

COUNCIL SUMMONS

YOU ARE REQUESTED TO ATTEND A MEETING OF THE TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL TO BE HELD IN THE PRINCIPAL COMMITTEE, THE DEANE HOUSE, BELVEDERE ROAD, TAUNTON ON WEDNESDAY 13TH SEPTEMBER 2006 AT 19:00.

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 18 July 2006 (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. Declarations of Interest
To receive declarations of personal or prejudicial interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct
7. Housing Transfer Issues
Report of Head of Housing (Housing Transfer Consultation Co-ordinator)(attached)

G P DYKE
Member Services Manager
05 September 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:



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

Taunton Deane Borough Council

At a meeting of the Taunton Deane Borough Council held in the Principal Committee Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton on 18 July 2006 at 6.30 pm.

Present: The Mayor (Councillor Hindley)

The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Hayward)

Councillors Mrs Allgrove, Beaven, Mrs Biscoe, Bishop, Bowrah, Mrs Bradley, Cavill, Miss Cavill, Clark, Coles, Croad, Davies, Durdan, Floyd, Garner, Govier, Hall, Henley, C Hill, Mrs Marie Hill, Mrs Marcia Hill, Lees, Leighton, Lisgo, Meikle, Morrell, Phillips, Prior-Sankey, Slattery, Mrs Smith, P Smith, Vail, Wedderkopp, Weston, Mrs Whitmarsh and Williams.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2006 were taken as read and were signed by the Mayor.

2. Apologies

Councillors Bone, C Cluff, Mrs Cluff, Denington, Edwards, House, Mrs Lewin-Harris, Mullins, Murphy, Paul, Stuart-Thorn, Watson and Mrs Wilson.

3. Communications

Councillor Williams referred to a recent visit to the Authority by representatives of H M Treasury and the Department of Communities and Local Government. This was a fact-finding visit by the representatives and Taunton Deane were one of only eight Councils within the country that were to be visited. Councillor Williams commended partner organisations and the Council's Officers for the way in which the programme had been put together and the efficient manner in which this visit had taken place.

4. Vision for Taunton

Council received a presentation from Ian Franklin, Vision Delivery Team Project Director, together with Richard Gould, Chief Executive, Somerset County Cricket Club and Robert Miles, Director of the Brewhouse Theatre regarding the present position of the Vision for Taunton. Progress, to-date, of a number of different aspects of the Vision were reported.

(Councillor Prior-Sankey declared a personal interest in the above item, as a member of both Somerset County Council and South West Regional Assembly.)

5. **Recommendations to Council from the Executive**

(a) **Performance Monitoring Outturn Report on 2005/08, Corporate Strategy 2005/06, Financial Outturn and 2005/06 Performance Indicators**

Reported that the Executive had considered a report which gave an update on the outturn position for the Authority on revenue and capital expenditure. The General Fund Revenue Outturn showed an underspend of £45,000 when compared with the current budget. It was suggested that this underspend be used towards potential additional concessionary travel costs within 2006/07. The current level of take-up of free bus passes for 2006/07 indicated that costs were likely to exceed the amount allocated in the budget.

RESOLVED that the General Fund underspend of £44,764 be earmarked for potential additional concessionary travel costs within 2006/07.

(b) **Virement Request to Council**

Following consideration of an exempt report by the Executive, Council had been recommended to approve various virements between budgets.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) The virement of the CCTV budget from Planning, Policy and Transportation Portfolio to the Community Development Portfolio be agreed; and
- (ii) The virement of the Capital budget for the proposed purchase of land at Bishops Hull from the Leisure Portfolio to the Economic Development Portfolio and the use of these monies for the purchasing of land at Bishops Hull or for Vision for Taunton capital purposes be agreed.

(c) **Corporate Services - Support to Corporate Project Teams**

Consideration was given to the making of a Supplementary Estimate from General Fund Reserves of £56,530 to fund temporary additional staffing resources within the Personnel and Financial Services Units. This was necessary to enable support to Corporate projects (ISiS, Housing Stock Transfer, Vision etc) to continue. It was envisaged that these arrangements would be required for a period of 12 months.

RESOLVED that a Supplementary Estimate from General Fund reserves of £56,530 be made to fund these posts for a period of 12 months.

(Councillor Henley declared a personal interest in relation to ISiS as a member of Somerset County Council. Councillor Prior-Sankey declared a personal interest in relation to ISiS and Waste Management as a member of Somerset County Council.)

(d) **Annual Report 2006/07**

The Council were required to produce an annual report (or performance plan) which articulated its proposals for improvement for the coming year including how weaknesses would be addressed, opportunities exploited and better outcomes delivered. The Council were also required to include outturn data and targets for BVPIs progressed against past objectives and statutory statements on workforce matters.

A more accessible Annual Report was published this year and was linked to an appendix of performance indicators and the previously published Corporate Strategy 2006/2009.

The Review Board had scrutinised the Annual Report at its meeting on 8 June 2006 and had recommended that it be approved. A copy of the report had also been sent separately to all Councillors.

RESOLVED that the Annual Report be agreed.

6. **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 (Councillor Williams)**

Councillor Williams' report covered the following topics:

- LGA Annual Conference and its speakers.
- Wellington Retail Survey.
- Economic Developments in Wellington.
- Ballot for Housing Stock Transfer.
- Annual Report of the Council.
- Relocation of the Livestock Market.
- Affordable Housing.
- Vision for Taunton.
- Redevelopment or Relocation of UKHO.
- Elton John Concert.

(ii) **Resources (Councillor Hall)**

Councillor Hall submitted his report which covered the following areas:

- ISiS (Improving Services in Somerset).
- Procurement.
- Corporate Property Services.
- Member Services.
- Financial Services.
- Revenues.
- Personnel.
- Information Systems.

(Councillor Henley declared a personal and prejudicial interest as an employee of the Department of Works and Pensions.)

(iii) **Community Leadership (Councillor Mrs Lewin-Harris)** submitted by Councillor Williams in Councillor Mrs Lewin-Harris' absence

Councillor Mrs Lewin-Harris' report drew attention to the following:

- Local Strategic Partnership.
- Crime and Disorder Partnership.
- CPA Use of Resources.
- Annual Report.
- Scrutiny.

(iv) **Planning, Policy and Transportation (Councillor Bishop)**

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

- Regional Spatial Strategy.
- Transportation Issues.
- Talking Tomorrow's Taunton Deane.
- E-Planning Criteria, Changes and Planning Delivery Grant
- Circular 1/2006.

(Councillor Prior-Sankey declared a personal interest in matters relating to Transportation and the Regional Spatial Strategy as a Member of Somerset County Council and the South West Regional Assembly.)

(v) **Environmental Services (Councillor Mrs Bradley)**

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

- Licensing.
- Health and Safety.

- Food Safety.
- Environmental Protection.
- Environmental Health.
- Waste and Recycling Services.

(vi) **Economic Asset Management and Tourism (Councillor Cavill)**

The report from Councillor Cavill covered:

- Asset Management.
- Tourism and TIC.
- Economic Development.
- Community Arts.

(vii) **Leisure, Arts and Culture (Councillor Clark)**

The report from Councillor Clark provided information on the following areas within his portfolio:

- Arts and Culture.
- Park Events.
- Grant Aid.
- Wellington Open Spaces.
- Youth Facilities.
- Use of Public Open Spaces for Events.
- Beechgrove Playing Field.
- Blackbrook Tennis Centre.
- Taunton Green MUGA.
- Tone Leisure Limited Activities.
- Plans for the Future.

(Councillors Prior-Sankey and Williams declared personal interests in any discussion relating to Taunton Flower Show as Members of the Taunton Flower Show.)

(viii) **Housing Services (Councillor Garner)**

Councillor Garner's report focused 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 affordable housing.

(ix) **Communications (Councillor Leighton)**

Councillor Leighton submitted her report which drew attention to the following:

- Your Council, Your Views Consultation.
- Information Management.
- Public Relations and Media Relations.

- Marketing.
- Annual Report.

7. **Social Network Payment to the Post Office Limited**

On the motion of Councillor Williams, seconded by Councillor Cavill, it was RESOLVED that Taunton Deane Borough Council fully support Post Watch in its aims to persuade Government to retain the social network payment as made to the Post Office Limited to support rural Post Offices. This was scheduled to expire in March 2008 and decisions regarding the continuance of this were to be made in the Autumn of this year. The Council strongly urged the Government to consider providing support to ensure that this vital rural community facility could continue. Without support, large numbers of rural Post Offices would be financially disadvantaged and the likelihood was that closure would follow. This would not be good for the community or, in fact, the Government's own strongly promoted sustainability programme.

(Councillors Mrs Allgrove and Bishop declared personal interest in this item as members of TA Postwatch).

(The following Councillors left the meeting at the times indicated - Councillor Bowrah at 7.30 pm and Councillor Mrs Marcia Hill at 9.00 pm.)

(The meeting ended at 9.37 pm.)

TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

SPECIAL MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL – WEDNESDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 2006

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HOUSING (HOUSING TRANSFER CONSULTATION CO-ORDINATOR)

HOUSING TRANSFER ISSUES

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor G Garner)

Executive Summary

Councillors are asked to :-

1. Sign off the Housing Transfer Offer Document
2. To authorise procedure to stage one of the Housing Transfer Ballot procedure.

1. Background and Considerations

1.1 Members are aware that the Housing Service, supported by advisors and directed by Corporate Director Jeremy Thornberry, has been consulting tenants to consider transfer of the Council's housing stock to a new Registered Social Landlord, Deane Housing. So far we have sent out leaflets, newsletters and other written material to all of our tenants to explain:-

- 1) Why the Council has chosen this path
- 2) The £1.85m shortfall in funding per annum if we are required to keep services as they are and meet the Government's "Decent Homes" standard.
- 3) The cuts required to services and jobs to close the funding gap
- 4) How tenants' rights are protected
- 5) What the benefits of transferring to Deane Housing would mean to tenants.

1.2 This literature has been supported by staff, Councillors and Deane Housing Shadow Board members attending many different events from coffee mornings to steam rallies, "door knocking", static stands in supermarkets and a mobile trailer visiting many villages and estates. Staff are now visiting tenants missed in the first round of door knocking. There has also been press coverage of the consultation procedures. All staff have been kept updated through meetings, newsletters and information from their managers.

- 1.3 During the consultation we have kept figures, a very rough guide, to record what staff believe tenants are saying based on the information received so far from the door “knocking process” (figures attached), but the main aim was to ensure that all tenants knew about the Housing Transfer Consultation and understood why the Council was consulting staff. The “door knockers” opinions were 27% in favour of transfer, 12% against, 44% undecided, 12% not known and 5% unlikely to vote. This is a very rough guide.
- 1.4 Since the meeting of the Political Leadership Group and Executive on 22 August we have received little relevant advice, but by the meeting on 13 September, we should have the results of a survey by SMSR, which should help inform members. Information will be relayed at the meeting.
- 1.5 Most other advice would indicate that we are at a quite normal position strategically at this stage in the housing transfer consultation procedure and that it is only when tenants have had time to read the offer document, see the DVD/video and consider the summary that views become more realistic.
- 1.6 We aim to have further market research carried out in the third week following the release of the offer document which will give a more accurate forecast of the tenants’ intention at ballot. Should it be necessary we could stop the ballot then, but councillors need to bear in mind that our consultation has been based on the slogan “You Decide”, meaning the tenants decide at ballot. They could therefore feel cheated if a ballot is not held.
- 1.7 At the same time we prepared a draft offer document. This has been scrutinised by the Executive, Housing Review Panel, Deane Housing Shadow Board, the Tenants Forum, advisors and housing managers. The Tenants Panel supported by Aldbournes, the independent tenants advisors, have worked very hard on this document, giving up most of their own time. I am grateful for their commitment. All their proposals have been considered, costed and added to the offer document whenever feasible.
- 1.8 In conjunction with the offer document a DVD/video and summary pamphlet are being prepared.

2. Conclusion

- 2.1 After much consultation, advice and hard work by all concerned the offer document is now complete and ready to be signed off. (copies available on 13 September).
- 2.2 Members must now decide whether the Council should take the next step towards balloting the tenants on transferring the housing stock to Deane Housing or not. The next step is “stage one”; issuing each tenant with their copy of the offer document, DVD/video and summary. At the same time staff will door knock again to ensure all tenants understand the promises contained in the offer document, with SMSR carrying out market research to clarify tenants’ understanding and likely voting position.

2.3 Further special meetings of the Executive and Council will be held on Monday 13 November 2006, when the Council must decide whether or not to proceed to ballot. This is subject to the decisions being made on 13 September.

3. Recommendations

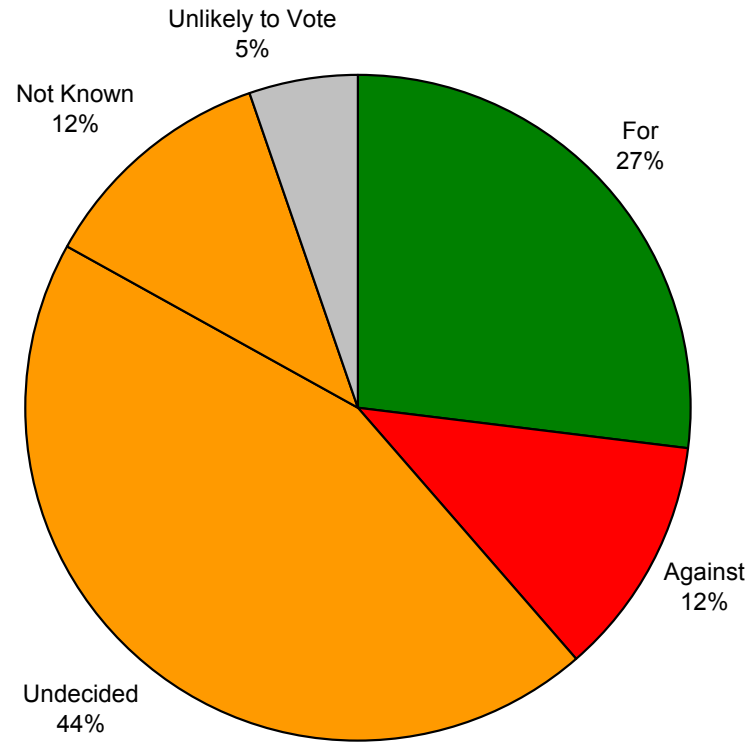
1. The Executive agrees to “sign off” the offer document.
2. The Executive agrees to proceed to stage one of the ballot process.

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Analysis of Door Knocking Campaign

Follow Up Action Required		Officer Opinion of Tenant View on Transfer		Outcome	
None	5168	For	1337	Successful	4930
Revisit	1694	Against	575	Out	1719
Phone	32	Undecided	2217	Declined	269
Letter	7	Unlikely to Vote	257		
Fact Sheet	14	Not Known	580		
Appointment	3				
	6918		4966		6918

Visiting Officers Opinion of Tenant View on Transfer



Tenants Areas of Concern About Housing Transfer

