Councillor Greg Garner

COUNCIL MEETING – 20 JULY 2004

REPORT OF COUNCILLOR HALL - RESOURCES

FINANCIAL SERVICES UNIT

During the last three months the Financial Services Unit have been finalising the annual accounts for the year ending 31 March 2004. This work is now complete and the Unit is now working with the Audit Commission who is currently auditing the accounts. In addition with the forthcoming Leisure Trust the final financial arrangements are being made to ensure a smooth handover and finally work on the first formal budget monitoring exercise of 2004/05 is underway.

MEMBER SERVICES

The programme for the review of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny role continues with visits to Beacon Authorities and with pilots being undertaken by the Community Leadership Review Panel and the Strategic Planning, Transportation & Economic Development Review Panel. Helen Watson of Public Sector Training has been engaged to facilitate the proposed Member's Forum and to deliver training.

The Ministry of Defence have announced plans to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the end of the Second World War. Commemoration events will take place on 10 July 2005, which is the mid point between VE Day and VJ Day.

This will be the last official, formal commemoration of the end of the Second World War. We are currently working in partnership with the Royal British Legion, United Services Association and the Police to mark this occasion locally and discuss initial thoughts on what form the commemoration could take.

Following a demonstration on the use of a web cam as a means of improving communication with citizens, further discussions are taking place on the possible use of this technology by the Council.

A report is to be submitted to the Resources Review Panel at its meeting on 22 July regarding a suggestion that the Council make a contribution towards the cost of Councillors subscribing to Broadband.

A report will also be submitted to the Review Board at its meeting on 5 August asking for guidance how best to allocate the budget for attendance at Conferences by Councillors.

OFFICE SERVICES

A trial of revised working arrangements for Caretaking staff at Deane House has proved successful. The 'split shift' pattern of working, with its inherent wild fluctuations in hours from week to week, has been replaced with a formal rota of early and late working. This has the twin benefits of the building being covered from 7.00am to whenever evening meetings finish and the staff themselves being able to enjoy more freedom away from work.

Replacement of the mail-franking machine with a more up-to-date model will allow us to monitor and analyse much more closely postage trends and costs. This will be an important tool in helping us to reach the planned reduction in postage costs by switching as much as possible to Second Class.

The Geographic Information Systems (GIS) team is continuing to introduce new technology across Service Units. Putting much of our information into a mapping background will help deliver services to the public by making the information much easier to present – a picture being worth a thousand words. It will also mean that information will be much more readily accessible and interchangeable between all sections of the Council.

CUSTOMER SERVICES

The Customer Services team is now established, and dealing in varying depths with nine of the first ten services that were scheduled to be included in the first ten. Those are, the exchange facility of 356356, Housing Benefits, Electoral services, Parking services, Land charges, Waste Management, Planning services, Democratic services and taking electronic payments. Council Tax is the last of the first phase, which will be completed by the end of this month.

The service is dealing with between 900 and 1000 calls per day, and already some 33% of calls are being dealt with at the first point of contact. This means that the average 'talk time' is now in excess of 2 minutes.

There remains staffing and accommodation difficulties, which are currently being worked upon, plus the reliability of the telephone system needs to be made more robust. Again this is being worked upon, and these minor points should not detract from the overwhelming view that this is the way of dealing with customers is the right way that makes maximum use of today's technology.

The system is now providing invaluable management information on calls levels etc. that will allow us to more closely align staff to calls and thereby improve our service.

BENEFITS

April 2004 saw the abolition of the requirement for customers to complete renewal claim forms every year. However, the Government recognise that customers sometimes forget to tell us about changes in their circumstances, so they have replaced renewals with targeted reviews. We must visit at least 50% of those claims that we review. Since April, we have found that nearly half of those we visit have failed to tell us about something that means they are entitled to less benefit. Although this increases the level of overpaid

benefit we identify, it means we ensure more accurate payments to those genuinely entitled. The implementation of the new review regime impacted on our performance as officers adapted to new working practices. However, we saw steady improvement in speed of processing in May and June and the outlook in achieving our annual targets looks very positive.

REVENUES

Much work has been undertaken during the first couple of months of the financial year in order to implement the Revenues Team Plan for 2004/05. Individual team plans have been developed for each of the 5 teams within Revenues as part of the PREDs process.

The major areas of the team plan currently being worked on are as follows:

- *Cash Allocation System Development* – a new in-house cash receipting system was introduced in April 2004. This system is being further developed so that it will help us to streamline and automate, where possible, our cash balancing and reconciliation processes. Doing so will save time, provide full audit trails for each transaction and provide for greater accuracy and procedural clarity in a complex area.
- *Council Tax & NNDR Collection Rates* – these are being closely monitored in view of the change this year to the standard instalment date. The statistics for the end of the first quarter indicate an increase in the percentage of Council Tax collected and put us ahead of target. The NNDR percentage is slightly down on target, but the figure has been adversely affected by the creation of large amounts of new debit since the start of the financial year. (A full report on collection is being made to the Resources Review Panel on 22 July 2004).
- *Council Tax IT System Development* – a project has recently been started to upgrade our Council Tax IT system – this will result in a move to windows based technology and will introduce enhancements such as electronic billing.
- *Non-Domestic Rate Legislation Changes* – April 2005 sees the introduction of major changes to Non Domestic Rates legislation. These include a re-valuation of all business properties and the introduction of new transitional and small business relief schemes together with the business improvement districts (BIDS) scheme. All will require major changes to our software. Much work has been undertaken since the beginning of the financial year to prepare for these changes.
- *Non Domestic Rate Discretionary Relief Guidelines* – we are currently in the process of reviewing our existing guidelines with a view to updating them and including the various new reliefs. Once complete a revised draft will be put before the Executive for approval.

INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Training - The development team (11 staff) are undertaking a 5-day training course in Microsoft DotNet technology from 19th - 23rd July.

During that period we will only be responding to 'emergency' system support calls.

FMS Review - A PAR is being prepared for to capital funding to replace FMS software. Target implementation date is Oct 05.

Housing - work on developing an integrated stock condition / programmed maintenance / asset register has commenced - target completion December 04.

Land Searches - testing of electronic link to Somerset CC in progress, when live this will speed the turn around for County's input to the land search significantly.

Storage Network - Tenders are now being received, with target live date Oct 05.

Intranet - Staff are now being consulted on ideas for the new intranet system. A 'working group' of IS Unit and Policy and Performance staff is being set up to specify the work.

6 week placement from West Country Training Services - helping people recovering from long term illness get back in to work. We have taken on someone as part of this programme with significant project management experience for a 6-week placement. We expect both us and the 'placement' to gain significantly from this.

Wireless networking - a small area of The Deane House is now enabled - we continue to check the security of this and will enable the entire building once satisfied.

INTERNAL AUDIT

The Audit Team have been concentrating on getting on with the main systems based audits during the first quarter of 2004/05 which include Bank Reconciliation, Treasury Management, Housing Rents. The section undertakes other non-audit duties which have seen individual members of the team dealing with issues covering a wide range of Council activities such as: -

- Data Protection – General advice and guidance on data protection issues (Dealing with subject access requests, providing guidance to staff on disclosures)
- Risk Management – Facilitation of Risk Management sessions and ongoing involvement in the creation of risk registers covering various areas of Council activity.
- Corporate Governance – Setting up arrangements for the Council's new Corporate Governance Committee.

Councillor Terry Hall

COUNCIL MEETING – 20 JULY 2004

REPORT OF COUNCILLOR MRS. LEWIN-HARRIS – COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

As Taunton Deane's representative on the Regional Assembly, I have been nominated to the Regional Futures Sub Group. The task before this group is to develop an Integrated Regional Strategy against which all other regional and sub regional strategies can be tested.

This is proving an interesting but challenging task. The brief is that the Integrated Regional Strategy should set the tone for how we want the South West to develop over the next 20 years, identifying the key priorities that are important for the region and also be short and concise.

The first draft of the Integrated Regional Strategy has now been produced. Currently it is entitled Just Connect. It identifies five key headline aims for the Region:

- To harness the benefits of population growth and manage the implications of population change
- To enhance our distinctive environments and the quality and diversity of our cultural life
- To enhance our economic prosperity and ensure quality of employment opportunity
- To address deprivation and disadvantage to reduce significant intra-regional inequalities
- To make sure that people are treated fairly and can participate fully in society

Under these will lie a number of 'Crunch Objectives' that require an integrated approach across the Region. The full document can be seen on the Regional Assembly website www.southwest-ra.gov.uk.

The Assembly will debate the draft strategy at the next meeting on 16 July.

TAUNTON DEANE LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

The LSP met on the 17 June, at the Wellsprings Leisure Centre. The main item on the agenda was to agree a plan for spending the additional income raised by the 90% Council Tax now levied on second home owners in Taunton Deane (the previous levy was 50%). Projects to advance the following shared priorities were discussed:

- Inequalities and the needs of minority and 'hard to reach' groups
- Promoting a stronger economy and tackling the causes of deprivation in particular areas of Taunton Deane

- Developing better ways of sharing information between agencies about local needs and quality of life trends
- Developing safer communities, with a particular emphasis on the night time economy and anti-social behaviour

A multi-agency group would meet to work up project ideas in more detail. These will then be agreed by myself as Chair of the LSP, Penny James (as TDBC's representative on the LSP)) and David Taylor (Somerset County Council).

Further information on the LSP can be found on its website:

www.tauntondeane-lsp.com

ENSURING LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS DELIVER

I recently attended a Conference in London, organised by the New Local Government Network (described as Local Government's Think Tank). The subject was: Ensuring Local Strategic Partnerships Deliver.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is looking for 3 key outcomes from LSP's:

- Improvement of mainstream services through pooling of resources and new ways of working
- Community involvement and community empowerment
- Reduction in inequalities between deprived areas and other areas

There are a great many models of LSP out there. Those in areas where Neighbourhood Renewal Funding is available look very different to those in largely Rural Districts. However, it was clear that there are some tensions that are common to many:

- Between community priorities and core business (which will most likely be driven by government targets).
- Between the different layers of local government, particularly in 2 tier areas. There are significant complexities in aligning regional, county, district and local community strategies.
- Between all the different partnerships operating in the same field (partner fatigue).
- Between Government requirements/suggestions as to what LSP's should take on and the capacity of LSP's to do this

THE FUTURE

- 'New Localism' or 'Giving the LSP's Teeth' was being heavily promoted
- This could mean LSP's would develop into Local Public Service Boards with both appointed and elected members and pooled budgets and staff
- They would plan and deliver on new Local Public Service Agreements or Local Area Agreements
- These would make explicit who will deliver change and how at the local level
- Success would depend on clear new settlement between Whitehall and localities
- Would need a much simplified target regime

- Funding streams would also have to be simplified

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LESSONS FOR TAUNTON DEANE LSP

We need to:

- monitor and report back on progress against the targets in the Community Strategy (we are already working on this)
- look further at areas where pooling resources could bring greater efficiencies/savings to be reinvested.
- Look at ways we can measure if we are “closing the gap” in the disadvantaged areas
- Do more to raise awareness of the LSP amongst a wider audience
- Consider next round of LSPA targets to be agreed by LSP

Councillor Mrs Joanna Lewin-Harris