

## COUNCIL SUMMONS

YOU ARE REQUESTED TO ATTEND A MEETING OF THE TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL TO BE HELD IN PRINCIPAL COMMITTEE ROOM, THE DEANE HOUSE, BELVEDERE ROAD, TAUNTON ON TUESDAY 21ST FEBRUARY 2006 AT 18:30.

---

### AGENDA

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

1. To receive the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 13 December 2005 (attached)
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. Part 1- To deal with questions and receive recommendations from the Executive:-

(i) Councillor Williams (Leader of the Council)

Recommendations relating to:-

- (a) General Fund Revenue Estimates 2006/07
- (b) Capital Programme 2006/07 to 2008/09
- (c) Council Tax Setting 2006/07

(ii) Councillor Garner (Housing Services)

Recommendation relating to Housing Revenue Account, Revenue Estimates and Rent Levels, Deane Helpline and Deane Building DLO Account for 2006/07

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

Recommendation relating to Corporate Strategy 2006 - 09

7. Part II - To receive reports from the following members of the Executive:-
  - (i) Councillor Williams (Leader of the Council)
  - (ii) Councillor Bishop (Planning Policy and Transportation)
  - (iii) Councillor Leighton (Communications)
  - (iv) Councillor Mrs Bradley (Leisure, Arts and Culture)
  - (v) Councillor Cavill (Economic Development, Property and Tourism)
  - (vi) Councillor Edwards (Environmental Services)
  - (vii) Councillor Garner (Housing Services)
  - (viii) Clouncillor Hall (Resources)

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

8. To consider the following Motion to be moved by Councillor Lisgo, seconded by Councillor Weston:

This Council is mindful of its commitment to developing the economic prosperity of Taunton whilst recognising the challenge to companies of competing in a global market place.

Taunton Deane Borough Council is therefore asked to call an urgent meeting with representatives of the Thales Group where the company will be urged to re-think their recent announcement to make redundancies in its local workforce. The retention of highly skilled jobs is crucial to the continuing growth of our local economy.

G P DYKE  
Member Services Manager

The Deane House  
Belvedere Road  
TAUNTON  
Somerset

TA1 1HE

14 February 2006







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



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



Tel: 01823 356410  
Fax: 01823 356329  
E-Mail: [g.dyke@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:g.dyke@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

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

## TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the Taunton Deane Borough Council held in the Principal Committee Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton on 13 December 2005 at 6.30 pm.

Present: The Mayor (Councillor Lees)  
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Hindley)  
Councillors Mrs Allgrove, Beaven, Bishop, Bone, Bowrah, Mrs Bradley, N Cavill, Miss S Cavill, Clark, Mrs Cluff, Coles, Croad, Davies, Denington, Durdan, Edwards, Floyd, Garner, Govier, Hall, Hayward, Henley, C Hill, Mrs Marie Hill, House, Leighton, Mrs Lewin-Harris, Lisgo, Meikle, Morrell, Mullins, Murphy, Paul, Phillips, Prior-Sankey, Slattery, Mrs Smith, Stone, Stuart-Thorn, Vail, Wedderkopp, Weston, Mrs Whitmarsh, Williams and Mrs Wilson

### 1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 11 October 2005, copies having been sent to each Member were signed by the Mayor.

### 2. Apologies

Councillors Mrs Biscoe, Mrs Marcia Hill, Mrs Jones, Ms Priscott and Watson.

### 3. Vision for Taunton

Council received a presentation from Ian Franklin, Vision Delivery Team Project Director, and Mark Green also of the Vision Delivery Team regarding the present position of the Vision for Taunton. Progress to date of a number of different aspects of the Vision were reported. It was noted that presentations of this nature would be made to the Council from time to time in order that all Members were kept up to date and informed of progress on the Vision.

### 4. Members Allowances 2006/2007

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

A copy of its report and recommendations had been circulated to all Councillors. It had also been considered by the Resources Review Panel at its meeting on 10 November 2005.

Details of the Member's Allowances scheme that had been recommended by the independent Panel were submitted.

These recommendations had been considered by the Council's Resources Review Panel at its meeting on 10 November 2005. The Panel had recommended that the recommendations of the Independent Member's Allowances Panel be agreed.

Moved by Councillor Mrs Lewin-Harris, seconded by Councillor Hall that the recommended Member's Allowances scheme for 2006/2007 be amended to enable a 3.5% increase in basic and special responsibility allowances.

The amendment was put and was lost.

On the motion of Councillor Mrs Whitmarsh it was RESOLVED that the existing Member's Allowances scheme be discontinued and replaced with the scheme recommended by both the Member's Allowances Panel and the Resources Review Panel with effect from 1 April 2006. (Full details of the scheme are set out in the report submitted to Council).

5. Car Parking Charges 2006/2007

Submitted recommendations from Councillor Bishop, Executive Councillor, Planning and Transportation following a meeting of the Traffic Regulation Order Panel held on 29 November 2005.

Moved by Councillor Henley, seconded by Councillor Floyd that the recommended parking tariffs for 2006/2007 be amended as follows. Following a proposal from Councillor Weston, the amendment was further added to and the following composite amendment was therefore submitted for consideration.

- a. Remove the proposed increase in car parking charges for Wellington.
- b. Remove the increase in shopper car park charges.
- c. Ring fence all the proposed monies gained from the increase in commuter car park charges for specific transport measures including (i) that income from car parks be used to improve public transport in Taunton Deane (ii) to investigate measures to increase use of public transport and to discourage single use of cars and (iii) to invest in measures to encourage alternative uses of transport.

The amendment was put and was lost.

On the motion of Councillor Bishop it was RESOLVED that:

- (a) the parking tariffs for 2006/2007 be increased as set out in the appendix attached to the report and
- (b) the Taunton Deane Borough (Off-Street Parking Places) (No 27 Amendment) Order 2005 as set out in the report submitted be confirmed. (Councillors Govier, Henley and Prior-Sanke declared a personal interest in the above item as members of Somerset County Council).

6. Recommendations to Council from the Executive

(a) Capital Programme Update 2005/2006

Reported that over recent months detailed reports had been submitted to the appropriate Review Panels regarding some expected changes to the Capital Programme of the Council. Although the details of each of these expected changes had been explained fully in the reports to the Review Panels, the

Executive had considered a report which consolidated these variations. Details were submitted of the schemes where changes to the Capital Programme were being sought.

On the motion of Councillor Mrs Bradley it was RESOLVED that the proposed changes to the Capital Programme be supported and the following be agreed:

- (i) Additional funding for the indoor tennis centre extension of £60,000.
- (ii) Virement of £44,000 from the "Grants to Parish Play Areas" budget towards health and safety improvements in Taunton Deane Borough Council play areas within parishes.
- (iii) Virement of a total of £28,000 from the Depot Improvements budget to DDA works and to the DLO reserve.
- (iv) Reductions to the Housing Capital Programme as outlined in the report.
- (v) A Supplementary Estimate from the HRA Working Balance of £500,000.
- (vi) A Supplementary Estimate from General Fund reserves of £60,000 to meet the additional debt costs that would result from a switch of supported borrowing approvals from the HRA to the General Fund.

(b) Acceptance of a Tender for Revenue and Benefits Software

At its meeting on 21 September 2005 the Executive had considered details of the outcome of the procurement exercise undertaken to buy a new suite of Revenues and Benefits software to replace the present in-house systems.

The tender had been awarded but it was necessary to vire £56,000 from Housing Benefit admin to Revenue Contribution to Capital in order to meet the expected shortfall in Capital funding.

On the motion of Councillor Hall it was RESOLVED that £56,000 be vired from Housing Benefit admin to Revenue Contribution to Capital.

(c) The Local Government Pay and Workforce Strategy

In March 2004 a three year pay settlement had been agreed for Local Government. As part of the settlement both employers and the trade unions had agreed that a number of pay and workforce related issues needed to be progressed and that this should be done through a national framework.

Progress had been made on all fronts in particular in workforce planning and leadership development. There was however still much work to be done on the pay and grading review and additional resources would be needed to meet the deadline for this exercise. Alternatives were currently being looked at to replace the Council's existing job evaluation system with one which met the requirements of this strategy. Following on from this it would be necessary to plan for a major review of every job in the organisation and re-evaluate them on the new chosen system. This was a very large piece of work that had to be



completed by March 2007. Further staff resources were required to achieve this. It was estimated that it would cost in the region of £75,000 which included staff, computer system support and necessary licences.

On the motion of Councillor Hall it was RESOLVED that a Supplementary Estimate from the General Fund reserve of £75,000 for additional resources to implement the new job evaluation scheme be agreed.

(d) Council Tax Section 13A Reduction Procedure

The Local Government Act 2003 had introduced various changes to the Council Tax legislation. One of these changes added a new “Section 13A Billing Authority’s power to reduce the amount of tax payable” to the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The new powers allowed the Billing Authority to reduce the Council Tax payable either for specific classes of cases or for individual cases. The Billing Authority had the power to either reduce or cancel the amount of Council Tax payable.

The new legislation was designed to allow Billing Authorities to create local discounts or exemptions in order to cater for local circumstances. The disadvantage of this change, however, was that the cost of awarding any such reduction had to be wholly funded by the Billing Authority. No provision was made for the other precepting authorities to contribute.

This meant that the financial implications of any decisions to create a class of reduction had to be considered in detail before any such reduction was created. It was anticipated therefore that such reductions would only be awarded in exceptional cases.

The Executive had considered the procedure to be adopted to deal with such applications on a consistent basis. Details of the proposed procedure were set out both in the report to Council and the minutes of the Executive meeting.

On the motion of Councillor Hall, it was RESOLVED that the procedure and delegation of powers, as outlined in the report to Council, be agreed when considering applications for Section 13A reductions.

(e) Fees and Charges

The Executive had considered the fees and charges for 2006/2007 for the Land Charges, Licensing and Cemeteries and Crematorium services.

For the Land Charges service, no increase in the basic search fee was proposed. For the Cemeteries and Crematorium an estimated £132,000 would be generated by the proposed charges.

Appendix C submitted with the report to Council contained a summary of the Licensing fees and charges with the exception of the Licensing Act 2003 fees as these were set by statute and were currently under review centrally. The proposed fees and charges had also been considered by the Review Board.

On the motion of Councillor Edwards, it was RESOLVED that the fees and charges for 2006/2007 as set out in the report submitted to Council be agreed.

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

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

(i) Leader of the Council (Councillors Williams)

Councillor Williams' report covered the following topics:

- Budget 2006/2007 and the Revenue Support Grant.
- Delivery of effective services.
- Vision for Taunton including the Livestock Market, Somerset County Cricket Club, Tangier and High Street areas.
- Regional Spatial Strategy.
- Silk Mills Bridge and the Park and Ride scheme.
- Overview and Scrutiny process.
- Turning on of the Taunton Christmas lights.
- Taunton Ice Rink.

(ii) Communications (Councillor Gwyneth Leighton)

Councillor Leighton submitted her report which covered the following areas:

- Information.
- Consultation.
- Local Government reputation project.
- Weekly Bulletin.
- Campaigns.
- Media training.
- Deane Dispatch.

(iii) Planning Policy and Transportation (Councillor Bishop)

Councillor Bishop submitted his report which drew attention to the following:

- 17th Annual Building Control Conference and Exhibition.
- Planning training.
- Planning applications and decisions.
- Regional Transport Strategy.
- Public Transport Forum.

(iv) Leisure, Arts and Culture (Councillor Mrs Bradley)

The report from Councillor Mrs Bradley dealt with activities taking place in the following areas:

- Community Arts and Arts Development including the cultural quarter and the Brewhouse. With regard to the cultural quarter Councillor Mrs Bradley thanked the Chairman of the Working Party, Max Hebditch for the very considerable time and expertise that he had given to the Council.
- Parks.
- Sports.
- Tone Leisure Limited events.
- Networking.

(v) Economic Development, Asset Management and Tourism (Councillor N P Cavill)

The report from Councillor Cavill covered:

- Asset Management.
- Economic Development.
- Tourism.
- Rural Economy.
- Taunton High Street.

(vi) Environmental Services (Councillor Edwards)

The report from Councillor Edwards drew attention to developments in the following areas:

- Licensing.
- Health and Safety.
- Food Safety.
- Environmental Protection.
- Waste Services.
- Cemeteries and Crematorium.

(vii) Housing Services (Councillor Garner)

Councillors Garners report focussed on two areas within the housing portfolio. The first provided the usual update on housing stock options and the second updated Councillors on the position regarding homelessness in Taunton Deane.

(viii) Resources (Councillor Hall)

The report from Councillor Hall provided information on the following areas within his portfolio.

- Boundary review.
- Customer Service.
- ISiS.
- Financial Services.

- Member Services.
- Internal Audit.
- Benefits.
- Revenues.

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

The first draft Local Area Agreement had now been through the scrutiny process at Taunton Deane and had been submitted to Government Office by the County Council at the end of November. An outline was submitted of the aims and targets that had particular relevance to this Council. Councillor Mrs Lewin-Harris' report continued to focus on the following areas within her portfolio.

- Policy and Performance.
- Scrutiny.
- Relocatable CCTV camera.
- Community planning.
- Local action teams.

8. Appointment of Civic Marshall

For the past few years the post of Civic Marshall had been efficiently undertaken by Councillor Mrs Mary Whitmarsh. Councillor Mrs Whitmarsh now wished to relinquish this role and it was therefore necessary to appoint a successor. Councillor Mrs Jean Allgrove, a past Mayor of the Council, had indicated that she was willing to undertake the duties of Civic Marshall. RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs Jean Allgrove be appointed as Civic Marshall and Councillor Mrs Whitmarsh be thanked for carrying out the duties over the past few years.

(The following Councillors left the meeting at the times indicated. Councillor Bone at 7.25pm, Councillor Mrs Cluff at 8.00pm, Councillor Prior-Sankey at 8.25pm, Councillor Floyd at 9.10pm, Councillor Stone at 9.20pm, Councillor Govier at 9.25pm and Councillors Morrell and Edwards at 9.30pm).

(The meeting ended at 10.15pm).

## TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

### COUNCIL MEETING - 21 FEBRUARY 2006

#### Part I

To deal with written questions to and receive recommendations to the Council from the Executive.

#### 1. COUNCILLOR WILLIAMS – LEADER OF THE EXECUTIVE

(a) General Fund Revenue Estimate 2006/07

The Executive have considered its 2006/07 budget proposals. The report we considered contained details on:-

- (i) The General Fund Revenue Budget proposals for 2006/07 including the proposed Council Tax increase and the Prudential Indicators and
- (ii) Draft figures on the predicted financial position of the Council for the following four years.

The Review Board have also considered the report in detail. Consultation on the budget has taken place and all Members have had an opportunity to contribute to the budget setting process.

The proposals will result in a total Council Tax increase of 3%.

It is now a requirement for the Council to prepare not only budgets for the following financial year but to also provide indicative figures for the two years after that. The provision of an indicative future Government grant settlement for 2007/08 helps considerably towards providing Members with more reliable forecasts than have been possible in the past. Details of the main cost pressures faced by the Council in future years have been identified. The Medium Term Financial Plan provides an indication of the expected budget gap going forward into 2007/08. The Council Tax calculation and formal tax setting resolution is considered separately. The proposed budget for Taunton Deane will result in a Band D Council Tax of £125.54 an increase of 3% on the previous year. This represents an increase of 7p per week. The Band D taxpayer will receive all the services provided by the Council in 2006/07 at a cost of £2.41 per week.

The estimated expenses chargeable to the non parished area of Taunton for the forthcoming year amounts to £27,320 an increase of 3% and this forms part of the total net expenditure of the Council.

The Council's Section 151 Officer is required to comment as part of the budget setting process upon the robustness of the budget and the adequacy of reserves. Shirlene Adam, Strategic Director, the Council's 151 Officer, has thoroughly reviewed the procedures, outputs and outcomes of the budget setting process and has confirmed that the Council's reserves are adequate and that the budget estimates used in preparing the 2006/07 budget are sufficiently robust.

The Council are RECOMMENDED that the budget for General Fund services for 2006/07 be agreed and that :-

- (i) the transfer of any underspend in 2005/06 back to General Fund reserves be agreed
- (ii) the proposed 2006/07 budget, being authority expenditure of £12,699,820 and Special Expenses of £27,320, be agreed in accordance with the Local Government Act 1992
- (iii) the predicted General Fund Reserve balance at 31 March 2007 of £1,407,088 be noted
- (iv) the Prudential Indicators for 2006/07 as set out in the report to the Executive be agreed
- (v) the revised forecast position for 2007/08 onwards as outlined in the report to the Executive be noted.

(b) Capital Programme 2006/2007 to 2008/2009

The Executive have considered the proposed General Fund (GF) and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programmes for the period 2006/07 to 2008/09.

For the General Fund the estimated unallocated resources available for this period amounts to £739,000. The proposed capital programme amounts to £407,500 leaving £331,500 of unallocated capital resources available for future schemes.

For all housing schemes both GF and HRA the estimated resources available for 2006/07 amount to £5,966K. The proposed capital programme for 2006/07 used all available resources.

The Review Board have also considered the Capital Programme and made no suggestions for changes to the proposed budget.

The Council are RECOMMENDED that both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account capital programmes be agreed.

(c) Council Tax Setting 2006/2007

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

The estimated expenses chargeable to the non parished area of Taunton in 2006/07 amounts to £27,320 and this forms part of the total net expenditure of the Council.

The estimated balance on the Council Tax Collection Fund is a surplus of £34,086. Taunton Deane's share of this amounts to £3,709 and this is reflected in the revenue estimates.

The Council's budget requirement including parish precepts and non parish special expenses is £13,065,305. This amount is then reduced by the amount notified in respect of the Borough Council's Revenue Support Grant of £1,254,774 and the Non Domestic Rates distribution from the pool which amounts to £6,500,220.

The net amount having taken the Collection Fund position into account of £5,306,601 is used to calculate the Council Tax at Band D reflecting the parish precepts by dividing it by the total of the Council Tax base as approved by the Executive in December 2005.

The Council Tax for the Borough (excluding parish precepts and special expenses for the non parished area) is £125.54 an increase of £3.66 (3%) compared to the 2005/06 Council Tax. The total Council Tax including the County Council and Police Authority precepts is still subject to confirmation.

The Council are therefore RECOMMENDED that subject to final determination including the Council Tax for Somerset County Council and the Police Authority which is still to be advised.

(i) That it be noted that at its meeting on 7 December 2005 the Executive calculated the following amounts for the year 2006/07 in accordance with the regulations made under Section 33(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended):-

(1) 39,358.90 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as its Council Tax base for the year.

(2)	Ash Priors	71.85	Neroche	242.82
-----	------------	-------	---------	--------

Ashbrittle	89.30	North Curry	707.64
Bathealton	82.42	Norton Fitzwarren	689.40
Bishops Hull	1,068.44	Nynehead	151.51
Bishops Lydeard/ Cothelstone	1,914.26	Oake	325.22
Bradford on Tone	276.07	Otterford	162.43
Burrowbridge	199.58	Pitminster	447.92
Cheddon Fitzpaine	635.09	Ruishton/Thornfalcon	614.37
Chipstable	117.71	Sampford Arundel	129.59
Churchstanton	307.09	Staplegrove	706.51
Combe Florey	120.30	Stawley	116.52
Comeytrowe	2,073.08	Stoke St Gregory	381.55
Corfe	131.85	Stoke St Mary	201.61
Creech St Michael	935.78	Taunton	15,726.14
Durston	58.53	Trull	990.12
Fitzhead	123.83	Wellington	4,509.64
Halse	143.16	Wellington (without)	292.29
Hatch Beauchamp	251.30	West Bagborough	157.62
Kingston St Mary	451.55	West Buckland	405.49
Langford Budville	213.25	West Hatch	139.97
Lydeard St	196.08	West Monkton	1,095.98
Lawrence/Tolland			
Milverton	585.69	Wiveliscombe	1,118.34

being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amounts of its Council Tax Base



for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

(2) That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2006/07 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:-

(a) £64,426,789 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2)(a) of the Act.

(Gross Expenditure including amount required for working balance).

(b) £51,361,484 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(3)(a) to (c) of the Act.

(Gross Income including reserves to be used to meet Gross Expenditure).

(c) £13,065,305 being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year.

(d) £7,758,704 being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its general fund in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates, revenue support grant, additional grant or SSA reduction grant (increased by the amount of the sums which the Council estimates will be transferred in the year from its Collection Fund to its General Fund in accordance with Section 97(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (Council Tax Surplus) and increased by the amount of any sum which the Council estimates will be transferred from its Collection Fund to its General Fund pursuant to the Collection Fund (Community Charge) directions under Section 98(4) of the

Local Government Finance Act 1988  
made on 7 February 1994  
(Community Charge Surplus).

(e) £134.83

$$\frac{(c) - (d)}{3.2.1(1)} = \frac{13,065,305 - 7,758,704}{39,358.90}$$

being the amount calculated at (c) above less the amount at (d) above, all divided by the amount at 3.2.1(1) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year. (Average Council Tax at Band D for Borough including Parish Precepts and Special Expenses).

(f) £365,485

being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act. (Parish Precepts and Special Expenses).

(g) £125.54

$$\frac{(e) - (f)}{3.2.1(1)} = \frac{134.83 - 365,485}{39,358.90}$$

being the amount at (e) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (f) above by the amount at 3.2.1(1) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special items relate. (Council Tax at Band D for Borough Excluding Parish Precepts and Special Expenses).

(h)	Ash Priors	125.54	Neroche	145.45
	Ashbrittle	140.10	North Curry	143.91
	Bathealton	132.82	Norton Fitzwarren	142.53
	Bishops Hull	139.58	Nynehead	145.34
	Bishops Lydeard/ Cothelstone	139.17	Oake	135.99

Bradford on Tone	140.03	Otterford	125.54
Burrowbridge	148.09	Pitminster	138.82
Cheddon Fitzpaine	131.84	Ruishton/Thornfalcon	141.82
Chipstable	134.89	Sampford Arundel	159.80
Churchstanton	149.15	Staplegrove	137.22
Combe Florey	140.50	Stawley	135.84
Comeytrowe	136.63	Stoke St Gregory	141.27
Corfe	133.88	Stoke St Mary	139.25
Creech St Michael	140.73	Taunton	127.28
Durstun	126.22	Trull	135.64
Fitzhead	146.09	Wellington	143.28
Halse	137.76	Wellington (without)	140.25
Hatch Beauchamp	137.88	West Bagborough	138.23
Kingston St Mary	138.83	West Buckland	145.27
Langford Budville	133.98	West Hatch	139.83
Lydeard St Lawrence/Tolland	135.79	West Monkton	136.49
Milverton	136.64	Wiveliscombe	141.28

being the amounts given by adding to the amount at (g) above, the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 3.2.1(2) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate. (Council Taxes at Band D for Borough, Parish and Special Expenses).

- (i) See overleaf.

**NOTE: Since the meeting of the Executive final notification of all parish precepts have been received. This has resulted in a number of minor amendments to the figures previously submitted.**

**Also since the meeting, draft figures in relation to the Police Authority precept and the likely level of the Council Tax for Somerset County Council have been received. Attached as Appendix A and B are tables which indicate the revised figures.**

Councillor John Williams

## **2. COUNCILLOR GARNER – HOUSING SERVICES**

### Housing Revenue Account, Revenue Estimates and Rent Levels

The Executive have considered the proposed Housing Revenue Account for 2006/2007. It also includes details of the new rent level, service charges and other housing related charges such as garage rents. It also provides information on the Deane Helpline trading account and the Deane Building DLO trading account. Both the Housing Review Panel and the Review Board have considered the 2006/2007 budget report and had made no amendments or suggestions or changes to the proposed budget.

The Council are therefore RECOMMENDED that the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2006/07 be agreed.

Councillor Greg Garner

### **3. COUNCILLOR MRS LEWIN-HARRIS – COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP**

#### Corporate Strategy 2006 to 2009

The Executive have considered the draft Corporate Strategy 2006 to 2009 which provides direction for the Council and sets its objectives and desired outcomes for the next three years.

The Corporate Strategy is the Council's principal Policy document which establishes the outcomes that it wants to achieve in the community. It provides an important lead for budget setting and service planning activities.

Extensive public consultation has taken place when views were sought on future priorities and budget setting choices. The outcomes of the consultation have been considered by the Review Board and the draft Corporate Strategy reflects the findings from this exercise.

The Corporate Strategy 2006 to 2009 is outcome focused and aligned closely to delivering the Council's stated priorities. It provides a framework for future decisions over budget and resource allocation and reflects national recommended best practice in its design. The strategy has been challenged and scrutinised during its development through a number of different means.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that the Corporate Strategy (attached as an appendix) be agreed.

Councillor Joanna Lewin-Harris

**TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CORPORATE STRATEGY**

**2006-2009**

# **CORPORATE STRATEGY 2006-09**

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>FOREWORD</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>PURPOSE OF THE CORPORATE STRATEGY</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>VISION, BUSINESS PRINCIPLES AND CORE VALUES</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>CORPORATE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>5 - 6</b>
<b>KEY ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>7 - 20</b>
<b>ECONOMY</b>	<b>7 - 10</b>
<b>TRANSPORT</b>	<b>11 - 12</b>
<b>CRIME</b>	<b>13 - 15</b>
<b>HEALTHY LIVING</b>	<b>16 - 17</b>
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>	<b>18 - 19</b>
<b>DELIVERY</b>	<b>20 - 22</b>
<b>CONTRIBUTING TO WIDER PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES</b>	<b>23 - 24</b>
<b>HOW WE DELIVER THE CORPORATE STRATEGY</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT OF CORPORATE STRATEGY</b>	<b>26</b>



# **CORPORATE STRATEGY 2006-09**

## **FOREWORD**

Welcome to our new Corporate Strategy for 2006-09.

In September 2004, Taunton Deane Borough Council was rated an 'excellent' authority by the Audit Commission. Although proud of this recognition, we are not resting on our laurels. We need to ensure that we remain in touch and responsive to the changing needs and pressures we face as a community into the future.

In this Corporate Strategy we set out clearly what kind of organisation we want to be and introduce a range of measurable ambitions to improve local quality of life and make a positive difference in our communities.

In developing our Corporate Strategy, we have consulted residents and listened carefully to their views about local priorities. We have also taken account of statistical trends in the area and the requirements of the Government and other national bodies. Our Corporate Strategy does not attempt to cover everything that we do, or intend to do, as a local authority. However the priorities and ambitions established in this document will provide the main foundation for future choices about local services and the setting of budgets. We will publish results in our Annual Report, produced in late June each year.

We recognise that our ambitions are challenging and that we cannot achieve them alone. We will work closely with local residents and partner agencies to ensure success.

Our staff and elected members are committed to delivering this Strategy and we commend it to you.

## **PURPOSE OF THE CORPORATE STRATEGY**

Our Corporate Strategy is intended for our staff, councillors, residents and partners. It has three main aims:

- To establish the Council's overall Vision and priorities for the area and how we will deliver these
- To give a clear lead for service planning activities and budget setting decisions
- To guide our dealings with partners and the community.

# VISION, BUSINESS PRINCIPLES AND CORE VALUES

## OUR VISION

Our Vision is:

**To be a high performing Council, working in partnership to create a good quality of life for all Taunton Deane residents.**

## OUR BUSINESS PRINCIPLES

We have established four essential principles to support our Vision and help make it happen:

**Excellent services** – ensuring the delivery of accessible, high quality services that provide good value for money.

**Customer driven** – putting the needs of individual customers at the heart of all that we do.

**Local focus** – making a positive difference to quality of life in communities across Taunton Deane

**A dynamic organisation** – innovative, forward-looking and focused on results

## CORE VALUES

We have developed a set of Core Values with our staff and Councillors. These reflect our fundamental beliefs as an organisation and will guide how we deal with our staff, customers and partners. Our Core Values are:

**Integrity** – we will be honest, do what is right and stick to it.

**Fairness** – we will consistently treat everyone equally, respecting their individual needs and abilities

**Respect** – we will always show respect for everyone

**Trust** – we will show trust and confidence in our staff and members

<p><b>AIM 1</b></p> <p><b>Economy</b> Regenerating Taunton and strengthening the economy of the Borough (Lead Director: JW)</p>	<p><b>AIM 2</b></p> <p><b>Transport</b> Minimising the growth in traffic congestion (Lead Director: JW)</p>	<p><b>AIM 3</b></p> <p><b>Crime</b> Promoting safer communities and tackling anti-social behaviour (Lead Director: SA)</p>	<p><b>AIM 4</b></p> <p><b>Healthy Living</b> Promoting healthy and sustainable communities (Lead Director: JJT)</p>	<p><b>AIM 5</b></p> <p><b>Environment</b> Safeguarding and enhancing the local environment (Lead Director: JW)</p>	<p><b>AIM 6</b></p> <p><b>Delivery</b> Delivering accessible, value for money services (Lead Director: All)</p>
---	---	--	---	--	---

**OUR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**  
(Principal Objectives shown in Bold and above the line)

<p>1. <b>Develop 47 hectares of brownfield employment land and create 14,000 new jobs in the Borough between 2006 and 2026, (5% from Creative Industries Sector) (T Noall)</b></p>	<p>5. <b>Support the County Council as lead agency to limit the rate of growth of traffic congestion in Taunton (to limit vehicle delay hours at peak-time to 2,414 hours by 2011) (T Noall)</b></p>	<p>7. <b>To reduce overall crime in Taunton Deane by 15% by March 2008. (B Cleere)</b></p>	<p>11. <b>To enable the building of 985 units of affordable housing between April 2006 and March 2011 (M Western)</b></p>	<p>13. <b>To increase to at least 75% the percentage of people who are satisfied with the cleanliness of their local environment by 2007. (P Weaver)</b></p>	<p>15. <b>To provide value for money services where overall satisfaction with the Council is in the top quartile nationally and council tax charges are in the lowest quartile when compared with other English districts (All Heads of Service)</b></p>
<p>2. To encourage 30 additional new businesses to set up in Taunton Deane per year (5% from Creative Industries Sector) (T Noall)</p>	<p>Objective 6 - See Over</p>	<p>8. To reduce the incidence of violent crime in Taunton Deane by 15% by 2008 (B Cleere)</p>	<p>12. To reduce the number of homeless applications in temporary accommodation by 50% by 2010, with an emphasis on homelessness prevention (M Western)</p>	<p>14. To increase the percentage of household waste recycled to 34% by the end of 2006 and 50% by the end of 2009 (P Weaver)</p>	<p>16. To achieve level 5 of the Equality Standard for Local Government by the end of 2009 (B Cleere)</p> <p>17. To ensure that 90% of service enquiries to the Council are resolved at the first point of contact by 2015. (K Toller)</p>
<p>Objectives 3 and 4 - See Over</p>		<p>9. To reduce anti-social behaviour incidents by 15% from baseline figures by 2007/08 (B Cleere)</p> <p>Objective 10 - See Over</p>			

<p>3. Reduce deprivation in Halcon and Lyngford, taking the most deprived sub-areas out of the 25% national most deprived areas by 2020 (T Noall)</p> <p>4. Support the development of the rural economy through facilitating and supporting agricultural diversification projects, business activity and land development (T Noall)</p>	<p>6. Support the County Council as lead agency to reduce the proportion of journeys to work made in Taunton by Single Occupancy Vehicles (T Noall)</p>	<p>10. To increase the percentage of residents who feel that their neighbourhoods are becoming safer to over 55% (B Cleere)</p>			
--	---	---	--	--	--

## KEY ACTIVITIES

### AIM 1: Economy

#### Regenerating Taunton and strengthening the economy of the Borough

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Norman Cavill

Lead Director: Joy Wishlade

The Council's major priority under Economy is to work in partnership to deliver the Vision for Taunton, an exciting and long-term initiative to transform our County town into a key economic and cultural centre in the South West region. We are also focussed on enabling local businesses to start up and grow in both rural and urban areas and to tackle areas of deprivation.

<b>Objective 1: Facilitate development of 47 hectares of brownfield employment land and stimulate the creation of 14,000 new jobs in the Borough between 2006 and 2026, of which 5% will be within the Creative Industries Sector (Head of Service: Tom Noall)</b>			
<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>
Produce an appraisal of the Borough's economy to use for a baseline to develop an Economic Development Strategy with a 3 year detailed action plan.	✓	✓ (Annual Review)	✓ (Annual Review)
Free up the Firepool development area for the Vision for Taunton by relocating the Livestock Market (Spring 2007)	✓	✓	
Secure a preferred developer for Firepool, the Vision's key Strategic employment site and commence commercial/employment development (Summer 2007)	✓	✓	
Kick start the Cultural Quarter of the Vision for Taunton by beginning redevelopment of the Tangier site, including providing a new site for the County Council library and records office (Spring 2007)	✓	✓	
Provide an agreed framework of planning policies to successfully implement the Urban Design Framework and the Vision for Taunton, through adopting the Town Centre Area Action Plan (June 08)	✓	✓	✓
Examine the potential to establish Taunton Deane as a Regional Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries. Produce an action plan to develop business activities in Tourism and Culture.	✓	✓	✓

<b>Objective 2: To encourage 30 additional businesses to set up in Taunton Deane per year (5% from the Creative Industries Sector) (Head of Service: Tom Noall)</b>			
<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>
Secure a major business incubation centre for Taunton with facilities for up to 40 emerging micro and creative industries companies		✓	
Cross-working within the Council and with partners to purchase / develop land for a minimum of ten small business units and to develop a further two hectares of serviced land for business use through S106 agreements. This includes the need to find suitable premises for firms relocating from the Taunton Trading Estate as a result of its redevelopment	✓	✓	✓
Effectively work in partnership to promote new business start-ups, small business support and grant schemes to ensure that 250 businesses receive suitable advice, counselling and support in the Borough over the lifetime of this plan.	✓	✓	✓

<b>Objective 3: To reduce deprivation in Halcon and Lyngford, taking the four most deprived sub-areas from these wards out of the 25% most deprived 'super output' areas in the country by 2020. (Based on national index of multiple deprivation rankings) (Head of Service: Tom Noall)</b>			
<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>
Work closely with the Vision Delivery Team, LSC and SCAT to agree an approach for promoting new work opportunities and training provision resulting from the Vision for Taunton. This is aimed at improving skills levels, job readiness and employment levels in these wards	✓		
Agree a local workforce arrangement with the RDA for employing a percentage of local labour for all development.	✓		
Deliver promotional events and workshops to engage the community and signpost training and work opportunities, grants and support.		✓	✓
Council to facilitate between employers, community and partners to match people, skills, training and jobs		✓	✓
Develop Local Community Strategies for these two wards to support the above activities (July 06)	✓		

<b>Objective 4: Support the development of the rural economy through facilitating and supporting agricultural diversification projects, business activity and land development (Head of Service: Tom Noall)</b>			
<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>
Facilitate and support ten rural agricultural diversification projects in the rural economy between 2006 and 2009	✓	✓	✓
Work with partners to develop two rural 'nodes' of business activity through diversification and promotion of creative and tourism business opportunities by 2009	✓	✓	✓
Facilitate the development of 20 hectares of employment land in Wellington and Wiveliscombe by 2009	✓	✓	✓
Facilitate the development of Tone Mill, Wellington as a cultural and creative industry 'node'	✓		

## **ECONOMY - Key Performance Indicators and Baselines**

The Following Performance Indicators will demonstrate levels of progress against our Objectives and the 'Economy' Aim. The key indicators will be reported to CMT and Members as part of a 'Dashboard' to help assess progress against the Corporate Strategy.

### **Objective 1:**

QoL 11 – The percentage of the working-age population that is in employment  
Baseline: 2003/04: 87%

Corporate Strategy – The number of new jobs created in the Creative Industries Sector in the Deane (Baseline to be established 2006/07)

HoS PI – Average income relative to regional average (Baseline: 97%)

### **Objective 2:**

HoS PI 13a – New VAT registrations per 10,000 population in Taunton Deane  
Baseline: 2002: 30 per 10,000 population

HoS PI – Number of businesses assisted through business development grant  
Baseline: 2004/05: 19

HoS PI – Increase in 3 year business survival rate (Baseline: 2002: 71.5%)

Corporate Strategy – The number of new projects in the Creative Industries sector supported by the Council (Baseline: 2005/6: 2.0)

### **Objective 3:**

QoL 15 – The proportion of the population living in the most deprived super output areas in the country (Baseline: 2004: 5%)  
(Baseline: Index of Multiple Deprivation national rankings: Halcon North (10.3%); Halcon West (15.2%); Lyngford North (15.2%); Lyngford West (24.1%))

### **Objective 4:**

Corporate Strategy – The number of rural agricultural diversification projects supported by the Council (Baseline: 2005/06: 4)



## **AIM 2: Transport**

### **Minimising the growth in traffic congestion**

**Portfolio Holder: Councillor Cliff Bishop**

**Lead Director: Joy Wishlade**

Working in partnership with the County Council, we will ensure that strategic transport investment is made for the future prosperity of the Borough as part of the Vision for Taunton. A major part of this is to reduce the rate of growth of traffic congestion in Taunton

<b>Objective 5: Support the County Council as lead agency, to limit the rate of growth of traffic congestion in Taunton (to limit vehicle delay hours at peak-time to 2,414 hours by 2011) (Head of Service: Tom Noall)</b>			
<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>
Implement the Taunton car park strategy to operate up to 7 new strategically placed multi-story car parks around the Taunton town centre	✓	✓	✓
Promote the use of the Silk Mills Park and Ride Scheme	✓	✓	✓
Work closely with the County Council to lobby for a clear timetable for delivery of the Cambria Farm Park and Ride Facility	✓	✓	✓
Optimise the location of homes, retail, business and leisure to minimise travel requirements, by implementing the actions in the Local Development Framework and Vision for Taunton	✓	✓	✓

<b>Objective 6: Support the County Council as lead agency, to reduce the proportion of journeys to work made in Taunton by Single Occupancy Vehicles (SOV) (Head of Service: Tom Noall)</b>			
<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>
Deliver the actions in the Taunton Deane Borough Council Employee Travel Plan to achieve key targets including reducing the use of SOVs to 60% by March 2008	✓	✓	
Work in partnership with SCC to encourage top ten employers to achieve a transport modal shift to reduce SOV by 2011 (to align to SCC target)	✓	✓	✓
Develop a S106 policy to ensure that significant new commercial premises or major extensions to existing premises have a S106 agreement requiring submission and implementation of a travel plan	✓	✓	✓
Promote and publicise alternative modes of transport to local residents and businesses through targeted road-shows, campaigns and other means	✓	✓	✓

#### **TRANSPORT - Key Performance Indicators and Baselines**

The Following Performance Indicators will demonstrate levels of progress against our Objectives and the 'Transport' Aim. The key indicators will be reported to CMT and Members as part of a 'Dashboard' to help assess progress against the Corporate Strategy.

#### **Objective 5:**

Corporate Strategy – Vehicle delay on principal Taunton roads at peak hour (9am)  
(Baseline 2001: 1,093 hours; predicted rate without action: 2,847 vehicle hours 2011)

QoL 42 - The percentage of the resident population who travel to work by a) private motor vehicle; b) by public transport; c) on foot or cycle (*10 yearly census*)  
(Baseline 2001: (a) 54.6%, (b) 2.7% (c) 24.4%)

#### **Objective 6:**

Corporate Strategy - Journeys to work in Taunton in Single Occupancy Vehicles  
(Baseline to be established 2006/07)

Corporate Strategy - Journeys to work (TDBC) in single occupancy vehicles  
(Baseline: 2004: 74%)

## AIM 3: Crime

### Promoting safer communities and tackling anti-social behaviour

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Joanna Lewin-Harris

Lead Director: Shirlene Adam

As a member of the Taunton Deane Crime and Disorder Partnership, we strive to reduce levels of crime, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime in Taunton Deane. Although not the main agency for tackling crime, we make a key contribution and through close working with partners can have a considerable impact

<b>Objective 7: To reduce overall crime in Taunton Deane by 15% by March 2008* (Head of Service: Brendan Cleere)</b>			
<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>
Deliver Somerset Crime Reduction and Drug Strategy 2005-2008 by delivering objectives 8 and 9	✓	✓	
Focus on reducing and preventing volume crimes (common assault, vehicle crime and criminal damage)	✓	✓	

\* Target set by the Home Office

<b>Objective 8: To reduce the incidence of violent crime in Taunton Deane by 15% by 2008** (Head of Service: Brendan Cleere)</b>			
<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>
Enforcement of new licensing laws to meet the four licensing objectives of public safety, prevention of nuisance, prevention of harm to children and prevention of crime and disorder	✓	✓	
Delivery of night-time economy plan in partnership with the police. Key actions being the 'three strikes' initiative and the 'drink safe, be safe' campaign	✓	✓	

<b>Objective 9: To reduce anti-social behaviour incidents by 15% from baseline figures by 2007/08** (Head of Service: Brendan Cleere)</b>			
<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>
Devise and deliver a program of actions to tackle antisocial behaviour hotspots, identified through the database and partnership working	✓	✓	
Continue identifying and implementing youth diversionary activities and facilities	✓	✓	
Provide training and support to the Antisocial Behaviour Officer to tackle antisocial behaviour through partnership work, youth provision and diversion work, ASBOs, the three strike policy and other means	✓	✓	

\*\* Targets agreed in the Somerset Crime Reduction and Drugs Strategy

<b>Objective 10: To increase the percentage of residents who feel that their neighbourhoods are becoming safer to over 55% by 2009*** (Head of Service: Brendan Cleere)</b>			
<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>
Implement the Somerset multi-agency action plan to reduce fear of crime	✓	✓	✓

\*\*\* Data collected through Best Value General Survey (2006 and 2009)

## **CRIME - Key Performance Indicators and Baselines**

The Following Performance Indicators will demonstrate levels of progress against our Objectives and the 'Crime' Aim. The key indicators will be reported to CMT and Members as part of a 'Dashboard' to help assess progress against the Corporate Strategy.

### **Objective 7:**

Corporate Strategy - Overall crime incidents (basket of crimes)  
(Baseline: 2003/04: 5,245 incidents)

BV 126 – Domestic burglaries per 1,000 households (Baseline: 2004/05: 6.7)

BV 128 – Vehicle crimes per 1,000 population (Baseline: 2004/05: 10.8)

### **Objective 8:**

Corporate Strategy – Violent crime incidents (Baseline: 2003/04: 1,340 incidents)

BV 127a – Violent offences committed by a stranger per 1,000 population  
Baseline: 2004/05: 7.1

BV 127b - Violent offences committed in a public place per 1,000 population  
Baseline: 2004/05: 10.5

BV 127c - Violent offences committed in connection with licensed premises per 1,000 population (Baseline: 2004/05: 2.2)

BV 127d - Violent offences committed under the influence per 1,000 population  
Baseline: 2004/05: 2.7

LPI 49 – Percentage of inspections of licensed premises (Baseline: 2004/05: 100%)

### **Objective 9:**

Corporate Strategy – Antisocial behaviour incidents  
Baseline: 2003/04: – criminal – 1977 incidents

LPI 30 – Percentage of council tenants who have reported anti-social behaviour / neighbour nuisance in the past 12 months, satisfied with the service received  
Baseline: 2004/05: 64%

### **Objective 10:**

BV3 (General Survey) – The percentage of residents that feel that their neighbourhoods are becoming safer (Baseline: 2003: 47%)

## AIM 4 – Healthy Living

### Promoting healthy and sustainable communities

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Greg Garner

Lead Director: Jeremy Thornberry

Under Healthy Living, our highest priority is to meet the requirements of those with greatest housing need. Housing is fundamental to the general health and well-being of our citizens and we have focussed on enabling more affordable housing and tackling homelessness in the Deane

<b>Objective 11: To enable the building of 985 units of affordable housing between April 2006 and March 2011 (Head of Service: Malcolm Western)</b>			
<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>
Planning Gain through Section 106 agreements – negotiations with developers to meet a targeted proportion of social housing and other subsidised housing, as outlined in the LDF	✓	✓	✓
Utilise council owned and other sites to develop social and other subsidised housing, as detailed in the Housing Strategy	✓	✓	✓
Deliver the Local Development Framework for all types of housing need, including low cost and social housing.	✓	✓	✓
Investigate new approaches to delivering intermediate housing to meet targets from the ARK report.	✓		

<b>Objective 12: To reduce the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation by 50% by 2010, with an emphasis on homelessness prevention (Head of Service: Malcolm Western)</b>			
<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>
Prevention – Deliver the issues in the Planning Out Homelessness Strategy around preventing homelessness	✓	✓	✓
Supply - Deliver the issues in the Planning Out Homelessness Strategy around increasing housing supply for the homeless	✓	✓	✓
Support - Deliver the issues in the Planning Out Homelessness Strategy around improving support for the homeless	✓	✓	✓

### **Healthy Living - Key Performance Indicators and Baselines**

The Following Performance Indicators will demonstrate levels of progress against our Objectives and the 'Healthy Living' Aim. The key indicators will be reported to CMT and Members as part of a 'Dashboard' to help assess progress against the Corporate Strategy.

#### **Objective 11:**

QoL 37 - Affordable dwellings completed (Number of, and as a percentage of all new housing completions (Baseline: 2004/05: 48; 10.7%)

BV 212 - Average time taken to re-let local authority housing  
Baseline: 2004/05: 16.4 days

#### **Objective 12:**

Corporate Strategy - Homeless Households in temporary accommodation  
(Baseline: 30/6/05: 94)

BV 202 – The number of people sleeping rough on a single night within the area of the authority (Baseline: 2004/05: 4)

BV 203 – The percentage change in the average number of families placed in temporary accommodation (Baseline: 2004/05: -17.5%)

BV 213 - Preventing Homelessness: Number of households who considered themselves as homeless, who approached the local housing authority's housing advice service(s), and for whom housing advice casework intervention resolved their situation.  
(Baseline to be established 2006/07)

BV 214 - Repeat Homelessness: Proportion of households accepted as statutorily homeless who were accepted as statutorily homeless by the same Authority within the last two years. (Baseline to be established 2006/07)

## AIM 5 - Environment

### Safeguarding and Enhancing the local environment

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Mark Edwards

Lead Director: Joy Wishlade

We aim to manage a clean and safe environment and we achieve this through our services and partnerships, most significantly the Somerset Waste Partnership. Residents and visitors alike value the high quality of the physical environment of the Borough and we aim to continue to protect and enhance it

<b>Objective 13:</b> <b>To increase to at least 75% the percentage of people who are satisfied with the cleanliness of their local environment by 2007 and to 78% by 2009</b> <b>(Head of Service: Pete Weaver)</b>			
<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>
Holistic management of the environment, linking highways, parks, open spaces, car parks, river and canal and other street scene areas. Improved partnership and cross-service working	✓	✓	✓
Further improve cleanliness of the environment by targeting litter offenders through a publicised program of enforcement for littering - PCSOs to serve fixed penalty notices	✓	✓	✓
Improve methods and approach to street cleansing such as taking a responsive approach to tackling areas that need cleaning (rather than strictly following a rota)	✓	✓	✓

<b>Objective 14:</b> <b>To increase the percentage of household waste recycled to 34% by the end of 2006 and 50% by the end of 2009</b> <b>(Head of Service: Pete Weaver)</b>			
<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>
Complete the roll out of the Sort It! Service to a further 15,000 households in May and then the remaining households in the Deane by October 2006	✓		
Expanded delivery, promotion and enforcement of the recycling service, focussing on maintaining high levels of awareness, overcoming obstacles and enforcing compliance where necessary	✓	✓	✓



## **ENVIRONMENT – Key performance Indicators and Baselines**

The Following Performance Indicators will demonstrate levels of progress against our Objectives and the 'Environment' Aim. The key indicators will be reported to CMT and Members as part of a 'Dashboard' to help assess progress against the Corporate Strategy.

### **Objective 13:**

BV89 – Percentage of people satisfied with cleanliness standards of the local environment (Baseline: 2003: 72.5%)

BV 199.1 The proportion of relevant land and highways (expressed as a percentage) that is assessed as having combined deposits of litter and detritus that fall below an acceptable level (Baseline to be established 2006/07)

BV 199.2 - The proportion of relevant land and highways (expressed as a percentage) from which unacceptable levels of graffiti are visible (Baseline to be established 2006/07)

BV 199.3 - The proportion of relevant land and highways (expressed as a percentage) from which unacceptable levels of fly-posting are visible (Baseline to be established 2006/07)

BV 218.2 - Percentage of abandoned vehicles removed within 24 hours from the point at which the Authority is legally entitled to remove the vehicle (Baseline to be established 2006/07)

### **Objective 14:**

Corporate Strategy: Overall percentage of household waste recycled  
Baseline: 2004/05: 20.8%

BV 82ai – Percentage of household waste arisings which have been sent by the Authority for recycling (Baseline: 2004/05: 16.9%)

BV 82bi - The percentage of household waste sent by the Authority for composting or treatment by anaerobic digestion (Baseline: 2004/05 3.9%)

## AIM 6 - Delivery

Delivering accessible, value for money services

Portfolio Holder: All Members of the Executive

Lead Director: All

We aim to deliver value for money services that are customer focussed and accessible by everyone. To this end, we aim to achieve high levels of customer satisfaction, ensuring we provide value for money services, improving on our approach to Equalities and providing a consistent high standard of response to our customers

<b>Objective 15: To provide value for money services where overall satisfaction with the Council is in the top quartile nationally, over 60% of national BVPIs perform above English average and council tax charges are in the lowest quartile when compared with other English districts (Head of Service: All)</b>			
<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>
Achieve a minimum Level 3 rating for CPA 'Value for Money' annual assessment by implementing key recommendations from the Audit Commission assessment of the Council	✓	✓	✓
Improve customer perception and satisfaction of the Council through delivering the five core communications actions recommended by the LGA (Local Government Reputation Project) that promote effective communication	✓	✓	
Strengthen the role of Scrutiny at the Council to drive improvement, including developing the review of Value for Money and Performance.	✓	✓	✓
Develop Corporate Procurement in line with the National Procurement Strategy and other Best Practise to achieve better quality, cost effective services	✓	✓	✓

<b>Objective 16: To achieve level 5 of the Equality Standard for Local Government by the end of 2009 (Head of Service: Brendan Cleere)</b>			
<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>
Deliver effective Equalities Training to managers, staff and councillors and ensure this training is implemented at every level through the staff appraisal, committee reporting and service planning mechanisms	✓	✓	✓
Working through the requirements to progress the Council through Levels 2 to 5	✓	✓	✓
Improved engagement of BME communities through good service interface, use of an Equalities Forum and translation policies - all informed through customer feedback	✓	✓	✓

<b>Objective 17: To ensure that 90% of service enquiries to the Council are resolved at the first point of contact by 2015. (Head of Service: Kevin Toller)</b>			
<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>
Revise the Customer Relationship Management System to manage additional services and expand to the Wellington community Office (2006)	✓		
ISiS Review – investigating a joint venture scheme to provide Council support and transactional services (2007)	✓	✓	
Implement the Customer Access Strategy to deliver our services where and when they are required (2006 onwards)	✓	✓	✓
Implement appropriate HR policies to manage the cultural change and workforce development required to achieve the above key activities	✓	✓	✓

### **DELIVERY - Key Performance Indicators and Baselines**

The Following Performance Indicators will demonstrate levels of progress against our Objectives and the 'Delivery' Aim. The key indicators will be reported to CMT and Members as part of a 'Dashboard' to help assess progress against the Corporate Strategy.

#### **Objective 15:**

Corporate Strategy: CPA Rating for Value for Money Assessment (Baseline to be established 2006/07)

Corporate Strategy: Percentage of BVPIs that are above the English District Average  
Baseline: 2003/04: 65%

Corporate Strategy: Percentage of BVPIs that are in the national top quartile  
Baseline: 2003/04: 33%

Corporate Strategy: Average Band D Council Tax, and percentile when compared to other English District Councils (Baseline: 2005/06: £121.88; 23.9<sup>th</sup> percentile)

BV 3 – The percentage of citizens satisfied with the overall service provided by the authority (Baseline: 2003/04: 69.8%)

Corporate Strategy: Percentage of media articles that positively and negatively reflect on the Council (Baseline: 2005/06: 44% positively, 15% negatively)

Corporate Strategy: Percentage of milestone activities completed in the National Procurement Strategy for Local Government (Baseline to be established 2006/07)

#### **Objective 16:**

BV 2a – The level of the Equality Standard for Local Government to which the authority confirms (Baseline: 2004/05: Level 1)

#### **Objective 17:**

Corporate Strategy: The percentage of service enquiries to the Council resolved at first point of contact (Baseline: 2005/06: 60% of services linked to Customer Services)

## Contributing to Wider Priorities and Strategies

Corporate Priority	LSP (Four LSP Priorities)				LAA	Community Strategy	National Shared Priorities					Other Key Strategies	
	Safer Communities	Stronger Economy / Deprivation	Sharing Information	Reducing Inequalities			Safer and Stronger Communities	Quality of life for the vulnerable	Transport needs	Healthier Communities	Economic Vitality		Local Environment
<b>ECONOMY</b> (Objectives 1 to 4)		✓		✓	✓	✓					✓		A, B, C, D, E, F, G
<b>TRANSPORT</b> (Objectives 5 to 6)						✓			✓				A, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K
<b>CRIME</b> (Objectives 7 to 10)	✓				✓	✓	✓			✓			L, M, N
<b>HEALTHY LIVING</b> (Objectives 11 to 12)		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓			E, F, G, O, P, Q
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b> (Objectives 13 to 14)						✓						✓	R, S
<b>DELIVERY</b> (Objectives 15 to 17)				✓					✓				T, U, V, W, X

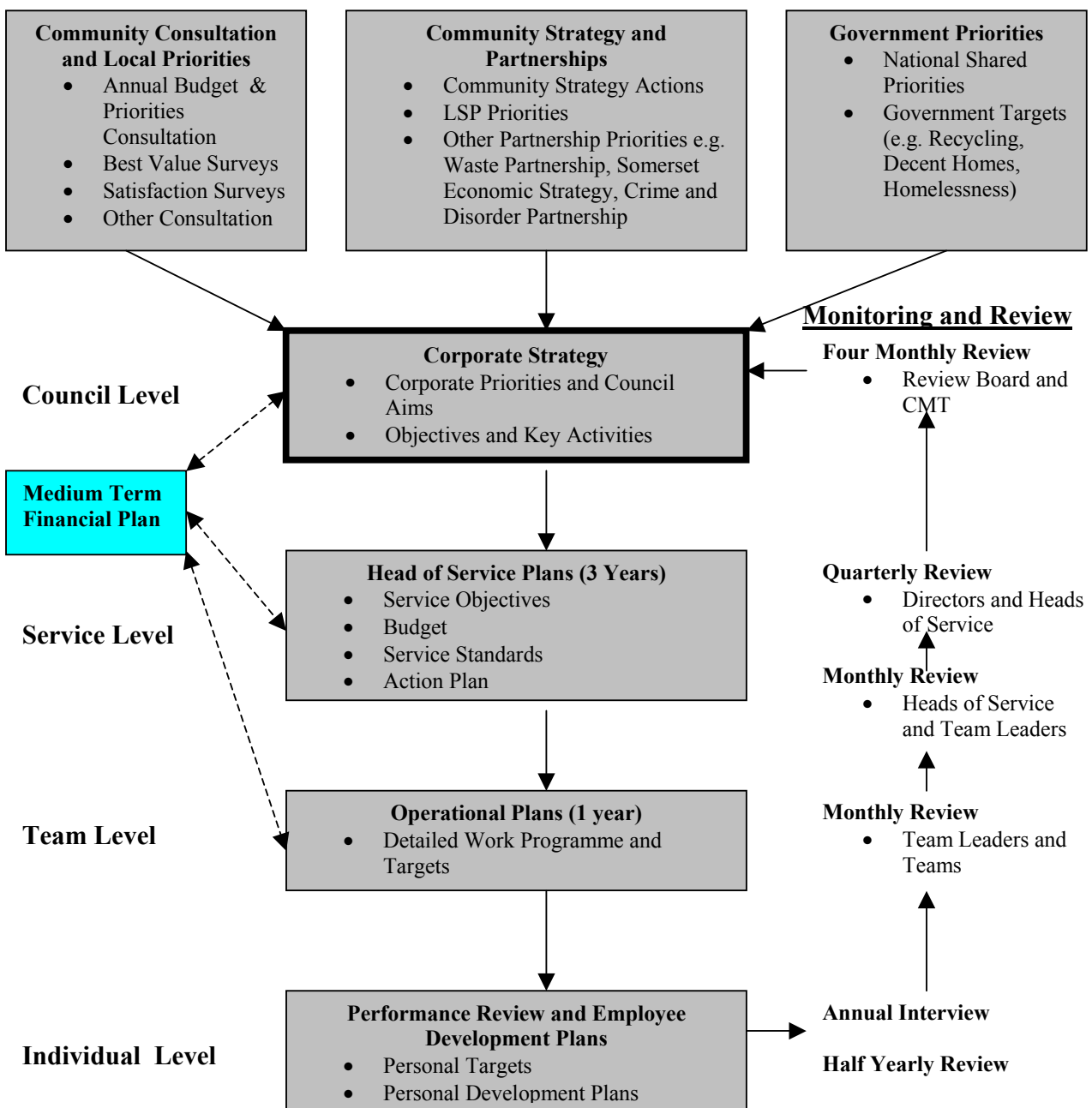
## **Key to 'Other Key Strategies' that link to Corporate Strategy Objectives**

- A. The Vision for Taunton
- B. Economic Development and Tourism Strategy
- C. Somerset Economic Strategy
- D. Town Centre Area Action Plan
- E. Regional Spatial Strategy
- F. Taunton Deane Local Development Framework
- G. Taunton Deane Local Plan
- H. Local Transport Plan 2
- I. Atkins Car Park Strategy
- J. Traffic Congestion Protocol
- K. Taunton Deane Travel Plan
- L. Somerset Crime Reduction and Drug Strategy 2005-2008
- M. Taunton Deane Crime and Disorder Reduction Audit 2004
- N. Taunton Deane Licensing Policy
- O. Housing Strategy
- P. Planning Out Homelessness Strategy
- Q. ARK Housing Needs Report
- R. Somerset Waste Strategy
- S. Green Spaces Strategy
- T. ISIS documentation
- U. Risk Management Strategy
- V. Customer Access Strategy
- W. Medium Term Financial Strategy
- X. Race Equality Scheme

# How we deliver the Corporate Strategy

The Corporate Strategy is established through annual priorities consultation, consideration of government and local priorities and the community strategy. The Corporate Strategy then informs service planning, the Medium Term Financial Plan, budget setting and service delivery (through Heads of Service Plans, operational plans and staff appraisals.) The link from community consultation right through to staff delivery is often referred to as 'The Golden Thread.' The whole process has a feed-back cycle built in to ensure effective performance management and delivery. This is illustrated below:

## Managing performance at each level of the organisation



## **Performance Management of the Corporate Strategy**

The Corporate Strategy is clearly very important in translating the priorities of the community and government into real objectives that can be delivered by the Council and its partners. We are confident that we have identified the correct areas of action that will result in tangible improvement in these priority areas.

The detail of how the seventeen objectives will be delivered can be found in the five Heads of Service Plans and corresponding Operational Plans. These actions, when completed effectively will result in measurable progress being made against the Corporate Strategy Objectives.

To ensure we make forward progress in achieving these objectives, and to provide assurance to CMT, Managers and Councillors, the Corporate Strategy is monitored through the Performance Management System. This takes place through the following means:

1. Heads of Service review their Service Plans monthly, and discuss progress regularly at Corporate Management Team.
2. Progress against the Corporate Strategy Objectives will be reported every four months to Corporate Management Team and the Review Board. These reports will include:
  - Progress against each of the 17 objectives, describing them as 'On Course', 'Off Course' or 'Action Pending'
  - Detail of actions taken, progress made and problems or delays occurring
  - A Summary 'Dashboard' clearly showing progress through simple graphs and analysis of Key Activities and Performance Indicators
  - Any areas where inadequate progress is being made against Objectives or Key Activities, and recommended actions to address this.
3. A four-monthly simplified performance summary to communicate to staff successes and current issues against our Corporate Strategy.



## **Part II Reports from the Executive**

### **COUNCIL MEETING 21 FEBRUARY 2006 REPORT OF COUNCILLOR JOHN WILLIAMS - LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

Our first Full Council of the New Year and as always at this time of the year we have the huge task of budget setting for the next financial year to deliver the wishes of the community for effective and efficient front-line services at minimum cost possible. I believe we have delivered this with the difficult reconciliation of providing more for less. Other major initiatives we are taking forward include the Vision for Taunton, ISIS project, review of our housing stock, various economic development programmes, recycling of waste, continuing negotiations for Regional Spatial strategy, Housing Needs survey and we must not forget the many and varied services that we must continue to provide in an efficient manner to our customers. Local Government Review is also being floated if one believes the leaked letters and the appallingly undemocratic manner with which central government is handling it (or not as the case may be!)

#### **Budget Setting**

This is never easy but this year has been made easier because we were prepared to take the difficult decisions necessary during budget setting last year. We acknowledge a far better Revenue Support settlement than we could ever have expected. I must qualify this as not being generous in relation to the increased costs commitments to be met but more than we budgeted when first preparing our budget. When starting the process our budget gap was around £700,000, we found the necessary efficiency savings and extra income to deal with this shortfall and almost achieve a balanced budget. The greater than expected settlement created flexibility for this year so we used this to ensure it helped towards the known shortfall of future years as signalled by our medium term financial plan. Again we have also managed to reverse the trend of taking from reserves to support the budget because we have made a revenue contribution to capital of a further £150,000 (2005/06 £300,000). This is a huge turn around from the previous eight years when an average of just short of £500,000 every year was taken from reserves to support the budget. Equally I am proud to say that Council Tax increases have been steadily reducing year on year. From 1995 to 2003 the increase averaged 10% for every year, with our prudent 3% for 2006/07 we have achieved an average of just over 4% for every year of our administration. This is clear evidence, that we are, and will continue to deliver our manifesto promise to ensure value for money.

#### **Vision for Taunton**

A huge amount of work is being done on our behalf by various teams each taking forward a discrete part of the overall project. All essential to provide a

solid foundation from which to launch the huge development programme for Taunton, that is now being set in motion. It has now received national recognition as The Vision for Taunton has been recognised for exemplary planning at the recent RTPI awards for 2005. The breadth of planning, partnership working and the Vision's embrace of community aspirations have helped to clinch the award for 'Spatial Strategies'. The Award is not only a strong endorsement of our plans and community support, but will also raise awareness nationally among industry leaders and key players, which will help to drive the Vision forward.

Feasibility studies are being carried out to establish the way forward in respect of flooding issues, car parking requirements including provision of multi story parking, funding of infrastructure and public amenity from developers contributions and social housing. All of these separate studies feed into preparing an overall package that will be provided to would be developers who express an interest in taking the project forward. To date much interest has been shown. I am heartened that we will be able to provide the much needed development of Taunton to enhance its important role as County Town to becoming a regional centre with much improved economy, culture and leisure facilities.

In all of this I must not forget Somerset County Cricket Club. They have exciting and progressive development plans to ensure International matches can be regularly hosted in Taunton together with training and development plans for young people. They must succeed as it will place Taunton "on the map" as far as cricket is concerned and as an authority we must provide all backing possible in bringing their plans to fruition. Equally, adjacent to the cricket ground is the Brewhouse Theatre, the management of which appear to have taken a long hard look at the best way forward. They have decided to remain on its present site and to develop it further, looks the most sensible way forward. Again we must fully support them with their proposals as we must ensure our cultural provision expands every much as our economic development grows. I have said it often, we must not leave behind a cultural wasteland in pursuit of economic development. The two are essential to move forward together.

### **Regional Spatial Strategy**

The plans that will emerge from these negotiations are incredibly important to the potential future successful development of Taunton Deane. The very sad part is that plans are being prepared and promoted by the unelected and unaccountable body of the South West Regional Assembly. Although we can shout foul if something seriously adverse is promoted we do not have an official voice at the negotiating table. So much for this Governments hollow claim to promoting localism and for democracy to be brought nearer the people, what a sham claim this is when all actions, words and deeds point towards an ever more centralizing command and control mentality of central government. Central Government have decided that new housing completion numbers need to grow substantially, could be double the existing rate of present development in the worst case scenario! It

does not take a genius to realise that this rate of increase is just not sustainable in the short or medium term because of the huge increases in resources it would need. Add to this the ridiculous situation imposed on us as regards development of infrastructure necessary to support such growth, this needs substantial public purse investment in the whole infrastructure requirement otherwise we will compound and perpetuate the inadequate road and transport system that has been developed to date. An example of the ridiculously inadequate public investment proposed in infrastructure is the proposals for road improvements. Schemes totalling over £3 billion were identified as necessary in the SW Region. We have had about £90 million a year allocated for all the SW region for the next 10 years. Therefore £3 billion identified and circa £0.9 billion identified for the next 10 years - at today's rates a £2.1 billion shortfall across the region. All the more galling when it is realized the motorist contributes more than £40 billion to the exchequer but only receives about £7 billion investment in work to the roads. An appalling situation.

### **Local Government Review**

Yet again central government has shown its complete contempt for local democracy. It appears to have decided the existing three tier system, County, District and Parish Council, is wasteful, expensive and lacks representation for the people. The process by leaked correspondence between two Ministers and has grown since then. Firstly, consulting with County Chief Executives and then a programme of consultation with District Chief Executives. If you have not noticed, no mention of elected representatives being consulted as obviously we do not even figure in central government's thinking about their professed localism and democratic involvement. Much belatedly I received a letter only last week from the Minister playing catch up and inviting me to participate in a consultation process. I have to seriously question the sincerity and value of this offer having demonstrated a total contempt for democratically elected Members so far.

The even more incredible part of all this is the Government's case is not being supported by any solid evidential base that Unitary Authorities are better placed and sized to provide more efficient and effective services to our communities. We have enough historic knowledge of the establishment of Unitary Authorities, so the least the Government could do is provide a properly researched case to prove their stated claims that County and District authorities are wasteful and in need of change. I wish to deliver the most efficient and cost effective services for our customers whether this be Unitary or two tier but do not see the alternative the Government is promoting as being anything other than an attempt to tear down our traditional institutions because they perceive it as ineffective without any attempt to evidence their assertions. The sad loser in my view, will be the democratic loss of accountability to our communities.

I recently attended a meeting at DEFRA offices with Right Hon Margaret Beckett MP, and I had the opportunity to raise various issues affecting Taunton Deane. Of prime importance to our agricultural community was the assurance the long-

awaited Single Farm payment (made to Farmers in Scotland and Wales pre Christmas) would be made by the end of February. I sincerely hope this will be honoured as I am well aware of the serious implications of the protracted delay to date. Farmers do not have enough funding therefore the whole rural associated business community is starved of vital funds to keep going.

In addition I raised the problem that recycling targets and credits for recycled materials had been frozen at present levels which could seriously affect our levels of funding for this service in future years. There also appeared to be a change of emphasis towards supporting incineration of waste as opposed to recycling. The Minister gave assurance that recycling was the top priority and the emphasis is still on removing as much waste as possible to minimise residual waste and that incineration would be very much the second option if recycling did not work satisfactorily.

I was pleased to receive this reassurance but unfortunately did not receive any reassurance about the loss of recycling credits which help so greatly with the ongoing funding of recycling. It is therefore, much a case of “watch this space” and await the issue of a supposedly imminent White Paper for consultation on the merits of recycling or incineration!

Cllr John Williams  
Leader Taunton Deane Borough Council

## **COUNCIL MEETING 21 FEBRUARY, 2006**

### **Report of Councillor Bishop**

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

##### **Consultations on the Local Development Framework (LDF) and the Review of the Community Strategy.**

The new spatial planning system places emphasis on the need to integrate the LDF with the Community Strategy. As such, the Borough Council (Forward Plan Unit and Policy and Performance Team) and the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) have been working closely together over the past few months to consider the preparation of a single consultation strategy that will engage the public on the preparation of the following documents:

- Core Strategy (LDF document)
- Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan (LDF document)
- Review of the Community Strategy
- Area based plans for North Taunton and Taunton East

This joint approach is a direct result of the strategy contained within the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). As well as strategy integration, the SCI emphasises the need to engage underrepresented groups.

To assist with these objectives, the Borough Council and the LSP have appointed Baker Associates to help prepare the detailed consultation strategy and facilitate the resulting actions. A range of consultation is proposed, including web based technology, exhibitions at various locations throughout the Deane, workshops, attending meetings of specific groups, and working with detached youth workers (amongst others). Intensive consultation activity will be focussed in North Taunton, Taunton East and Taunton Town Centre (the three areas where detailed plans are to be prepared).

Planning Aid South West is a key partner in helping to deliver the consultation activity. Planning Aid South West are very supportive of the steps that both the Borough Council and LSP have taken to fully integrate the LDF and the Community Strategy. As such, they are providing us with a significant resource and will work directly with underrepresented groups, helping with capacity building and facilitation.

The consultation period is due to commence on March 20<sup>th</sup> and close during the first week of June and will, without doubt, be the most intensive consultation exercise carried out in Taunton Deane.

#### **Planning Gain Supplement (PGS)**

The pre-budget statement in December confirmed the Chancellor, Gordon Brown's intention to introduce a PGS on windfall gains in land value arising from planning permission.

Members will have seen the comments on the consultation paper in a report to the SPTED Panel on 14 February 2006. Although PGS will not come into effect until 2008, it is likely to encourage developers to bring forward sites in their ownership before the tax bites.

The Government has indicated that their plans for a PGS are to be scrutinised by the Commons ODPM select committee. The inquiry will look at what factors should be considered when determining the rate of the supplement, the level at which it should be set and how the revenue should be distributed. It will examine how the PGS can be used to encourage brownfield development and the potential impact on section 106 agreements.

### **“Super-flexible” homes**

The Milton Keynes Partnership (MKP) has issued a discussion paper which proposes that Super-flexible homes would account for around 30% of the total homes on a 57 ha site. The document states that the homes should be flexible enough for residents to adapt to their changing needs throughout their occupation.

MKP chief operating officer, Jane Hamilton commented: “In a house designed on super-flexible principles, space can be arranged then potentially rearranged to meet future needs. This would allow homeowners to adapt their homes instead of moving as their circumstances changed”. She also stated the “Design flexibility could include open-plan layouts or rooms with partition walls that can be easily removed or repositioned. Another option would be the use of open truss roofs to ease future dormer conversion or upward extensions”.

### **Planning Applications**

The following two major applications have been received:-

Telephone House, The Crescent, Taunton  
Mixed use conversion to form 75 apartments and retention of 8,500 square feet of office space and associated facilities.

Construction of New Business Park, including formation of new roundabout, pumping station and lagoon on 17.29 ha of land adjoining Chelston House Farm, Chelston, Nr Wellington.

### **RTPI Award for Spatial Strategies Taunton Vision**

I would like to congratulate everyone, including our partners, who have been involved in the preparation of the Spatial Strategy for the Taunton Vision, which has been recognised for exemplary planning at the recent RTPI awards. The judges made many favourable comments, which have been reported in the local press.

The award was sponsored by The Planning Officer Society, which represents the most senior professionals and managers of planning functions in the English Local Authorities.

### **Planning Training**

Members have already been notified about a training session taking place in March for members of the Planning Committee and I would like to encourage other members to attend.

A training session has also been arranged for Members of Parish Councils covering Enforcement, and it is anticipated that this may be oversubscribed.

### **Councillor Cliff Bishop**

## REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL 21 FEBRUARY 2006

### COMMUNICATIONS

#### Information and Research

The Wellington and Area Profile mentioned in my last report is complete. It contains information on the economic, social and environmental well being of the wards of Wellington East, Wellington North, Rockwell Green, Oake, Monument and Bradford on Tone. The profile provides a baseline of information using the most up-to-date data and trends available and forms the basis of the draft Wellington and Area Community Strategy. Members will be aware that this is now available for public comment on the Council's website at:

[www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/tdbcsites/LOCAL\\_STRAT\\_PART/Wellington\\_and\\_Area.asp](http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/tdbcsites/LOCAL_STRAT_PART/Wellington_and_Area.asp).

#### Local Futures Audit and On-Line Database

The Policy and Performance and Economic Development and Regeneration teams have commissioned an audit of Taunton Deane from the firm Local Futures.

This will provide an overall assessment of quality of life in Taunton Deane, including a wide range of economic, social, cultural and environmental factors.. It will include maps, charts and tables with a commentary that analyses and compares performance. The Audit will analyse and benchmark performance at a Borough level, set within a sub-regional, regional and national context. It will also allow national benchmarking, help with policy development. Not least it will encourage a shared and 'joined-up' understanding of the issues and challenges faced in Taunton Deane. It will help us develop and monitor the following key areas of work:

- The Corporate Strategy
- The review of the Community Strategy
- Local Area Agreements
- The Economic and Regeneration Strategy
- The Local Development Framework

The Audit will comprise five sections:

*Section 1: Introduction* – background, objectives and report structure

*Section 2: Economic profile* – economic performance (scale, productivity, growth); industry; business and enterprise; education and skills; labour market

*Section 3: Social profile* – demographics (age; ethnicity; occupations; household formation; migration and change); prosperity and wealth; deprivation and inequality; health; crime

*Section 4: Environmental profile* – land and property; housing; transport and connectivity; services and amenities; natural environment



*Section 5: Summary and conclusions* – summary of research findings and identification of key issues and implications for strategy.

The final section of the Audit will reference some of the Council's policy documents and draw out some of the key issues and challenges for policy development. It will be complete by the end of March 2006. We intend for the Local Futures Group to present their findings to officers, members and the Taunton Deane Local Strategic Partnership. These sessions will we hope identify key issues, help create consensus and highlight key strategic challenges.

As well as the Audit, we are also buying a license to their on-line Local Knowledge database. This is a powerful research tool and will help us to make major savings on research time and costs. The database is always up-to-date and ensures users have access to the latest indicators and information down to ward level. Accessed by the Internet, the results and queries can be saved, printed or downloaded for immediate use in reports or presentations with high-quality graphics.

Local Futures will provide training sessions and advice on getting the most from the database.

### **Public Relations and Media Relations**

The press briefing on the Budget proposals held on January 31<sup>st</sup> was again successful and well attended. Press briefings such as this provide a positive platform to build relations with the media, educate on complex issues and are also a good opportunity for the press to ask questions. The briefing timing ensured Members were aware of the report at the same time as our delivery to the media.

We continue to work closely with the local media to promote a better public understanding of the Vision for Taunton as shown by the successful column in the Taunton Times. The column aims to raise local awareness of work that is happening from within the Delivery Team and the Vision in general. The Vision Guide has been flying off the shelves and we are getting many positive comments.

Media interest is still strong and we plan to be more active in looking at trade publications and working with regional media and where opportunity presents the national media too. We have forged links with the National Local Government Association Media Officers and we now send them specific press releases.

### **Local Government Reputation Project**

Taunton Deane recently hosted a presentation from the LGA on the 'Local Government Reputation Programme'. Officers from Somerset County Council, South Somerset District Council and the Regional Secretariat all attended. A quarter of councils in England and Wales have now signed up to

this. I am pleased that this Council is carrying out the core actions outlined in my last report and more importantly is doing them well. Our media relations are improving all the time. We publish a regular newspaper. We are more aware of the need to brand our services. We continue to improve our internal communications and we are producing an A-Z of services.

### **Finally ...**

While member training is not within my area of responsibility I would like to congratulate Member Services. The **Public Speaking** training session was excellent. It was thoroughly enjoyable with lots of practical hints and tips. I am sure as a result we will be better communicators. We look forward to more of the same, as it was a useful and stimulating evening.

Gwyneth Leighton  
Executive Councillor for Communications

## **COUNCIL MEETING 21 FEBRUARY 2006**

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

#### **COMMUNITY ARTS AND ARTS DEVELOPMENT**

##### **Orchestra West**

The launch of Orchestra West at the Gaumont Theatre, courtesy of Mecca Bingo, on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> February was a tremendous success. It worked well as a performance venue with over 600 people attending a superb concert by this new Taunton based professional orchestra. This and the take-up on the Somerset County Cricket Club's Elton John concert in June indicate the demand for quality entertainment.

##### **Arts Website – [www.tauntondeane.gov.uk](http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk)**

This is now live – click on A-Z services, then arts and creative enterprise, then arts service and take it from there. It gives contact details for the numerous arts organisations in Taunton Deane, provides the arts grants guidelines and application form on line and signposts to other funding sources. The partnership and policy page will come soon.

##### **Regional Cultural Spatial Strategy**

Officers attended a stakeholders meeting. A supply/demand model for culture was flagged up as useful, as was the need for investment in both the medium and small scale facilities as well as the flag ship venues. The need for a major iconic exhibition and conference space in the SW like the NEC was also discussed.

##### **Anne Frank Exhibition opening 4<sup>th</sup> March**

She Koyokh, an internationally acclaimed klezmer group will be touring schools, special schools and community groups in Taunton Deane from 28<sup>th</sup> February to promote this exhibition. They will give a live performance alongside the Stoke St. Gregory Young Players' award winning play "Strength of Spirit" at the Brewhouse on 2<sup>nd</sup> March. Taunton Deane has contributed £2K to this residence, Live Music Now! the organisers have brought £3K and the Anne Frank Steering group have contributed £340 to the launch.

#### **PARKS AND PUBLIC SPACES**

##### **Victoria Park**

Work is progressing on the new facilities here, funded mainly by s.106 money. The official opening is planned for 25<sup>th</sup> March with tree planting to mark the Anne Frank Exhibition.

### **Wellington Open Space**

Work continues on this project involving the community working out what facilities are needed where in Wellington.

### **French Weir Development Plan**

The consultants' report from The Community First Partnership and the Swan Paul Partnership is now available on the website:

[www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/parks](http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/parks) under the Neighbourhood Parks heading. Community consultation continues with positive and encouraging responses.

**Carols Around The Bandstand** were this year organised very successfully by the Friends of Vivary Park, with some financial assistance from the Council. The event was a very happy and well supported occasion.

### **CABE Spaces Parkforce Pledge Campaign**

All our consultation tells us that site based staff is what the public want in the parks and open spaces across the Borough. CABE Space, the government funded agency for open spaces, has a current campaign to which local authorities are being encouraged to sign-up (without requiring expenditure). This is just one way of promoting our green spaces and their effective management in quite a variety of ways.

### **Chalet in the Park – The Sand Wedge Café**

The Vivary Chalet, environmentally friendly, has been completed on time and within budget to provide a community focal point in Vivary Park. Overlooking the golf course and the mini golf, the building is now open and being run by Tone Leisure. It is Taunton Deane's response to requests for somewhere for coffee or tea, a place to meet and a presence in the park. It will also provide new public toilets, The refreshment facility will be open from Easter. The old pro-shop will become a changing facility for the pay and play golfers.

### **Waterlinks**

An ambitious application has been submitted to the Big Lottery Living Landmarks Scheme by a partnership of 4 District Councils and the County Council towards an imaginative project to enhance the waterways of Somerset. Labelled '**Waterlinks**', the project aims to provide such facilities as a sluice on the Parrett, a Climate Change Centre on the Levels and major enhancements to the rivers and canals in the area including a 'Park and Glide' facility on the Tone in Taunton to link the new Silk Mills Park & Ride scheme and the town centre.

The application is for £45 million (towards a total project cost of approximately £70 million) and we will know by April 2006 whether the project has been shortlisted by the Panel.

## **SPORTS**

### **Taunton Tennis Centre**

The tenders have just been opened for this scheme to resurface two existing outdoor courts and cover them with a framed fabric structure. Work will begin in the spring of this year. The project will increase the number of covered

courts to 6 and set Blackbrook up as the major tennis facility for the South West Region. Over half the money has come from the Lawn Tennis Association and the balance by way of grant and a loan from Taunton Deane to Tone Leisure. This is progressive partnership working into which Richard Huish College South West Tennis Academy and the Taunton Tennis Club have had input.

### **Taunton Green**

Tenders have been received relating to the conversion of a tennis court to a Multi Use Games Area at **Taunton Green**. A funding application has been submitted to Barclays Space For Sport to finance the project and we are currently awaiting their decision. It is anticipated that the cost will be in the order of £50,000 and that Barclays will provide all of the required funding.

### **Tone Leisure Events**

Wellsprings has hosted five very successful Christmas parties and a number of large social events are also booked. As well as these there have been Tribute Bands and a Pantomime, not to mention private childrens' parties. These all ensure that we have a leisure centre enjoyed by a wide range of people.

## VILLAGE HALLS

Bathealton Village Hall Committee has completed the works to the kitchen, electrics, toilets and other refurbishment items. The grant of £13,750 from this Council has been paid.

Combe Florey Village Hall is making good progress with its grant aided refurbishment works and is planning an official opening in April.

Ash Priors Village Hall and Wiveliscombe Community Centre have both been accepted for funding in principle by the Joint County and District Panel for Voluntary Village Halls and Community subject to there being sufficient funds available. The final decision will be made on 24 March.

## NETWORKING

The **LGA Rural Policy Review Group** covered Affordable Rural Housing and the England Rural Development Programme. As to the former, sustainability appraisals need to be encouraged and there is a need for a small number of new dwellings in our rural areas. As to the second topic, we need to decide what we mean by rural development; land needs to be manageable through the money it produces. The question is what is the role of agriculture in a prosperous rural economy. We need to find a profitable use for the land as it does not manage itself.

The message from **The SWMLAC Annual Forum** is that Museums, Libraries and Archives are at the centre of a community enabling it to understand itself and its past. Such facilities provide a sense of identity, a sense of place and a shared experience – community! Culture strengthens community and must have a voice in the LSPs, the local Community Strategies and the LAAs.

The **Rural Enterprise Gateway Conference** was all about climate change, fuel security and sustainability. Quite clearly there are opportunities for us as a council to promote alternative fuels such as wood chip heating systems. For the farmer directly and us indirectly there appears, following the huge hike in oil and gas prices to be a viable future for bio-fuels.

**Frieze Hill Orchard Community Wassail** was a very happy family event which involved a walk in the dark down a muddy lane armed with sticks to a bonfire, mulled cider and apple cake, the Mummers and a Morris Dance or two; a most successful community get-together.

Cllr. D. Bradley

## **COUNCIL MEETING 21 FEBRUARY 2006**

### **REPORT OF COUNCILLOR CAVILL ECONOMIC ASSET MANGEMENT AND TOURISM**

#### **Tourism and TIC**

Taunton TIC in conjunction with Wellington was nominated, and subsequently won the National Express Regional Agent of the Year award for the South West area. This award recognises the commitment and enthusiasm of the TIC and its staff. The award ceremonies take place at Cheltenham races in March and the National Agent of the Year will be announced. Our TICs will be attending.

The 2006 'Heart of Somerset' visitor guide as a brand seems to be capturing the public's imagination. So far 32933 have been distributed compared to 15000 at the same time last year. The campaign is performing extremely well with very positive feedback from the advertising agencies that we use. Taunton Deane and Somerset will be present at the British Travel Trade Fair 2006 in March, in order to promote our area. This fair takes place each year at Birmingham NEC and is the established exhibition dedicated to showcasing travel and tourism products. Somerset will also be represented at this show by 'Visit Exmoor' and the West Somerset railway.

The Somerset Tourism partnership has recently had feedback from the consultants who are undertaking a review of all aspects of tourism delivery, management, and promotion in Somerset. A further series of workshops will take place in March and the work is due to end in April. It will contain recommendations on how best to move forward tourism delivery in Somerset.

Following a meeting with our Tourism Officer and Sky Channel 160, the company wishes to film one of their 30 minute programmes called Britain's Best Breaks here in Somerset. This will be excellent promotion as this programme will be repeated in the order of 24 times. If you want an idea of what they produce, visit their web site [www.britainsbestbreaks.tv](http://www.britainsbestbreaks.tv)

#### **Rural regeneration**

Successful negotiations have been made with Road Chef, such that there is an area available for us within Road Chef's retail area in the south bound site of the deane Services. Visible promotional material has been designed and put in place and Graeme Wallace of Wallace's farm shop is leading the project on our behalf. Whist promoting his own products, of course, he will also be including as many other Taunton Vale producers as possible, so a wide range of local food, drinks, arts and crafts will be on offer. Although this is very much early stages of the plan, we hope that we will be able to obtain a north bound site as well and when the operation is up and running properly then to have an official opening later in the year.

A new member of the Ec Dev team, Alex Stephens is carrying out a study of all community spaces in the Ten Parishes area around Wiveliscombe, to assist in the site design and to see who else might use the facilities of the new

children's centre which the county council have decided to locate on a single site at Croft Way, Wiveliscombe.

### **Community Arts**

Taunton Deane Borough Council has been instrumental in gaining £41,000 from Arts Council England to match £75,000 County Council's Social Services funds for a disability arts project. Six Acres Resource centre and other residential and day centres in Taunton Deane and across the County will be hosting national and local artists, storytellers and dancers over the next 18 months. The aim is to encourage people with learning difficulties to take up creative learning opportunities, artistic careers and in the long term to set up an arts social enterprise. This is a major step forward for the shared Somerset Local Authority Arts and Disability Action Plan.

### **Asset management**

The DDA ramps that were designed for Halcon Road Post office and that were awaiting Highways approval are now being installed. Work should be completed on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2006.

Blackdown Business Park. The final process of selecting a developer and agreeing the tender is now almost complete.

OMB. Various designs have been drawn up to resolve the DDA problems and the requirements for the County Council. With agreement from the County we should be able to progress this work in the near future.

### **Economic Development**

The latest business development grant, after strong competition, has been awarded to the following:

'Clever Clogs' Games, which are early years literacy games for use in the classroom: [www.cleverclogsgames.co.uk](http://www.cleverclogsgames.co.uk)

Mark Butterfield Furniture Ltd, high quality furniture design, manufacture and fitting: [www.markbutterfield.co.uk](http://www.markbutterfield.co.uk)

G's Fashion, a new men's and women's fashion retailer combining great quality products with a relaxing and friendly atmosphere.

Good to Go providing top quality foods for delivery to offices and work places in Taunton, offering a wide range of soups, desserts, smoothies, snacks and drinks: [www.goodtogofood.co.uk](http://www.goodtogofood.co.uk)

Stawley Village Shop, the new village shop in Stawley will replace the old shop and post office in Greenham. Located next to Stawley School, the shop will offer improved access, larger premises and a wider range of stock for residents living in Stawley and the surrounding villages. This initiative will be of great benefit to this rural community and its suppliers.

Those who were unfortunate not to finish in the final five have still gained greatly in the business planning and advice that our partner 'Business Link' has been able to provide.

Councillor Norman P Cavill



## **COUNCIL MEETING – 21 February 2006.**

### **REPORT OF COUNCILLOR MARK EDWARDS – ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES.**

#### **1.0 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH.**

##### **1.1 Licensing.**

January saw the introduction of the Drink Safe Be Safe Awards with the top prize being given to the Moat House at a gala dinner. Many other premises in Taunton Town Centre also received awards and it is hoped the scheme will now roll out across the Borough.

The Licensing Unit/Council is also taking part in the Scrutiny Council initiative organised by the Department of Culture Media and Sport, (DCMS) so far DCMS have visited Taunton twice as part of a six month long review of the Licensing Act. They have met with bodies and individuals who have been involved locally in the new licensing process, including the Police, the Chair of the Licensing Committee, the Council's Chief Solicitor and representation from Village Halls and Community premises in Taunton, along with visits to venues in the Borough on an evening. The purpose of the Scrutiny panel is to assess the impact of the Licensing Act and to make changes where appropriate to the Guidance that accompanies the Act, the Regulations and if necessary the Act itself.

The Unit is now getting ready for the implementation of the Gambling Act that will transfer additional responsibilities to the Local Authority from 2007.

##### **1.2 Health and Safety.**

In December 2005 the Health and Safety Team took a prosecution against National firm Carpetright for failing to comply with an Improvement Notice. The Notice required them to carry out risk assessments for display screen equipment used at their Taunton premises. As a result of their failure to act Carpetright were fined £7500 and costs of £1000 were awarded to the Council. These costs have now been successfully recovered.

A successful Safety and Health Awareness seminar was arranged at SCAT on 8 November 2005. The event (attended by 50 people) was aimed at Taunton Deane's business community and was run in partnership with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The afternoon provided valuable advice on how to avoid slips and trips in the workplace. Slips and trips account for a third of all major injuries reported each year and are the single most common cause of injuries at work. TDBC is committed to working more closely with the HSE, in order to pool resources and deliver effective training. TDBC and the HSE are holding another safety and health awareness day at Bridgwater College on 14 February. The seminar will focus on health and safety hazards in food businesses.

##### **1.3 Food Safety.**

Members of the Food Safety Team detained a large quantity of stored rice after a serious infestation of rats had been discovered in a temporary food storage warehouse. Several tons of rice were subsequently surrendered voluntarily to the Council by the owners, and were destroyed. The detention action became necessary to ensure food that had been potentially contaminated by rats did not leave the warehouse for distribution to retail outlets. Food Safety Team officers, working with

the cooperation of the owners, sorted through the consignment of over 40 tons, and were able to certify a quantity of it as being safe for use. The salvaged proportion was moved into rodent proofed storage areas, while the remainder was sprayed with dye and removed to landfill under the supervision of our Officers. This was a good example of timely and effective intervention by the Team, and of using a pragmatic combination of statutory powers and cooperation with business.

#### **1.4 Environmental Protection.**

Further to the report given to the last Full Council, there has been an excellent response from owners of private water supplies to our new sampling service that is tailored more precisely to our customers' requirements. A questionnaire was sent out to all 374 households with a private supply, explaining that the new service allows the customer to choose the frequency and variety of testing for their water supply, in addition to statutory sampling requirements. 373 responses were received (99.5% return rate), enabling us to update our records and identify previously unknown supplies. Twelve properties initially requested extra routine sampling, with many more asking for a 'one off' test, and requests for extra testing are still being received.

## **2.0 WASTE and RECYCLING SERVICES**

### **2.1 Toilet Cleansing**

The staffing of the Castle Green Ladies toilets will cease on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March they will then remain open on a similar basis to the Castle Green Gentlemen's facilities. The two members of staff involved have been given notice of their redundancy and every effort is being made to find alternative employment for them. As part of the change improvement works will be necessary to give greater durability against vandalism.

The toilet block situated in the car park at Wilton Lands has now been closed with the public being directed to the new facilities within the new Vivary chalet.

### **2.2 Sort It!**

In addition to winning the National Recycling Award for the best local authority initiative the Somerset Waste Partnership has now also won the Composting Association's national award for the *SORT IT!* services

Feed back has been received from 3000 properties included in Phase 1 of SORT IT! The opinions of the respondents are very similar to the feedback from Mendip and South Somerset .

The key statistics that emerged are:

- 73.2% of respondents thought the new arrangements were better of which 33.7% thought they were much better.
- 85% of respondents though it was easy to sort out their waste
- 80.1% of respondents are now recycling more (and 38.1% are recycling a lot more

- 79.4% of respondents use the food waste collection service. Of those that don't it is because 77.3% make their own compost at home.
- 84.2% of respondents rarely have waste that will not fit in the standard sized wheeled bin.
- 93.1% of respondents thought the information provided for the new services was clear and helpful.
- Although only 18.1% of respondents contacted the SORT IT! helpline of those that did 80.5% thought the response was helpful.

5,000 properties included in Phase 3 of *SORT IT!* have received their notification packs about the changes to waste services. Phase 3 collections will commence in May. Promotional events and roadshows are being managed to accompany the programme together with media support.

### **3.0 TAUNTON DEANE CEMETERIES AND CREMATORIUM**

#### **3.1 Annual Emissions Testing**

The results of independent sampling and analysis from the discharge of three stacks at the crematorium have shown the concentration of total particulate emitted was well below the prescribed limits. These limits are as dictated by Guidance Note PG 5/2 (95) "Crematoria." The test work carried out investigated the components and concentrations of the releases to atmosphere from the crematorium. The crematoriums own analytical equipments data confirms compliance with the legislation.

#### **3.2 Cremators**

The maintenance of the crematorium cremators is always considered of the utmost importance and with this in mind the latest version of operating software has been installed. The equipment has also undergone a comprehensive maintenance check and a full re-bricking of a cremator is currently underway.

#### **3.3 Cremation Regulations**

The Department for Constitutional Affairs has issued various amendments to the Cremation Regulations. These amendments concern; incineration of body parts, cremation of bodies where the death occurred outside the British islands, still-born children, The Civil Partnership Act, Medical Referees and updates references to the Births and Deaths Registration Act.

#### **3.4 St Mary's Cemetery, Wellington Road**

During the winter some of our grounds staff have been concentrating on St Mary's cemetery. Unfortunately many of the old memorials have become rather dilapidated and pose difficulty when maintaining the cemetery. The Local Authorities Cemeteries Order enables the lowering of some of these badly worn stones and we are currently investigating this option.

Councillor Mark Edwards



## **COUNCIL MEETING 21 FEBRUARY 2006**

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

This report will focus on three areas within the Housing Portfolio. The first is to provide the usual update on Housing Stock Options and the second will be to update members on the handyman service and the third to advise on the current status of the Cash Incentive Scheme..

#### **Housing Stock Transfer Update**

##### Last three months

Further to December's Full Council, the following provides Members with an overview on what has taken place and what will take place for the next couple of months.

Since the last Full Council update:

- i) Two Tenants and Staff Newsletters have been sent
- ii) A members briefing has been held where there was an introduction to the Offer Document and more information on the findings on the Tenants' Priority Survey
- iii) Meetings of the Officer Steering Group, Communication Group, Staff Forum, Tenants' Panel, Tenants' Forum and Sheltered Housing Forum
- iv) Two further Shadow Board Meetings, covering an Overview of the Housing Service, a tour of some estates, Culture of the Registered Social Landlord (RSL), Offer Document and training on Equality and Diversity
- v) Undertaking Tenants' Days to talk to tenants to understand more about the areas they have asked for improvements in, from the returned Tenants' Priority Survey
- vi) Door Knocking by the Independent Tenants Advisor
- vii) Undertaking a Partners Day
- viii) Selected the name of the potential new RSL – "Deane Housing"

By the time of the next Full Council the following will have taken place:

- i) Further Tenants and Staff Newsletters will be sent
- ii) Further Council meetings where the Offer Document for example will start to formalised
- iii) Meetings of the Officer Steering Group, Communication Group, Staff Forum and Tenants' Panel and Tenants' Forum, covering such important matters as the Offer Document
- iv) Two further Shadow Board Meetings, covering Business Planning / Valuation, Key Policies, Assets and Services to be transferred and TUPE / Staff Protocol
- v) Undertaking Staff Workshops
- vi) Agreeing what areas of Housing would transfer if there was a "Yes" vote, including Staff and Assets / Services
- vii) Further Door Knocking
- viii) Visits to other organisations that have gone through a similar experience
- ix) Undertaking a Media Briefing

Naturally all Members will be kept updated and informed.

### Handyman update

As at the first week of February, we have received 292 Handyman requests of which 199 have had work completed. Pete, the Handyman, currently has another person working with him to help deal with the outstanding workload.

I am delighted at the continued success of the handyman service, a function that provides a much needed and trusted service to vulnerable members of our community.

### Cash Incentive scheme update

£

The budget was:-

Carried over from 2004/05 =	68,500
Budget =	200,000
Plus Extra =	50,000

**£318,500**

Spent =	310,000
---------	---------

Balance remaining in Budget =	8,500
-------------------------------	-------

Breakdown of Properties	Number
4 Bed House	1
3 Bed House	5
2 Bed House	5
2 Bed Bungalow	1
2 Bed Flat	4
1 Bed Flat	1
<u>TOTAL</u>	17

Completed	13
With Solicitor	4*
Awaiting Property	0
Cancelled	6
<u>TOTAL</u>	23

\*One is due to complete on 20 February.

The Cash Incentive Scheme remains a very cost efficient method of housing families and will be supported as demand dictates.

Councillor Greg Garner



## **COUNCIL MEETING 21 FEBRUARY 2006**

### **REPORT OF COUNCILLOR TERRY HALL - RESOURCES**

#### **1 Electoral Services**

##### **Boundary Review**

The Working Group of members met on the 6<sup>th</sup> February to discuss Taunton Deane's formal response to the Draft Recommendations of the Boundary Committee for England, during Stage 3 of the ongoing Review of the Borough wards.

The Working Group accepted the Boundary Committee's recommendations for no change in the wards of

Blackdown  
Monument  
Norton Fitzwarren  
Staplegrove  
Fairwater  
Trull  
West Monkton

The Boundary Committee have accepted Taunton Deane's original proposal that a new ward comprising the parishes of Ash Priors, Bishop's Lydeard, Combe Florey, Cothelstone, Halse and West Bagborough be created, and it is suggested this be known as Bishop's Lydeard ward.

Minor amendments to the three Wellington wards, confirmed as acceptable to Wellington Town Council, were also accepted.

The Working Group were opposed to the recommendations for Wiveliscombe and West Deane ward and noted the strong opposition received from the parishes potentially affected. Well-established community links in the area of the 10 Parishes and Market Towns Initiatives would be disrupted and Community Planning Areas breached. It was agreed that Taunton Deane would press for their original proposals for no change in this ward be adopted.

The Working Group considered that the recommendation from the Boundary Committee for two new wards in the east of the Deane namely Creech, North Curry and Stoke St Gregory and a separate Ruishton and Neroche ward was unacceptable. In the absence of a suitable alternative the original proposal for a combined North Curry and Stoke St Gregory ward with the inclusion of the parish of West Hatch remains Taunton Deane's preferred option and it is suggested that the ward be known as The Levels ward. The Working Group was, however, aware that there had been opposition to this proposal.



With the exception of a transfer of 500 electors from Taunton Eastgate ward to Taunton Killams and Mountfield ward and minor boundary adjustments between Lyngford and Pyrland & Rowbarton wards and between Blackbrook & Holway and Halcon wards, all the other recommendations of the Boundary Committee were rejected.

Taunton Deane's formal response will be sent to the Boundary Committee before the consultation period ends on the 6<sup>th</sup> March 2006.

### **Electoral Administration Bill**

This piece of legislation is winding its way through the legislative system. Changes to the hours of Poll, to 7.00am to 10.00pm for ALL elections will be in force for the local elections in May.

Other provisions in the legislation relate to postal voting, anonymous registration, pre poll information, security issues and issues relating to the annual audit of electors.

As and when more information and detail is released I will keep you informed.

### **2 "ISIS" – (Improving Services in Somerset)**

Work on the ISiS Programme continues to progress according to plan.

#### **Selecting the partner**

- The advert to attract a private sector partner was published in the European Journal on 21 December and the LGC on 5 January. To help prospective Bidders better understand the principles and aspirations of ISiS, an Open Day was held on 16 January, which was attended by representatives of nearly 40 companies.

Short listing will take place on 17 March with further negotiations taking place with short listed companies between May and July, leading to a preferred bidder being identified around August.

#### **Service specifications**

- SMT members contributed to some extremely useful and constructive workshops in November to help determine what our baseline services currently look like for those services in scope of ISiS. The workshops also spent some time thinking through what we might want those services to look like in the future. This work was carried out so that our prospective partner has a clear picture not only of what needs to be delivered now, but also what these services aspire to in the future. These specifications are now being combined with those of SCC, through joint workshops to produce a single, joint specification for each service.

## **Other progress**

One of the key drivers behind the ISiS programme is our ambitious plan to improve customer access. This is a key ambition for TDBC, so it is essential we plan and prepare for this properly. Consequently a full time secondment has now been made from the beginning of January to the role of Customer Access Project Manager - this will help us develop and implement these plans, and to ensure they are well developed enough to link with the ISiS timetable. This work will be very closely linked to the ISiS project team.

Now that the procurement process is under way, there is an enormous amount of work to do to ensure that we select the most appropriate bidder. Likewise, bidders will want to ensure that both TDBC's and SCC's "credentials" are in order. Work is therefore taking place to ensure the "Due Diligence" part of the procurement process is completed.

Both TDBC and SCC have expressed a preference for secondment to be the employment model. Staff workshops have been held in both SCC and TDBC for all those "in scope" to explain the differences between secondment and TUPE, and to consult staff about this preference.

## **3 Revenues**

*Payment kiosks* – with effect from 23 Jan 2006 we have closed the cash desks and moved over entirely to using the payment kiosks. This has largely been successful, although there have been a few technical hiccups and complaints from the public. The cashiers have done a sterling job in explaining to the public how to use the machines. However, the real test will come in late March/early April when the first Council Tax instalment becomes due.

*Council Tax & Business Rates collection* – the statistics at the end of the third quarter (31 Dec 2005) indicate that we are very slightly below target for both debts. (A detailed report was made to the Resources Panel on 9 Feb 2006).

*Year-End for Council Tax & Business Rates* – the new-year debit raise processes are scheduled to take place during the last week of February with bills being issued at various times over the subsequent 2 weeks. Currently we are undertaking detailed testing in order to check that the debit raise, calculation and bill production processes are working as they should.

*Small Business Rate Relief* – application forms were issued in Dec 2005 to all businesses possibly entitled to relief. So far we have had a good response

## **4 Member Services**

Discussions have now taken place with all political groups on the Overview and Scrutiny Review. A further report will now go to the Review Board. With

the recent appointment of an Overview and Scrutiny Officer it is hoped that any new proposals will be introduced as soon as practically possible.

## **5 Personnel**

### Staff Absence

The latest figures for the year up to December 2005 (Q3) projected for 12 months show that the average no of days absence due to sickness per employee is 11.1 days. This is a welcome improvement over last year and below the current year's BVPI target of 11.5 days.

A working group has been set up to look more closely at absence and they have looked at the figures and trends over the past 2 years and recommended some strategies to reduce absence due to sickness within the authority.

These include measures to try and prevent illness and to treat the more common conditions experienced by our staff. A more proactive strategy to manage absence through management training and greater support and encouragement to staff are being pursued.

## **6 New Revenue and Benefits System**

The key areas of progress are summarised below;

December 2005 - progress reports were submitted to DWP who were satisfied with the reports and have released a further instalment of the DWP award (£160k released, representing further 40% of the full award). We have now received a total of £240K. Final payment of £160k will be made on satisfactory completion of the project.

Hardware (servers) ordered, delivered and installed. OPENRevenues software installed on the new server on 24<sup>th</sup> January

IT staff have received 2 days Technical database administration training on 31.01.06 and 01.02.06 (loading new releases, batch processes and basic database housekeeping functions). IT staff presently working hard on creating very large number of conversion files which will extract the necessary information from the in-house system in a way that will enable it to be loaded onto OPENRevenues.

Comprehensive training plan agreed for ALL Revs & Bens staff and auditors.

Data cleansing exercises for Benefits and Council Tax underway, primarily focused on assisting with the creation of a single person database across OPENRevenues.

Once the conversion files have been created they will need to be checked and balanced by users involved in the implementation (no small task) before testing can begin (again a major task).

## **7 Financial Services**

The Financial Services Unit have now completed the work on the 2006/07 budget and work will now begin on finalising the closedown timetable for the 2005/06 financial year. In addition the Unit is supporting and working on various corporate projects such as ISIS, Housing Transfer and the Vision for Taunton. Work is also progressing on the production of the leaflet which will accompany the Council Tax bills for 2006/07 and we are currently liaising with the Supporting People Unit at SCC to determine the level of grant funding which the Council will receive next year"

## **8 Benefits**

The Benefits Service has successfully recruited staff for its new Benefits Advice team. The new team members are joining TDBC over the coming weeks in preparation for their 'go live' date of Monday 27<sup>th</sup> February.

Although the Customer Service Team have done an excellent job in answering calls from benefit customers, the complexity of benefits queries has led to many of these calls being lengthy, tying up the phone lines and preventing other customers getting through.

The new team will take calls from existing benefits customers and will free up the Customer Service Team to answer calls from new customers. The Benefits Advice Team will have the time and the necessary experience to deal with these calls thoroughly without the need to transfer them to the assessment team.

It is also the team's aim, by using lean fundamentals, to improve the current service provided, process claims more efficiently and get the information we need first time.

Last year, the team piloted their 'Help Us to Help You' scheme, which rewarded customers whenever they responded immediately to a request for further information needed to support their claim. Customers who took part in the scheme gave very good feedback and it is being rolled out to all customers.

The service wants it's customers who have had a change in their circumstances to call the new team, get told the information needed to reassess their claim and offered an appointment with a Benefit Officer the next day. If they keep the appointment and provide all the information needed, their claim will be assessed immediately and they can leave the Deane House with a new decision.

The Overpayments Team was particularly successful in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2005/06. For the first time since the team was created, the overall debt relating to benefit overpayments fell by almost £1,000.

The Investigations Team continues to do well. So far in 2005/6, they have prosecuted 4 people and issued a formal caution to 24 others. One case is awaiting a prosecution and another is with the police pending an arrest. Again, the changes to the subsidy arrangements mean they will no longer get rewarded for issuing penalties and cautions.

In September 2005, 4 Benefit Officers started home working. Early signs show the scheme has been very successful. Home workers are at least 60% more productive than office based Benefit Officers and none of the home workers have been absent through sickness. The home workers themselves are complimentary of the scheme and comment on the positive affect it has made to their work-life balance. The service is currently looking at offering other Benefit Officers the opportunity to work from home.

## **9 Internal Audit Services**

The Audit Team have now finished the system-based audits during the last quarter and are now moving on to some of the Council's non-financial audit areas including dog wardens, community safety and housing repairs. The Internal Audit Team has successfully filled a full-time vacancy and continues to deliver in the following areas:-

- Undertaking a wide range of financial and non-financial audits
- Rolling out Risk Management at service level with a number of workshops being facilitated by members of the Internal Audit Section.
- Ongoing provision of Data Protection and Freedom of Information advice.
- Playing a vital assurance role in some of the major projects that the Council is working on including ISIS, replacement Revenues / Benefits and Housing Systems.

Councillor Terry Hall

## **COUNCIL MEETING 21 FEBRUARY 2006**

### **REPORT OF COUNCILLOR MRS JOANNA LEWIN-HARRIS**

#### **POLICY AND PERFORMANCE UNIT**

I would like to congratulate Simon Lewis on taking up his new post as Scrutiny and Performance Manager and also welcome three new members of staff to the Policy and Performance Unit.

Jane Chipp has joined us as the Strategy and Partnerships Manager. She will take responsibility for the Local Strategic Partnership, Community Planning, Community Safety and Equalities.

Alistair Higton has joined us as Scrutiny Officer. This is a new post and shows this administration's commitment to improving Taunton Deane's scrutiny function. Alistair recently gave a presentation to the Community Leadership Panel and will be repeating this for the Review Board later this month. I very much hope that this new resource for scrutiny will create the environment for members to get more involved in, and satisfied with, scrutiny and that the outcomes of scrutiny reviews will bring about changes in council policies or activities.

Clare Stuart has joined as Anti-Social Behaviour co-ordinator. The Crime and Disorder Partnership fund this post. Clare's role involves support for the Local Action Teams, developing an anti-social behaviour database and co-ordinating youth provision across the Deane.

#### **LOCAL ACTION TEAMS**

Five Local Action Teams (Galmington, Holway, Lambrook, Monkton Heathfield and Norton Fitzwarren) recently put in bids for funding to the Local Strategic Partnership. The bids were for items such as litter bins, dog bins, youth facilities, speedwatch, computer facilities, and grants amounting to a total of £6,335 were awarded.

#### **CCTV**

It has been apparent for some time that arrangements for monitoring our CCTV system are in need of updating. Currently the system is monitored live on average 18 hours a day by a combination of parking attendants and dedicated operators and they have done an excellent job. The police now tell us that we really need to monitor 24 hours a day, and to employ specialists who have the necessary training and security clearance to be linked in with the police airwave radios. WE are currently looking at upgrading our own system, or possibly linking with a neighbouring authority to deliver a better service.

#### **VISIT FROM HOME OFFICE ALCOHOL POLICY TEAM**

3 members of the Home Office Alcohol Policy Team are due to visit Taunton Deane on Tuesday 14 Feb. The visit is in recognition of the good work and achievements of the Taunton Deane Crime Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) in tackling alcohol related anti-social behaviour. The main purpose of the visit is to get a broad overview how Taunton Deane is addressing alcohol misuse problems. I will be meeting the team, as will the Chief Executive and officers from the Community Safety Unit and Licensing. The team will also meet with the police, the County Gazette and members of PubWatch.

## **COMMUNITY PLANNING**

In order to consult as many people and organisations as possible across the Borough in the preparation of the Local Development Framework and review of the Community Strategy, Bakers Associates were appointed by TDBC (Forward Plan and Policy & Performance) and the LSP to develop a consultation strategy and facilitate consultation workshops.

The LSPs Spatial Planning Working Group, with representatives from each local community planning area, have been instrumental in shaping the strategy with Bakers. There is considerable emphasis on engaging those who traditionally may not get involved in planning and community issues. Planning Aid South West are helping with free advice and community capacity building, particularly in North and East Taunton.

There will be a variety of consultation methods including workshops, exhibitions, drop-in sessions and stakeholder meetings. Feedback will be encouraged through completing comment forms, writing in, e-mailing to a dedicated e-mail address, and discussions.

The consultation period will commence towards the end of March and conclude at the beginning of June. The feedback from this will help shape the LDF Core Strategy and Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan, a review of the Community Strategy, and local area strategies for North and East Taunton.

### Wellington and Area Community Strategy:

The draft Wellington and Area Community Strategy is now live and ready for comment on Taunton Deane Borough Council's website. Community involvement has been integral to the process and we hope that the Strategy has the local community's final endorsement. Comments are welcomed and should be received by Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> February. The steering group will then consider all feedback before the plan becomes a working document.

## **LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT**

The Executive endorsed the Second Draft Local Area Agreement earlier this month, with support for the proposal of the Review Board to improve reference to culture within the LAA. There is still work to be done in respect of governance and performance management arrangements, how any reward grants will be distributed and possible alignment of budgets. The Chief Executive will represent TDBC in future discussions on these issues.

## **CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION PARTNERSHIP (CDRP)**

The Police and Justice Bill just published incorporates legislative changes to the working of Crime and Disorder Partnerships.

This will mean that the strategic direction of the CDRP will be set at the county level with a co-ordinating body overarching the 5 district CDRP's and including the county wide Drugs and Alcohol Action Team. Taunton Deane's portfolio holder will be required to sit on this strategic group that will also drive the Safer Communities block of the Local Area Agreement.

Instead of carrying out an audit every three years, and setting a 3 year strategy, we will be obliged to carry out a 6 monthly strategic assessment, and this will inform a rolling three yearly strategy to be updated each April.

Section 115 of the Crime and Disorder act relating to data sharing will be strengthened to oblige responsible authorities to share depersonalised data. CDRP's will be obliged to consult and engage communities on a regular and ongoing basis and produce regular reports. Overview and Scrutiny committees will have their powers extended to encompass the work of CDRP's. Elected members will be able to issue a Call for Action if they feel that

a member of their community has not had a community safety issue sufficiently well addressed.

Joanna Lewin-Harris