

## COUNCIL SUMMONS

YOU ARE REQUESTED TO ATTEND A MEETING OF THE TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL TO BE HELD IN THE PRINCIPAL COMMITTEE ROOM, THE DEANE HOUSE, BELVEDERE ROAD, TAUNTON ON TUESDAY 11TH DECEMBER 2007 AT 18:30.

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### 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 9 October 2007 (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
7. Members' Allowances 2008/09  
To receive recommendations from the independent Members' Allowances Panel and Chair of Strategy and Performance Panel (attached)
8. Annual Report 2007/08  
Report of Scrutiny and Performance Manager (attached)
9. Part 1 To deal with written questions to and receive recommendations from the Executive:-
  - (i) Councillor Henley (Leader of the Council)  
  
Recommendations relating to:-
    - (a) Capital Programme
    - (b) Legal and Democratic Services - Supplementary Estimate
    - (c) ISiS
  - (ii) Councillor Mullins  
  
Recommendation relating to the Licensing Policy
10. Part II - To receive reports from the following members of the Executive:
  - (i) Councillor Henley - Leader of the Council
  - (ii) Councillor Brooks - Communications
  - (iii) Councillor Coles - Planning and Transportation
  - (iv) Councillor Horsley - Economic Development, Property and Tourism

- (v) Councillor R Lees - Leisure, Arts and Culture
- (vi) Councillor Mullins - Environmental Services
- (vii) Councillor Prior-Sankey - Housing Services
- (viii) Councillor Mrs Smith - Resources
- (ix) Councillor A Wedderkopp - Community Leadership

11. Somerset Waste Board - To consider the following motion proposed by Councillor Edwards, seconded by Councillor House:-

The recently formed Somerset Waste Board is one of the most important strategic developments that TDBC has been involved in over the last four years. It was successfully implemented by the present administration after three years of extensive work by the last administration and cooperation across the Councils of Somerset.

Taunton Deane Borough Council presently finds itself in a position of no overall control. It is regrettable that as a result of decisions made by the present Executive, the largest opposition group have been completely isolated from this important partnership and the Leader of the Council has appointed two Executive members to the Board.

The knowledge and understanding that exists within the Conservative Group about the partnership and the future plans of the Board is therefore being wasted and the spirit of cooperation previously muted has not been effected. Despite numerous requests to change the appointments to the Board, the Leader of the Council has ignored all requests.

Therefore the following Motion is proposed to Full Council for consideration:

That the Executive reconsider its decision and in the spirit of cooperation, replace one of the two Executive Councillor representatives on the Somerset Waste Board with one from the largest opposition party to be decided by the Leader of that Group.

G P DYKE  
Democratic Services Manager  
04 December 2007







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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## **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 9 October 2007 at 6.30 pm.

**Present** The Mayor (Councillor Hayward)  
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Slattery)  
Councillors Mrs Allgrove, Beaven, Bishop, Brockwell, Brooks, Cavill, Coles, Mrs Copley, Mrs Court-Stenning, Critchard, Denington, Durdan, Edwards, Farbahi, Guerrier, Henley, Ms Herbert, C Hill, Mrs Hill, Horsley, House, Miss James, R Lees, Mrs Lees, Mrs Lewin-Harris, McMahon, Meikle, Morrell, Paul, Prior-Sankey, Mrs Smith, P Smith, Mrs Stock-Williams, Stone, Stuart-Thorn, Thorne, Watson, Mrs Waymouth, Ms Webber, D Wedderkopp, A Wedderkopp, Mrs Whitmarsh, Williams, Mrs Wilson, Miss Wood and Woolley.

### **1. Minutes**

The minutes of the Meetings of the Council held on 17 July 2007 and 18 July 2007, copies having been sent to each Member, were signed by the Mayor.

### **2. Apologies**

Councillors Bone, Bowrah, Govier, Hall, Leighton and Mullins.

### **3. Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Henley, Paul and Prior-Sankey all declared personal interests as Members of Somerset County Council. Councillor Mrs Allgrove declared a personal interest as Chairman of the Somerset Association of Local Councils. Councillors Miss James also declared a personal interest.

### **4. Written Questions to Members of the Executive**

(a) Councillor Thorne asked the following question:-

“Given the importance placed by the Council on dealing with anti-social behaviour in Taunton Deane, how satisfied is the Portfolio Holder for Community Leadership with the current delivery of this work, given that the Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator (a post hosted by the Council) has been absent through illness for the past eight weeks and that the situation is exacerbated by only having a part-time Community Safety Officer at present and what, if any, steps is the Portfolio Holder going to take to ensure an improvement in the situation?”

Councillor A Wedderkopp replied that cover for the Community Safety Officer is full-time - that is, 37 hours per week. The confusion about her being part-time may be because she is only based in the office here two days a week, but is doing Taunton Deane Borough Council work for the remaining three days per week also and is always contactable by phone or email. This is a temporary arrangement whilst the substantive post-holder is on secondment to the Home Office which is due to finish in March 2008 (but may end sooner in December). Dealing with anti-social behaviour case work is not a part of this post.

Taunton Deane Borough Council does not have an Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator. We host the post that is provided using funding from the Home Office. As such, when the post holder became ill there was no one else with the expertise to cover that work although Sedgemoor District Council's Anti-Social Behaviour staff did help out, through goodwill, by helping to "tie up loose ends" on cases when the post-holder first became ill. Wherever possible, guidance was given to help any callers with anti-social behaviour issues as follows:-

- Someone reporting anti-social behaviour who is a Council or Housing Association tenant were referred to their Housing Officer;
- Noise complaints were directed to Environmental Services;
- Someone calling for advice about Local Action Teams were referred to the Police Local Action Team Co-ordinator; and
- For other cases of anti-social behaviour, details were taken and the caller was advised that due to staff illness their complaint may not be dealt with for some time.

In the circumstances, I am satisfied that all that could be done over this difficult period has been done. The Home Office funding for the Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator post ceases on 31 March 2008. If the Council wishes to continue this post then funding of approximately £25,000 per annum would need to be found. In the unlikely event of this being possible alternatives are being investigated.

There is currently work being undertaken looking at the whole range of "safer communities" work undertaken throughout the whole County. Part of this review will look at how the limited resources for specialist posts such as the Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator can be used more effectively. Also, the contracts between the Police and Council's for Police Community Support Officers give us an opportunity to identify their role in dealing with anti-social behaviour casework.

(b) Councillor Edwards asked the following questions:-

"The Somerset Waste Board has been formed with the total support of all the political groups at Taunton Deane Borough Council.

It is therefore extremely disappointing and regretful that the administration has decided to ignore requests from the Conservative

Leadership and the Health and Leisure Review Panel to share the member representation on the Somerset Waste Board. This is especially disappointing considering the depth of knowledge that is available from within the Conservative Group from involvement in the process of developing the Somerset Waste Board over the last four years and also having introduced the key phases of the Sort It system in Taunton Deane.

Unfortunately, the actual decision to appoint two Liberal Democrat Executive Members to the Somerset Waste Board was taken at a meeting of the Executive on 19 July 2007 held at Lyngford House at 2.00 pm in the afternoon and the decision was not published until the period had passed for any call in. We therefore found out that this had been agreed when it was too late to challenge or discuss.

It was then agreed by you, as Leader of the Council, that this decision would be brought back to the Executive so it could be properly debated and our views put forward. This satisfied our group in light of the clerical error made in not informing the Council of the decision.

Unfortunately you then reneged on this agreement and decided to not bring this forward on the Executive's agenda as you had promised.

Therefore, I am forced to bring this to Full Council to ask the following questions:-

- (1) Why the Executive decided to ignore the views of Health and Leisure and the Conservative Group and decided on two Liberal Democrat Members on the Somerset Waste Board?
- (2) Why you felt it was necessary to renege on an agreement to put this item forward to the Executive? And
- (3) How you can justify constantly stating in your reports to Council and verbally that you want to work together as a Council and act with us as the largest opposition group in a "spirit of co-operation" when you ignore such an ideal opportunity to share what is ultimately a non-political role and one that I believe is better shared for the good of our community?

I would add that the Conservative Group has discussed this issue and unless we can find a solution to this issue we will bring a motion to the Full Council in December."

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Henley, replied as follows:-

- (1) Firstly, the meeting of the Executive on 19 July 2007 at Lyngford House was a public meeting and I apologise that a mistake was made in not notifying the decision taken at the meeting. If you or any member of your group had attended this meeting of the Executive



then you would have known of the decision and then challenge it in the appropriate way.

- (2) I did not renege on any agreement. The agreement was to take the decision back to Executive agenda setting. The Executive then decided not to change the appointment and therefore not to bring the decision before the Executive. All five District Council's and the County Council which make up the Somerset Waste Board are also sending two members of their ruling groups.
- (3) I do not accept your point about not working together. Since becoming Leader, I have worked very hard to be inclusive and to work together. Firstly you were offered a joint administration which for some reason you turned down. Secondly, I have made available to a number of your group an opportunity to become an observer at the Brewhouse Board Meetings when I could have just sent a Liberal Democrat Councillor. I have included your Leader in the press and publicity involving the launch of SouthWest One, acknowledging the role played by your Leader in this process and fully involving your Group and Members in the campaign against the Unitary Council, even attending a joint delegation with the Conservative Councillor Leader to see the Minister in London. As you will be aware, I will be making an offer to all Group Leaders on the budget to work together to pool our ideas on this subject so it is very unfair to claim that I have not been inclusive. However, I am sure that from time to time you will understand that sometimes it is appropriate for a member of the ruling group to fill a particular position.

## 5. **Recommendation to Council from the Executive**

### Plastic and Card Kerbside Collections – Supplementary Estimate

At the meeting of the Executive held on 19 July 2007, the decision was taken to award the County Wide Recycling and Waste Collection contract. As part of that decision, the Executive recommended that a Supplementary Estimate be made to fund the costs of trials of kerbside plastic and card collections.

RESOLVED that a Supplementary Estimate from the General Fund Reserves of £80,000 be agreed to fund the one off costs of the trials of the new methods of plastic and kerbside collections.

## 6. **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 Henley)**

Councillor Henley's report covered the following topics:-

- The proposed Unitary Council for Somerset result.
- Partnership working.
- The launch of SouthWest One.
- The current budget gap and the effect the cost of concessionary travel scheme had on this.
- The Wellington Food Town event.
- The success of Wellington and Taunton in Bloom.
- The success of the Taunton Flower Show.
- The commencement of the new system of Overview and Scrutiny.
- Meetings with local partners and stakeholders.

**(ii) Communications (Councillor Brooks)**

Councillors Brooks' report covered the following areas:-

- Public Relations.
- The Council's Website.
- Consultation and Information.
- Other communications.

**(iii) Planning Policy and Transportation (Councillor Coles)**

Councillors Coles submitted his report which drew attention to the following:-

- Improving Services in Somerset – SouthWest One.
- Taunton Firepool Regeneration.
- Development Management Staffing (Planning).
- Procurement of new development management IT system.
- Monkton Heathfield Major Planning Application.
- Residents parking.

On the assent of the Mayor, it was agreed that the Council's appreciation of the contribution made by both Members and Officers towards the successful launch of SouthWest One (formerly the ISiS Project) be recorded.

**(iv) Economic Development, Asset Management and Tourism (Councillor Horsley)**

The report from Councillor Horsley covered:-

- Inward Investment Agency.
- Destination Management Organisation.
- Taunton Business Improvement District (BID).
- Wellington Food Festival.
- Waterlinks.
- Taunton and Wellington Tourist Information Centre.
- Taunton East Development Trust.

- Sub National Economic Development and Regeneration Green Paper.
- Project Taunton.

(v) **Leisure, Arts and Culture (Councillor R Lees)**

The report from Councillor R Lees dealt with activities taking place in the following areas:-

- Events in the Parks.
- South West in Bloom triumphs.
- Arts.
- Westival.
- Parks Development.
- Sports Services.
- Tone Leisure.
- Programme initiatives.
- Sport and Health development.

(vi) **Environmental Services (Councillor Mullins)**

The report from Councillor Mullins (presented in his absence by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Henley) drew attention to developments in the following areas:-

- Licensing.
- Food Safety.
- Environmental Protection Team.
- Street Cleansing.
- Britain in Bloom – Deane Winners.
- Waste Collection and Recycling.

(vii) **Housing Services (Councillor Prior-Sankey)**

Councillor Prior-Sankey submitted her report which drew attention to the following:-

- The Housing Green Paper.
- Rough sleepers.
- New Affordable Housing.
- Transfer Removal Grants.
- Restructure.
- Deane Helpline.
- National News.

(viii) **Resources (Councillor Mrs Smith)**

The report from Councillor Mrs Smith provided information on the following areas within her Portfolio:-

- Democratic Services.
- Personnel.
- Corporate Support Services.
- ICT Service.
- Revenues and Benefits Service Unit.
- Financial Services.
- Scrutiny and Performance Management.

(ix) **Community Leadership (Councillor A Wedderkopp)**

Councillor A Wedderkopp's report focussed on the following areas within his Portfolio:-

- Taunton Deane Local Strategic Partnership.
- Community Partnerships.
- Crime and Disorder Partnership.
- Community and Services.

(The meeting ended at 8.38 pm.)

## **COUNCIL MEETING – 11 DECEMBER 2007**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL FROM JOHN DEWDNEY, CHAIRMAN, INDEPENDENT MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES PANEL AND COUNCILLOR KEN HAYWARD, CHAIRMAN STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL**

#### **Members' Allowances**

Recommendations from Members' Allowances Panel.

For the past few years the annual review had been carried out by those independent individuals appointed to the Council's Standards Committee. Although this arrangement had worked well for a number of years, the Panel felt that the functions of the independent remuneration panel and the Standards Committee should be kept separate and that in future years the membership should be clearly seen to be so. This requirement for an independent review of members' allowances was incorporated into the Council's Constitution.

Following public advertisement, five members were appointed and these were reported to the Strategy and Performance Panel.

The independent Members' Allowances Panel completed its annual review and submitted its report and recommendations to the Strategy and Performance Panel. The Panel considered our recommendations at its meeting on 13 November 2007.

The full details of the Panel's terms of reference, the methodology used and the research undertaken are contained in our report.

From the research we have undertaken and from the information provided to us we feel we have gained an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the modern day councillor. We have requested information and looked in detail at the overview and scrutiny requirements of the Council, particularly the pilot scheme which is currently operating.

The comparative data received this year has allowed us to identify the trends that are continuing to develop in respect of the payment of allowances.

As well as the comparative data from other local authorities on the level of allowances, we obtained information, again from members of the Council's "family group" and other local authorities, regarding payment of the Carer's Allowance, and levels of travel and subsistence allowances.

We have also given councillors the opportunity to come and speak to the Panel with any suggestions they might have or representations they might want to make.

We reached the following conclusions:-

## **Carers Allowance**

There is little evidence that this is an issue with many of the current members of the Council. However, we are firmly of the view that every opportunity should be given to any individual who might want to stand as a candidate. We are therefore recommending that the carer's allowance continue to reflect the national minimum wage.

## **Affordability**

We did not see it as part of our remit to consider the affordability of our recommendations. We have deliberately not received any advice on the financial implications of our recommendations, as it was felt that this was a consideration to be made solely by the Council itself.

## **Basic Allowances**

We would like to emphasise that in our opinion the basic allowance is not a full and proper recompense for the duties performed by a councillor. It does not reflect a similar level of responsibility in the private sector. The recommendations reflect the fact that a proportion of any councillor's work continues to be voluntary.

We believe that the basic allowance should continue to reflect the commitment in time necessary to be an effective local councillor. We feel that the level of increase made last year resulted in a basic allowance that gave parity with other, similar sized local authorities.

We are very mindful of the requirement for councillors to work in their communities and spend less time in formal meeting situations. The basic allowance we are recommending we feel acknowledges the demands placed on front line councillors. Therefore we consider that an increase of 4.1% is justified for 2008/09. This reflects the current Retail Price Index rate of inflation.

## **Special Responsibility Allowances**

This was an area we spent some time on, particularly bearing in mind the pilot overview and scrutiny arrangements that the Council were just about to embark on. We were also mindful of the need to reflect in our recommendations the situation that would prevail if the pilot did not become permanent and there was a return to the Review Panel system.

We have been supplied with copious information relating to the overview and scrutiny pilot and are grateful to the Council's Scrutiny Officer for attending one of our meetings and providing details of the finer points of these new arrangements.

In our opinion the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board will have the same level of responsibility as that of the Review Board Chair. The Chair of the Strategy and

Performance Panel will have responsibilities broadly similar to those of the Review Panel Chairs.

We recognise the important role that the Task and Finish Groups will play in enabling councillors to make a difference within their communities. We therefore feel that there is a special responsibility on the Chairs of these Groups to ensure that the Task and Finish Reviews are meaningful. In the circumstances we will recommend that a small special responsibility allowance be paid to Chairs of the Task and Finish Groups for the duration of their reviews. We hope that this will go some way to reflect the added value that the Groups should provide.

We now have a good understanding of the responsibilities of those offices that attract special responsibility allowances. The "Cabinet" system has meant greater responsibility and time commitment for those given Executive roles. It is also evident from the figures of the other authorities that there is now a general recognition of the extra responsibilities that such Councillors have. We feel that the level of special responsibility allowances should also be increased by 4.1%. We feel the amount recommended, accurately compensates Councillors for these important and time consuming duties, which now form such an integral part of administering a modern local authority.

We also looked again at the level of allowance for the Chairs of Regulatory Committees. We have looked, in particular, at the level of allowance currently payable to the Chair of Licensing Committee. When this allowance was originally set it was anticipated that the Licensing Committee would be meeting on a regular basis. However, experience has shown that the anticipated workload has not materialised. For that reason, we have recommended that this allowance be reduced. On the other hand, the workload and responsibilities of the Corporate Governance Committee have increased and looks likely to increase even further. For that reason we have recommended that an allowance now be paid to the Chair of this Committee.

Last year the Panel took the view that the high profile, workload and special responsibilities that the Chair of Planning Committee has should be reflected in an allowance that was equal to that of an Executive Councillor. The Council chose not to agree with our recommendation. We have therefore taken another look at this and remain of the view that this particular allowance should be at the same level as an Executive Councillor.

It is the opinion of the panel that Special Responsibility Allowances are a payment for a task, and it is therefore inappropriate for us to set a cap on individual member's emoluments, while reminding the Panel a Member may, "by notice in writing, elect to forgo any part of his/her entitlement to an allowance and associated benefits".

### **Mayor and Deputy Mayor Allowance**

Although it does not form part of the Members' Allowances Scheme the Council are entitled, by virtue of Sections 3 and 5 of the Local Government Act 1972 to pay an allowance which enables the Mayor to meet the expenses of his/her office. We are satisfied that the overall level of allowance paid to the Borough's First Citizen and the

deputy accurately reflects the duties of those roles and we will recommend an increase of 4.1% in line with the current rate of inflation.

### **Approved Duties**

We have taken a detailed look at the current list of approved duties and we are happy that this list is satisfactory.

We were made aware of the representations previously made regarding the non payment of expenses for attending political group meetings. This is something that also featured in the responses to the questionnaire we circulated to all councillors. We are of the view that there is no evidence which would make the Panel recommend a change in the Members' Allowances Regulations. These clearly state that the basic allowance is intended to cover time spent at political meetings and that approved duty payments should not be made in respect of single party meetings. This is a Government Regulation which means that we are unable to recommend any change even we were convinced of the need to do so.

Our suggested list of Approved Duties is set out in the Appendix.

### **Parish Council Allowances**

Existing powers to pay Parish Councillors allowances were repealed at the end of 2003 and replaced with a new system which involves this Panel.

Under this system, although a Parish Council would determine the level of allowances payable itself, it has to have regard to the advice received from the Panel.

Allowances payable include a basic 'participation allowance' which could be paid to the Chairman only or to all members and 'travelling and subsistence allowance' which can be claimed for duties within the parish as well as those outside.

As far as the participation allowance was concerned, the general view from Parish Councils nationally was that they wished to retain the existing practice whereby Parish Councillors were 'unpaid'. The advice we have received from the Parish Liaison Officer is that Parish Councils within the Deane are currently not seeking any kind of allowance. We feel therefore, that there is no need to consider the matter until a formal request for advice as to the level of allowance that should be paid is received.

As well as seeking the Panel's views on the level of travelling and subsistence that should be payable to Parish Councillors, we were also previously asked to comment in relation to proposals for Parish Councils to meet the cost of minor expenses incurred by its members, such as the replacement of computer consumables used in respect of parish business

We agreed with the deliberations of the Panel last year and came to the conclusion that:



- (a) no advice on a level of participation allowance for Parish Councils be offered by the Panel until a formal request was received from a Parish Council;
- (b) allowances for travelling and subsistence should be identical to those payable to Borough Councillors and that the same level of such allowances should apply for all Parishes throughout Taunton Deane; and
- (c) it would be in order for Parish Councillors to seek the reimbursement of the actual cost of items used for Parish Council business, such as computer consumables, or a nominal sum, provided such payments were approved by the Parish Council.

### **Travel and Subsistence Allowances**

The Regulations allow local authorities to determine their own travel and subsistence allowances after having regard to the recommendation of their independent remuneration panels.

As far as mileage rates are concerned, the Panel consider that car expenses should be limited to the tax free amount allowed by the Inland Revenue.

It was therefore felt that the basic mileage allowance should remain at the limit which the Inland Revenue would not treat as a taxable benefit – 40p per mile, unless the Inland Revenue makes any increases. In this case, we recommend that the increase should be incorporated into this scheme. The rate would apply whatever the size of car engine, because the size of car was a matter for the individual. These have recently been reviewed nationally and the level of subsistence allowances payable to councillors should be revised accordingly.

With regard to subsistence allowances, the Panel feel that the subsistence rates should be the same as those paid to the Council's officers. These have recently been reviewed nationally and the level of subsistence allowances payable to councillors should be revised accordingly.

### **Pensions for Councillors**

The Government have given local authorities the power to admit councillors to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

The Regulations require that Council's independent remuneration panel will make binding recommendations on which councillors may be eligible for access to the LGPS.

The independent remuneration panel can make recommendations as to which members (under 70 years of age) should be entitled to membership of the Scheme and whether the basic allowance or the special responsibility allowance or both should be made pensionable.

Our view remains unchanged from that of the previous Panel. We acknowledge that the current level of basic allowance might not make membership of the Scheme worthwhile for many councillors. However, we agree with the principle that all councillors should be treated equally on this issue. Every opportunity should be

taken to encourage individuals to stand as candidates and an enhancement of the overall remuneration package for councillors will help this aim. We continue to feel, therefore, that the Scheme should be made available to all councillors who want to take advantage of its benefits. We do not intend to make any change to our previous recommendation.

## **Renunciation**

The Panel noted that a Member may, by notice in writing, elect to forgo any part of his/her entitlement to an allowance and associated benefits.

## **Time Limit**

As previously recommended, councillors should submit their allowance claims regularly and we suggest a time limit of 6 months for backdated claims.

## **Co-optees**

The Regulations also make allowance for the payment by the Council of allowances for persons co-opted onto the Council. The only category of person this would affect currently would be the Council's Standards Committee. A number of Councils have already set allowances for Standards Committees. The position at Taunton Deane has always been that members of the Standards Committee are voluntary – although they are, of course, entitled to claim appropriate expenses. We see no reason to depart from this view.

## **Recommendations**

The Panel therefore submits the following recommendations for consideration by the Council:

1. The existing Members' Allowance Scheme be discontinued and replaced with the following scheme with effect from 1 April 2008 (The current scheme for 2007/08 is in brackets).
2. The existing Members' Allowance Scheme be discontinued and replaced with the following scheme with effect from 1 April 2008 (The current scheme for 2007/2008 is in brackets).

Basic Allowance (payable to all members (£4,012)	£4,176
Leader (£11,283)	£11,746
Executive Councillors (8) (£4,388)	£4,568
Chair, Planning Committee (£3,762)	£4,568
Chair, Licensing Committee (£2,279)	£1,305
Chair, Corporate Governance Committee	£1,305
Chair, Review Board (£3,762)	£3,916
Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Board	£3,916
Chair, Strategy and Performance Panel	£1,305
Chairs of Task and Finish Groups	£500

Chairs, Review Panels (in the event of this system being returned to after the overview and scrutiny pilot scheme) (£1,254)	£1,305
Mayor (£8,392)	£8,736
Deputy Mayor (£1,533)	£1,596

2. (i) Travelling and subsistence allowances shall be payable to councillors when incurred by them in the necessary carrying out of those official activities as a councillor as appear on the list of "Approved Duties" set out in the Appendix to this report.
- (ii) The mileage rate for cars, motorcycles and bicycles be set at the upper limit at which the Inland Revenue would not impose taxation. At present, the rate for cars is 40p per mile, motorcycles is 24p per mile and bicycles is 20p per mile.
- (iii) Subsistence rates as set out below:
- |              |        |
|--------------|--------|
| Breakfast    | £6.25  |
| Lunch        | £8.60  |
| Tea          | £3.39  |
| Evening Meal | £10.65 |
3. Payment for the care of Councillors' Dependents be increased to £5.52 per hour and to be in accordance with the following conditions:
- (a) Councillors shall be reimbursed, up to a specified maximum limit, for costs actually incurred in providing care for any of the following who are at the time part of the claimant's household living with him/her and who would normally be looked after by him/her, whilst the claimant is undertaking an "approved duty".
- i. children under the age of 14
  - ii. elderly person (aged 60 and over)
  - iii. people with disabilities
  - iv. people with learning difficulties
- (b) In addition to living as part of the claimant's household the dependent must be unable to be left unsupervised by the carer.
- (c) The carer must not be someone who ordinarily lives with the claimant as part of the household.
- (d) For the purposes of (a) above:
- (i) "approved duty" would be a duty under the Council's scheme
  - (ii) the maximum hourly rate repayable should be consistent with the statutory minimum wage

- (e) The claimant must produce a receipt for payments he/she has made to the carer and must sign a certificate which, amongst other things, will state that the costs were properly and necessarily incurred in the course of, or to permit, him/her undertaking his/her duties as a Councillor.
4. (a) no advice on a level of participation allowance for Parish Councillors be offered by the Panel until a formal request be received from a Parish Council;
- (b) allowances for travelling and subsistence be identical to those payable to Borough Councillors and the same level of such allowances should apply for all Parishes throughout Taunton Deane;
- (c) Parish Councillors be permitted to seek reimbursement of the actual cost of items used for Parish Council business, such as computer consumables, or a nominal sum, provided such payments were approved by the Parish Council.
5. (a) that all members of the Council be entitled to membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme;
- (b) both the basic and special responsibility allowance be treated as amounts in respect of which such pensions are payable.

John Dewdney  
Chair  
on behalf of the Members' Allowances Review Panel

(a) Recommendations of the Strategy and Performance Panel

The Strategy and Performance Panel at its meeting on 13 November 2007 considered the report on the annual review of Members' Allowances undertaken by the independent Members' Allowances Panel.

The Strategy and Performance Panel made the following comments:-

- Members were concerned that the mileage rate did not reflect the costs involved of using transport and although they appreciated that it was set at the upper level of the Inland Revenue's 'non-taxable limit', felt that the wording of the recommendation should enable any increases that the Inland Revenue made to be incorporated into the scheme;
- Some Members felt that the Members' Allowances Review Panel should consider imposing a capping for Councillors who received two or more Special Responsibility Allowances at the level of an Executive Councillor.

The report and recommendations of the Independent Members' Allowances Review Panel were noted.

Councillor Kenneth Hayward  
Chair, Strategy and Performance Panel

## APPENDIX

### Recommended List of Approved Duties

Approved duties for the payment of travelling and subsistence allowances:

- (a) meetings of the Council, the Executive, its Boards, Panels, Committees, Working Parties and sub groups;
- (b) meetings of County Council's committees where the Councillor has been appointed by Taunton Deane as a member or representative;
- (c) any national conference authorised by the Council and involving an overnight stay;
- (d) meetings of other bodies to which the Council make appointments (representatives of the Council on outside bodies);
- (e) the following types of meetings:-
  - briefing meetings convened in The Deane House for members by an officer;
  - Council organised induction/training seminars;
  - agenda setting meetings;
  - meetings on Council business with officers, MPs, VIPs and others holding official positions;
  - Informal Council;
  - civic functions (twinning ceremonies, Britain in Bloom awards, Design Awards, etc);
  - meetings of Parish Councils or Community Associations where the Councillor attends as a representative of the Council (not as a member of the Parish Council or Community Association);
  - meetings within a ward, generated by business with a constituent (any such claims be supported by completion of a form indicating the area of the journey and the nature of the business);
  - site visits by members of the Planning Committee
- (f) such other duties approved by the Council.



## **TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**FULL COUNCIL 11<sup>h</sup> DECEMBER 2007**

**REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE MANAGER  
(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Fran Smith)**

**RETROSPECTIVE APPROVAL OF ANNUAL REPORT 2007/08**

### **Executive Summary**

The Council is required to produce an Annual Report (or 'Performance Plan'). Its purpose is to "articulate proposals for improvement for the coming year, including how weaknesses will be addressed, opportunities exploited and better outcomes delivered." We are also required to include outturn data, targets for PIs and progress against past objectives.

We drafted the Annual Report in June 2007, and sought input and feedback from individual Executive members by email, which was fed into the final document. We also received feedback from Overview and Scrutiny members. We published and distributed copies of the Annual Report in July 2007. It can be accessed through the following link:

<http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/tdbcsites/polperf/annualreport.asp>

The Audit Commission requires formal approval of the Annual Report from Full Council, and we are now seeking this retrospective approval.

### **1. Purpose**

1.1 To retrospectively approve the Annual Report 2007/08.

### **2. Background**

2.1 This year the publication of the Annual Report was behind schedule and the Scrutiny and Performance Manager therefore requested Executive Member and Review Board input and feedback via email (email sent 19/7/07).

2.2 The Audit Commission requires the Annual Report to be formally approved by Full Council, as a requirement of the Local Government Act 1999: Best Value and Performance Improvement. Our Audit Manager has told us that he is happy for this to be done retrospectively this year.

### **3 Recommendation**

3.1 Full Council is recommended to formally approve the Annual Report.

**Contact Officer:**



Simon Lewis  
Scrutiny and Performance Manager  
01823 356397 [s.lewis@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:s.lewis@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

# Annual Report

## 2007/08



If you have any comments or require further information concerning this document please contact:

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Belvedere Road  
Taunton  
TA1 1HE

Telephone: 01823 356397

Email: [scrutinyandperformance@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:scrutinyandperformance@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

A copy of this Annual Report is available on our website at:  
[www.tauntondeane.gov.uk](http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk)

Copies are also available for viewing at local libraries,  
The Deane House, The Link Centre, Priorswood Resource Centre,  
Wellington Community Office, Wiveliscombe Community Office and  
Tone Leisure Centres.

#### **English**

If you need any information in this document translated into another language or in braille, large print, audio tape, or CD please telephone us on 01823 356397 or e-mail us at [scrutinyandperformance@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:scrutinyandperformance@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

#### **Bengali**

অপনি যদি এই দলিলপত্র অন্য কোন ভাষায় অনুবাদ করে চান, বা ব্রেল, বড়ো ছাপার অক্ষর, অডিও-ট্যেপ বা সিডিতে চান, তাহলে আমাদের টেলিফোন করুন এই নম্বরে 01823 356397 বা অথবা ই-মেল করুন [scrutinyandperformance@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:scrutinyandperformance@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

#### **Chinese**

如果你要這文件翻譯成其他語言或盲人凸字,大號字,聲帶,或光碟,請致電我們,電話 01823 356397 或電郵 [scrutinyandperformance@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:scrutinyandperformance@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

#### **Hindi**

अगर आप इस दस्तावेज़ का अनुवाद दूसरी भाषाओं या ब्रेल, बड़े अक्षरों वाली छपाई, ऑडियो टेप, या सीडी में चाहते हैं, तो कृपया हमें इस नंबर पर फ़ोन कीजिये 01823 356397 या यहाँ ईमेल कीजिये [scrutinyandperformance@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:scrutinyandperformance@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

#### **Portuguese**

Se desejar a tradução deste documento para um outro idioma ou em Braille, letras grandes, cassete de áudio ou CD, contacte-nos pelo telefone 01823 356397 ou pelo endereço de correio electrónico [scrutinyandperformance@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:scrutinyandperformance@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

#### **Polish**

W celu uzyskania niniejszego dokumentu w innym języku, w języku Braille'a, wydrukowanego dużym drukiem, nagranych na taśmę dźwiękową lub CD prosimy o kontakt pod numerem telefonu 01823 356397 lub na adres [scrutinyandperformance@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:scrutinyandperformance@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

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# Foreword

We are proud of this Annual Report and of the Council's achievements. What matters most is that this council delivers high quality, value-for-money services and once again the Audit Commission have confirmed that this is exactly what we do.

On top of excellent day-to-day service delivery we have broader ambitions for our communities and our staff.

We have concentrated on three big projects: Project Taunton, ISiS, and the Somerset Waste Partnership. All will bring enormous benefits.

We have appointed a lead developer for Firepool, a key part of Project Taunton, and we expect work to start on site this financial year to create jobs, new homes and a mix of restaurants, shops and cafes.

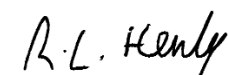
The Improving Services in Somerset Programme (ISiS) is a groundbreaking partnership between ourselves, the County Council, Police and IBM. Together we will form a new company, which will drive up service quality, improve access to services and reduce costs.

The Somerset Waste Partnership have progressed the procurement of a single waste contract, which should enable us to extend the range of recycling services to residents cost effectively.

We are proud of our achievements but cannot be complacent. Affordable housing, sustainability and energy efficiency remain big issues that we are committed to tackling in the future.



Penny James



Cllr Ross Henley

# Our Vision

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

# Business Principles, Core Values and Partnership Working

## Our Business Principles

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

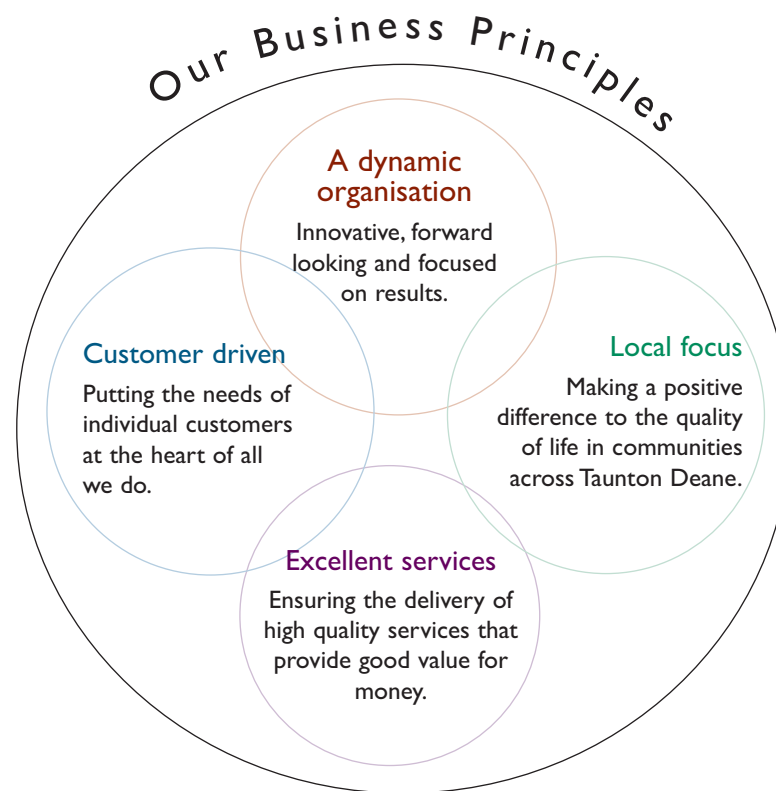
- Excellent services:** Ensuring the delivery of accessible, high quality services that provide good value for money.
- Customer driven:** Putting the needs of individual customers at the heart of all we do.
- Local focus:** Making a positive difference to the quality of life in communities across Taunton Deane.
- A dynamic organisation:** Innovative, forward-looking and focused on results.

## Our 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.



## Partnership Working

We are a relatively small council and know, that to achieve our challenging plans for the future, we must work with other organisations in strong and effective partnerships. Our Improving Services in Somerset (ISIS) plans are an example of how we propose to make the Council more effective and efficient by working in partnership. We are fortunate to be a member of several, very successful, partnerships that help us achieve our corporate aims. It is only through working with local residents and these partner-agencies that we will continue to ensure future success.

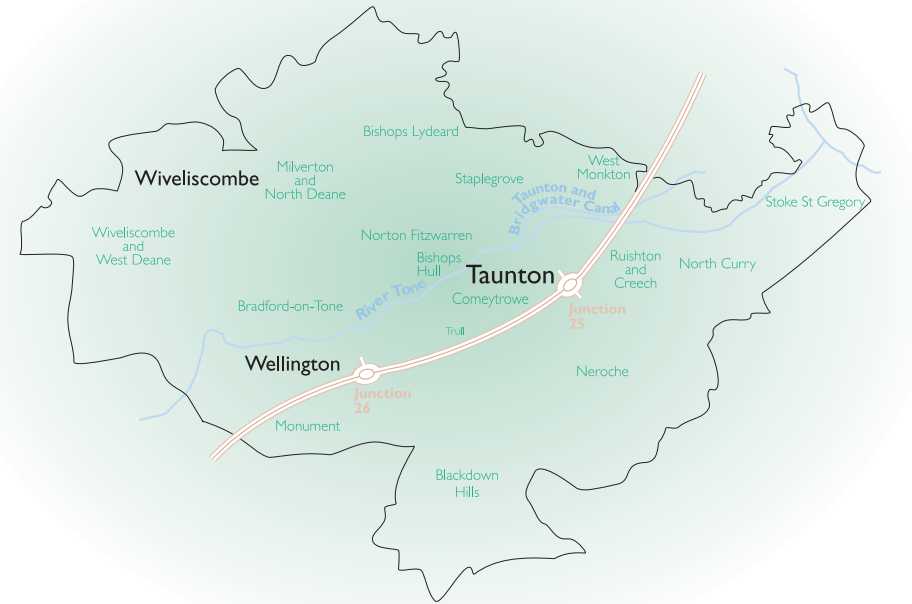
# Taunton Deane

## An Overview of the Borough with Key Facts and Figures

<b>Size:</b>	462 square kilometres
<b>Population:</b>	106,800 (Source 2005 Office of National Statistics)
<b>Households:</b>	46,859
<b>Main Settlements:</b>	Taunton, Wellington, Bishops Lydeard, Wiveliscombe
<b>Main Employment:</b>	Wholesale/Retail; Health & Social Work; Real Estate/Renting; Public Services; Education; Manufacturing
<b>Number of Businesses:</b>	5,000
<b>Unemployment:</b>	1.2% (Source NOMIS)
<b>Ethnic Minorities:</b>	1.6%
<b>Deprivation Ranking:</b>	188th out of 354 districts. Four wards ranked in the worst 25% nationally. (2004)

**Taunton Deane** is situated in an outstanding landscape of natural beauty, extending from the Somerset Levels along the River Tone, with the Quantock hills to the north and the Blackdowns to the south. It is well served by road and rail links to Bristol, Exeter and London, having the M5, A38, A303 and rail links within easy reach.

Taunton Deane is predominantly a rural borough, with the main centres of population being Taunton and Wellington and with a number of smaller towns and villages. The borough is generally prosperous, with relatively low levels of crime and unemployment. However, the area does suffer from lower rates of pay and relatively high house prices. Deprivation is not prevalent. However, there are significant pockets of greater need in parts of Taunton.



### Some of the longer term challenges that face Taunton Deane include:

- A shortage of affordable housing. We have a very challenging target of enabling 564 affordable dwellings per annum.
- An ageing population, with an anticipated decrease in 35-39 year olds and a significant increase in the over 65s age-group over the next few years.
- Some deprived wards, including four that are classed as being in the worst 25% deprived in the country.
- Significant planned growth in the district that reflects the strategic importance of Taunton and the Borough. Project Taunton will involve major regeneration of the town between now and 2020. Furthermore, the Regional Spatial Strategy has identified 17,300 new homes to be built in the district over the next twenty years.
- Anticipated increases in traffic congestion especially in the main towns.

On pages 24 to 26 we show our Key Plans for 2007/08, including a summary of our major projects. These plans will help us meet the objectives of our Corporate Strategy 2007-2010 and many will form part of longer-term plans to address the challenges above.

**Taunton** is the county town of Somerset, with a colourful history dating back over 1,100 years. Main attractions and landmarks include the Castle, the Taunton Museum, Vivary Park, the Somerset County Cricket Club, the Brewhouse Theatre, Hestercombe House and Gardens and a vibrant shopping centre and late night economy. The town is famed for the river Tone that flows through its centre, its award winning parks and the numerous church spires that can be seen from all corners of the town. Out of town shopping and entertainment is found at Hankridge Farm, with ten pin bowling, cinema and restaurants among the attractions.

**Wellington** is situated seven miles from Taunton and is immediately identifiable by its towering monument visible from miles around, commemorating the Duke of Wellington. The town is proud of its award winning park, which is nationally recognised as one of the Country's top ten urban parks. Much of the local employment is based around agriculture and factory units. Last year the town successfully launched the Wellington Food Town initiative in a bid to become a Centre of Excellence for food and local produce.

**Bishops Lydeard** is a rural centre five miles from Taunton with a good range of shops and facilities, including a village hall and a church centre that are well used by the local community. It is the home of the West Somerset Railway, a major tourist attraction which runs steam trains through the beautiful countryside to Minehead. Bishops Lydeard also has a mill with a water wheel that has been painstakingly restored as a further tourist attraction.

**Wiveliscombe** is a thriving community with societies and clubs to cater for all tastes, from sports to cinema and everything in between. Wiveliscombe is known for its artistic and creative side and hosts the annual Ten Parishes Art Festival. Economically, there is an abattoir, shops and two very popular breweries producing local ales, Cotleigh and Exmoor Ales.

Further information on Taunton Deane can be found by calling the Council's Tourism Section on 01823 356488 or visiting the Council's website at [www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/heartofsomerset](http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/heartofsomerset).



# Taunton Deane - A Year in View

The stories, events and achievements from 2006/07

## April 2006

- Fixed penalty notices introduced for litterbugs, with fines of up to £75.
- CCTV operations increased for Taunton and Wellington. Now 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and monitored by specialist CCTV Officers.
- Audit Commission says Taunton Deane Borough Council delivers “high quality services” and “delivers positive value for money” scoring us one of the highest marks for a district council in the South of England.
- ‘Your Council Your Views’ consultation launched, asking people what they think the Council’s priorities are and how council tax should be spent.

## May 2006

- ‘No Drinking Order’ introduced in Taunton.
- Nine Community Arts Projects awarded grants totalling £5,630. We also secured a further £106,000 from other sources for these projects.
- Cllr Chris Hindley welcomed as new Mayor for Taunton Deane.
- Taunton Deane Borough Council Supports “Noise Action Week”, promoting practical solutions to everyday noise problems.
- ‘Home Aid’ service launched focusing on home improvement for elderly and vulnerable tenants.

## June 2006

- Penny James, Chief Executive of Taunton Deane Borough Council, along with a Strategic Director, host three forums, giving the public an opportunity to air their views of the Council.
- Our Website is rated fifth out of 464 sites monitored by the Local Government Forum.
- Deane Helpline, our 24 hour emergency response service, is the first in the South or South-West to be given all three Telecare Services Association accreditations in a single audit.
- In the third round of Business Development Grants, Taunton Deane Borough Council award £2,000 each to four local companies.
- A Young Enterprise team from Richard Huish presented with £500 from TDBC’S Economic Development Unit, in recognition of their achievement in reaching the regional finals.
- Affordable Housing Open Day a great success, attracting nearly 500 visitors.

## July 2006

- Wellington Retail Survey shows that Wellington is improving with less retail vacancies.
- Wellington Park retains both the prestigious Green Flag and Green Heritage Site Accreditation, and Victoria and Vivary Parks, Taunton, were also awarded Green Flags.
- Vivary Park's new warden starts.
- Construction of Wellington Business Park enters its final stages. A sum of £469,357 has been invested in the park by Taunton Deane Borough Council.

## August 2006

- Wellington shoppers to be given 50p towards their parking charge as part of the Free Parking Scheme.
- First edition of Wellington Food Newsletter distributed in town.
- Our Dog Warden Service and Trust Ilfracombe Rehoming Centre team up to offer a microchipping day for dog owners in Wiveliscombe. Free advice and poop scoops given out.
- Family Fun Day a great success in French Weir Park.

## September 2006

- We contribute £658,739 towards an affordable housing development in Wiveliscombe.
- Final phase of Sort It! recycling scheme begins in Taunton Deane.
- 'View on Vivary' survey collects over 200 responses from people expressing their opinion on what should be done in the park ranging from number of tennis courts to a sensory garden.
- We approve over £5,000 worth of Arts grants to support local organisations including 'Take Art' and '10 Radio'.
- Taunton Deane Borough Council & British Gas cavity wall and insulation scheme a huge success, saving home owners £'000s and reducing carbon emissions.

## October 2006

- Opening of Taunton Green Site, Cheddon Road, in conjunction with Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership.
- Thanks to the weekly collection of food waste, 1,988 tonnes of leftover food has been recycled into high quality compost since SORT IT! was introduced.
- Customer Service charter agreed for all the Tourist Information Centres in Somerset. This will provide a consistent level of guidance and advice across Somerset.
- The 'Talking Tomorrow's Taunton Deane' Consultation reaches the final of the prestigious RTPI National Planning Awards for 2006, in recognition of the exemplar work linking planning and community consultation.

## November 2006

- Officers and Members visit Torbay Council to learn good practice from a council that has been praised for its scrutiny function.
- New Interpretation panels installed which provide information on the diversity of wildlife and promote appreciation of the South Taunton Brooks and Stream Local Nature Reserve.
- Seven new units unveiled at Blackdown Business Park following almost £500,000 of investment from Taunton Deane Borough Council.

## December 2006

- We give a grant of £1,000 to Mindline Somerset.
- Multi million pound affordable housing development launched at the BT building, Taunton, to include 75 high-quality homes.
- Plans approved to apply for a £900,000 bid for major improvements to Taunton's French Weir Park.
- Environmental Health and Communications Team successfully manage our response to a serious fire in central Taunton.
- First major food festival held in Wellington - begins campaign to achieve official 'Food Town' status.

## January 2007

- Opening of two state-of-the-art fabric framed tennis courts, funded by Taunton Deane Borough Council and the L.T.A.
- We provide a grant award of £1,200 to Wellington & District Healthy Living Trust.
- Taunton Car Parks secure a revamp, thanks to Avon and Somerset Probation Unpaid Work Unit. They carried out ground maintenance work as well as dealing with graffiti.
- 24 hour 7 days a week CCTV operations scheme is a success.
- TDDBC backs "Team Somerset" partnership approach as an alternative to Somerset County Unitary Authority bid.

## February 2007

- Launch of Staplegrove Local Action Team, with support from Avon and Somerset Constabulary.
- Anti-social behaviour (ASB) Project Officer appointed to support and advise residents and groups wanting to tackle anti-social behaviour.
- Mayor's Musical Extravaganza held in support of his charities.
- Six awards granted to support diverse and innovative entrepreneurs across Taunton Deane. Each received a £2,000 grant.

## March 2007

- IBM chosen as preferred bidder by Taunton Deane Borough Council and Somerset County Council for the ISiS Joint Venture Partnership. This should significantly improve how our services are delivered and enable savings for both Councils.
- Launch of new pilot scheme to help householders install solar power systems. Run in partnership with British Gas.
- £6,000 European grant secured for the continued development of Wellington as a Premier Food Town in the South West.
- 'Keep Somerset Local' campaign delegation in London to lobby MPs.

## Between April 2006 and March 2007

### We dealt with:

175,846	Calls to the Customer Enquiries line
133,217	Counter enquiries handled by the Tourist Information Centre
41,846	Enquiries through the Deane House main reception
30,803	Visits to our Wellington Community Office
12,963	Enquiries dealt with by our Wellington Community Office
14,425	Enquiries dealt with by Housing Reception
8,054	Enquiries dealt with by Planning Reception
6,478	Site inspections of building works in progress.
5,704	Homeless enquiries
1,728	Planning applications
1,350	Licence Applications
873	Pest Treatments
753	Nuisance service requests, for example noise complaints
747	Handyman jobs completed (at year end)
699	Potential building work defects identified and corrected
457	Press enquiries
207	Homeless applications
109	Defective drainage investigations

### We issued:

£70,000	Total value of Home Insulation Grants
17,400	Penalty notices for parking offences
10,000	Low energy light bulbs given to Vulnerable people and pensioners
347	Taxi licenses including Hackney Carriages, Private Hire, Private Hire, Private Operator and Drivers.
80	Repair grants
9	Fines for littering

### We collected:

21,348	Tonnes of household waste
8,669	Tonnes of dry recyclables eg. glass
3,488	Compostable tonnes of food waste
2,699	Compostable tonnes of garden waste
178	Abandoned vehicles
172	Stray dogs
157	Drinking water samples
105	Commercial food samples

### We inspected:

493	Premises for food safety
419	Planning complaints
142	Premises for health & safety
86	Housing standard inspections

### Other key statistics and facts:

£130 m	Value of tourism to Taunton Deane economy
235,666	New visitors to TDBC Website
200,156	Returning visitors to TDBC Website
572	Number of homes in TDBC where the thermal comfort has been improved

# Progress Against Last Year's Promises

Last year's Annual Report set out our planned improvements over the three years 2006-2009 under each of our six Corporate Aims. Here we report progress against all 17 planned improvements and it is pleasing to report that we have fully progressed as planned against 13 of these objectives, with some progress being made against the other four

The objectives in the Annual Report were established after listening to local residents' priorities, largely through the annual priorities consultation exercise and through feedback from satisfaction surveys and other consultation. We also considered government priorities and local partnership priorities in setting these objectives.

Last year's Annual Report is available to view on our website:  
<http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/tdbcsites/polperf/annualreport.asp>

## Corporate Aim - Economy

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

Taunton Deane has a medium sized economy by British standards, with only Exeter and South Somerset having larger economies locally. Taunton continues to be a significant 'growth area' for the region in both housing and employment terms.

The following tables show the employment structure, with a low level of manufacturing compared to the rest of the county, but high levels of public sector employment. We have experienced average growth in the number of VAT registered businesses. Wages remain lower than the average of the South West and the UK.

We have used this data to develop an Economic Development Strategy to focus our resources and efforts on developing the local economy. This work ties in to the Project Taunton regeneration.

Employment Structure	Taunton Deane	Somerset	South West	GB/UK
Public Admin, education & health	37.5 %	27.5 %	28.2 %	26.9 %
Distribution, hotels and restaurants	24.4 %	27.4 %	26.0 %	24.4 %
Finance, IT, other business activities	18.9 %	15.8 %	18.4 %	20.7 %
Manufacturing	6.8 %	14.4 %	11.4 %	11.1 %
Tourism related	6.3 %	8.3 %	8.8 %	8.1 %
Construction	3.7 %	5.5 %	4.5 %	4.6 %

#### Top 6 employment sectors

source: ONS annual business inquiry employee analysis 2005

	2003	2004	2005	Change 2000-05	VAT stock By population	Registration rate By population
Taunton Deane	465	3,365	3,670	4.7 %	582.5	48.4
Somerset	19,040	19,210	19,390	4.1 %	646.3	49.7
South West	170,120	171,935	174,135	5.8 %	573.8	49.2

#### Number of enterprises registering for VAT each year

source: NOMIS. Per 10,000 working population (mid-2005 estimates)

Taunton Deane	£419
Somerset	£421
South West	£424
Great Britain	£449

#### Average gross weekly pay (2006)

Source: ONS

### **Improvements on Course**

- Project Taunton is beginning to take shape and we have received developer bids for the redevelopment of the Firepool area of Taunton. We expect that a preferred bidder will be selected in the summer of 2007.
- Creative Business Boost has been set up which is a resource centre at the Brewhouse Theatre for artists and other creative enterprises.
- We have developed a Community Strategy for Taunton which also focuses on reducing deprivation in our most deprived wards.
- This year the Council has provided business support funding for fifteen local businesses and provided advice, guidance and support to hundreds more.
- We have continued to provide support for rural agricultural diversification projects such as Wellington Food Town initiative.

### **Improvements that have fallen behind the original timetable**

- Negotiations are still taking place for sites and the final shape of the proposed Cultural Quarter for Project Taunton.
- Negotiations are ongoing to provide a sixty unit business incubation centre at Somerset College for Arts and Technology (SCAT).

### **Other Specific Achievements for 2006/07**

- Nine Community Arts Projects were awarded grants totalling £5,630. We also secured a further £106,000 from other sources for these projects.
- The 'Talking Tomorrow's Taunton Deane' Consultation reached the final of the prestigious RTPI National Planning Awards for 2006, in recognition of the exemplar work linking planning and community consultation.
- We approved plans to apply for a £900,000 bid to the lottery for major improvements to Taunton's French Weir Park.

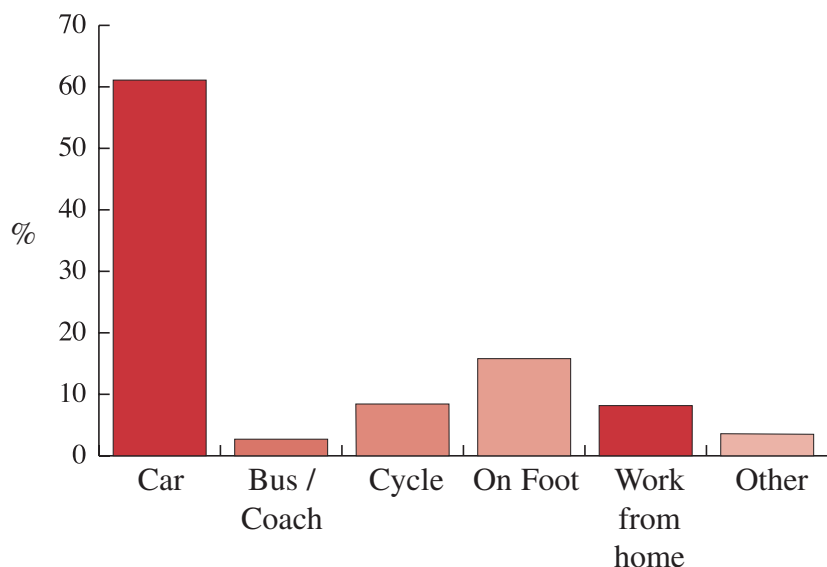
## Corporate Aim - Transport

### Minimising the growth in traffic congestion

We need to work in partnership with the County Council to ensure that strategic transport investment is made for the future prosperity of the Borough as part of Project Taunton. Current forecasts show a large increase in congestion in Taunton in the next few years, and we will work closely with the County Council to manage this rate of growth, keeping it to a minimum.

#### The percentage of resident population who travel to work in Taunton and method of travel

source: 2001 Census



The share of people using public transport is well below the national average (3.2% against 14.8%), while proportionately more people travel to work by car (63.6% versus 61.2% nationally)

#### Improvements On Course

- We implemented an employee travel plan to reduce single occupancy vehicles and encourage alternative means of transport. A new restrictive parking scheme for staff has been introduced along with the building of an additional bicycle shed.
- A car park strategy has been drafted outlining a series of action plans to develop the provision of multi-storey car parking for Taunton to underpin Project Taunton.
- We continue to lobby and work with others to ensure the strategic transport investment necessary to fulfil Taunton's role as a 'Strategically Significant Town'.
- We have promoted the use of the Silk Mills Park and Ride scheme which is currently exceeding expectations.
- Working closely with the County Council, we have lobbied for a clear timetable for the delivery of the Taunton East Park and Ride Facility. A planning application will be submitted in September 2007.
- We have worked in partnership with Somerset County Council to submit the Local Transport Plan 2006-2011, detailing our transport strategy for Somerset. This includes agreement for two major scheme bids 'The Northern Inner Distribution Road' (NIDR) and the 'Third-Way', which will alleviate traffic congestion in Taunton and enable the regeneration of Firepool and Tangier, both key sites for Project Taunton.

#### Other specific achievements in 2006/07:

- Signed up to the Congestion Protocol in partnership with the County Council. Action points include the promotion of 'Smarter Choices' (walking, cycling and public transport), the alleviation of congestion at Station Road, and the provision of coach drop-off facilities at Castle Way.

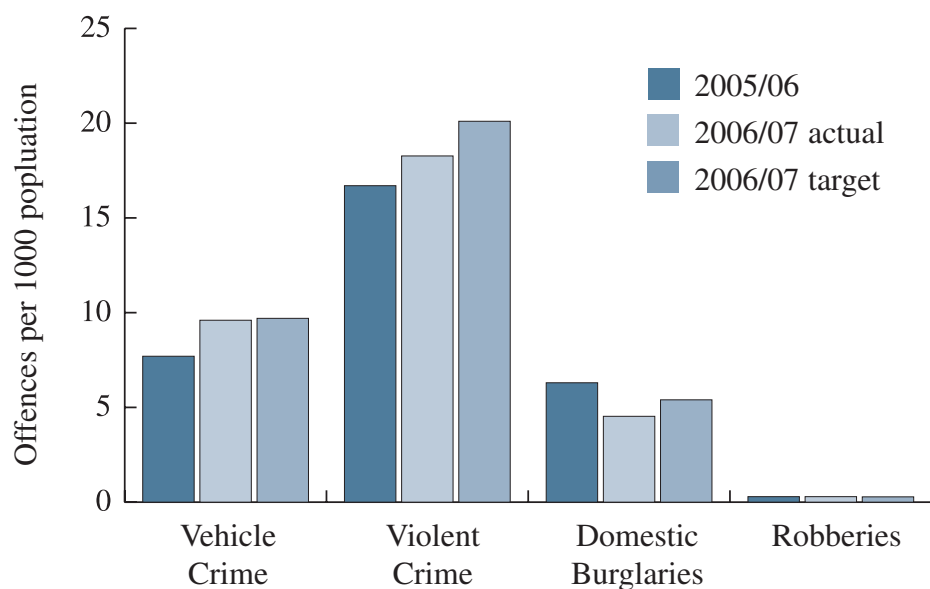
## Corporate Aim - Crime

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

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. By working closely with partners, we contribute to and have a considerable impact on meeting the Partnership's crime reduction targets. Crime levels in Taunton Deane are lower than the national average, and the graph below shows progress against the Partnership's main crime targets. The 2006/07 targets were set as a 15% reduction to crime incidents from 2003/04 levels, which we've compared to 2006/2007.

#### Offences per 1,000 population in Taunton Deane

Source: Home Office Crime in England and Wales



#### Improvements On Course

- By working closely with the 'Drink Safe, Be Safe' campaign, alcohol related crime in Taunton Town Centre has fallen by 40% in the last two years.
- Incidents of anti-social behaviour have been recorded and mapped to ensure partnership working develops appropriate actions to address problem areas.
- We have continued to provide support to twelve Local Action Teams and helped organise community clear up days in Halcon and Lambrook.
- Our licensing team continue to enforce new licensing laws to meet public safety, prevention of nuisance, prevention of harm to children and vulnerable adults and the prevention of crime and disorder.

#### Improvements that have fallen behind the original timetable

- We will continue to increase the number of reported incidents of anti-social behaviour before setting baseline figures to reduce the number of incidents occurring.
- We are investigating the purchase of a biometric scanning machine to help reduce problems associated with the night time economy. These are point of entry machines which record personal details of who is in a nightclub.

#### Other specific achievements in 2006/07:

- CCTV operations increased for Taunton and Wellington. Specialist CCTV officers now monitor coverage 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- A 'No Drinking Order' was introduced in Taunton.
- Avon and Somerset Unpaid Work Unit cleaned and painted our multi-storey and High Street car parks.



# Corporate Aim - Healthy Living

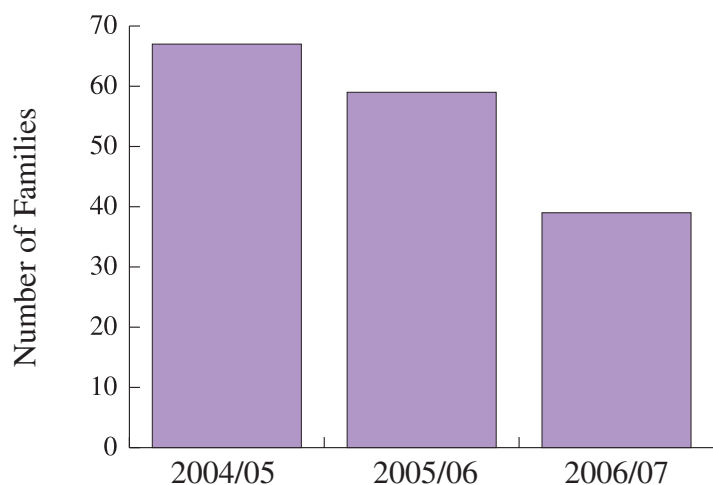
## Promoting healthy and sustainable communities

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. Our other main priority is around promoting healthy activities for the community, ensuring we respond to the needs of different age groups, recognising the contribution made from sport, arts and culture. The table and chart below shows house prices above the national average (although income is below the national average). However we are making good progress in reducing the number of families in temporary accommodation.

Taunton Deane	£201,963	South West	£202,248
Somerset	£191,622	Great Britain	£196,676
<b>House Prices: July to Sept 2005</b>		Source: Local Futures	

### Average number of families in temporary accommodation

Source: Housing Section, BVPI 203



### Improvements On Course

- As shown in the graph, we have significantly reduced the number of homeless families staying in bed and breakfast accommodation through prevention measures and the greater use of private sector tenancies.
- We are trying to increase the amount of permanent accommodation available to the homeless.
- A multi million pound affordable housing development at the BT Building in Taunton is underway to be ready for occupation in October 2007. This will create 75 high quality affordable homes, of which 51 will be socially rented and 24 will be shared equity apartments. The development will also include apartments specifically designed for disabled tenants.
- We continue to negotiate with developers to meet a targeted proportion of social housing and other subsidised housing.

### Improvements that have fallen behind the original timescale

- A housing needs survey identified that we should now be enabling the building of 564 affordable units each year. In 2006/07 we completed 53 units but anticipate an increase in numbers to around 300 this year.

### Other Specific Achievements for 2006/07

- Held an Affordable Housing Open Day which attracted nearly 500 visitors.
- Contributed £658,739 towards an affordable housing development in Wiveliscombe.
- Organised a Family Fun Day in French Weir Park which was hailed a great success.
- Completed Taunton Green site, off Cheddon Road in conjunction with Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership. This has a new tarmac court which has facilities for football and basketball, alongside there are tennis facilities.

## Corporate Aim - Environment

### Safeguarding and enhancing the local environment

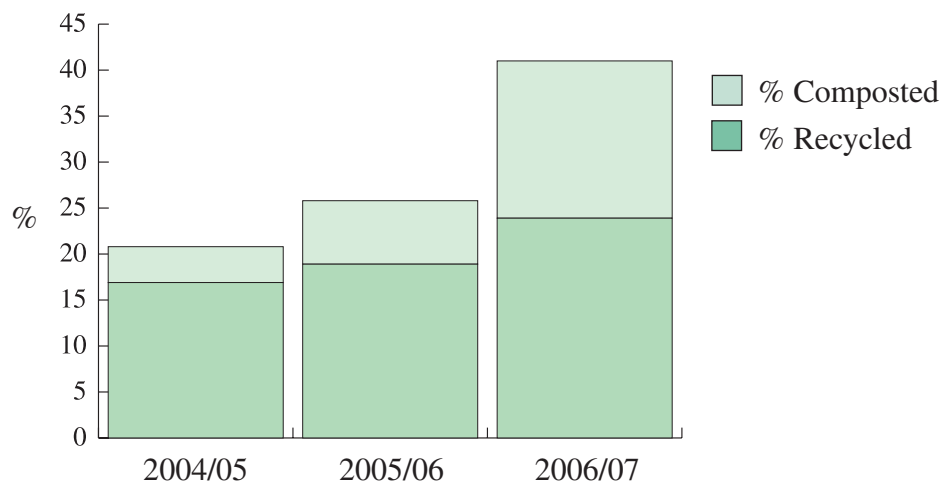
We aim to manage a clean and safe environment, through our services and partnerships, especially the Somerset Waste Partnership. Residents and visitors value the high quality of the physical environment of the Borough and we will continue to protect and enhance it. The table and chart below show high customer satisfaction with the cleanliness of the Borough, and increasing levels of recycling.

Year	TDBC	English Districts Top Quartile
2003	72.5%	68.0%
2006	73%	Unknown

**% of people satisfied with cleanliness of their local environment.**  
Source: TDBC General Survey

### Percentage of Taunton Deane household waste recycled and composted

Source: Waste Services



### Improvements On Course

- We have completed the roll out of SORT IT! to all properties in Taunton Deane which has resulted in an overall recycling figure of over 40% in 2006/07.
- Increased satisfaction from residents of our sports/leisure facilities from 59% in 2003 to 69% in 2006 (Source: Taunton Deane General Survey)
- Maintained high satisfaction from residents with our parks and open spaces from 83% in 2003 to 85% in 2006 (Source: Taunton Deane General Survey).
- We are continually reviewing and progressing in the holistic management of the environment.
- We have been working with community groups to improve street cleaning.

### Other specific achievements in 2006/07

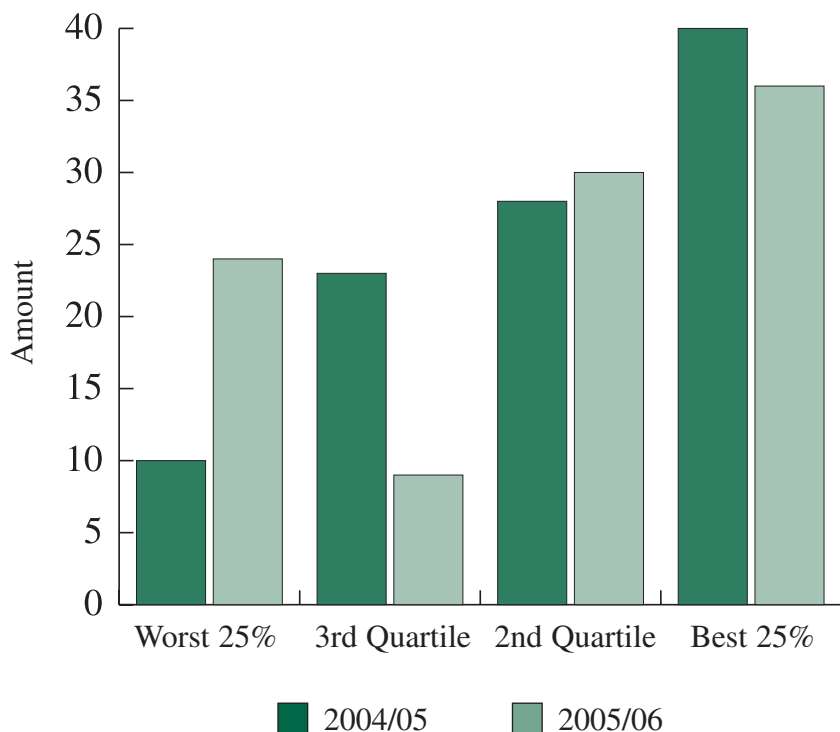
- Installed new Interpretation panels at the South Taunton Brooks and Stream Local Nature Reserve. These provide information on the diversity of wildlife.
- Supported new scheme to help Taunton Deane Householders to install solar power systems on their property.

# Corporate Aim - Delivery

## Delivering accessible, value for money services

We aim to deliver value for money services that are customer focussed and accessible to everyone. The chart below shows a breakdown of our statutory performance indicators compared nationally. In the latest comparison year (2005/06), 36 % of our performance indicators are ranked amongst the best 25% of council performance in the Country.

### Indicator Comparisons for Taunton Deane 2004/05 to 2005/06



### Improvements On Course

- Equality Impact Assessments have been undertaken for all our services. From these, we have created a comprehensive equalities scheme with an action plan to tackle race, gender and disability issues.
- We have liaised with Black and Minority Ethnic Communities via meetings with voluntary groups.
- A joint procurement strategy has been developed with Somerset County Council which aims to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and social responsibility of procurement.
- We were awarded a score of 'three' out of four for how well we use our resources which was assessed by the Audit Commission. This score places us in the top quartile against other councils, and further builds on our 'Excellent' status.
- IBM has been selected as our Preferred Bidder for the ISiS project. Negotiations are currently underway with a contract for the Joint Venture Partnership expected to be signed in September 07.
- We continue to work in partnership to deliver shared priorities, including the Local Area Agreement, the Local Strategic Partnership and the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.
- We are using a 'dashboard' approach to performance reporting to attain better focus on performance issues.
- We have strengthened the role of Scrutiny in the Council by undertaking more Task and Finish reviews that drive improvement on specific issues.

### Other specific achievements in 2006/07:

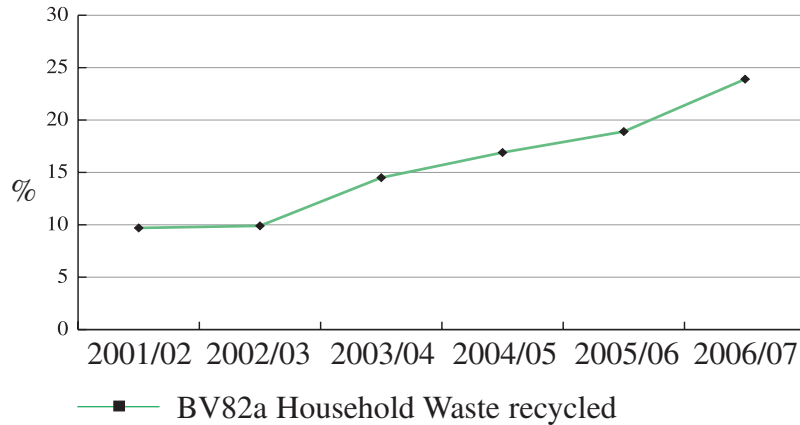
- 'Your Council, Your Views' consultation launched, asking people what they think the council's priorities are and how council tax should be spent.
- The Deane helpline was the first in the South and South West to be given all three Telecare Services Association accreditations in a single audit.
- The Mayor's Musical Extravaganza was held in support of his charities.

# Summary of Performance

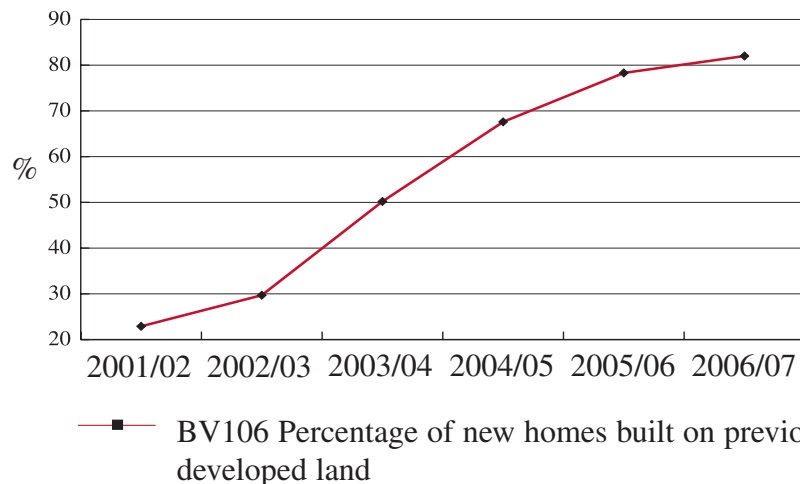
For 2006/07 we don't yet have national comparison data, however we know that our performance has improved on 35% of performance indicators compared to 2005/06, and we have met our targets for 56% of performance indicators.

We have included some example of our improving performance indicators below:

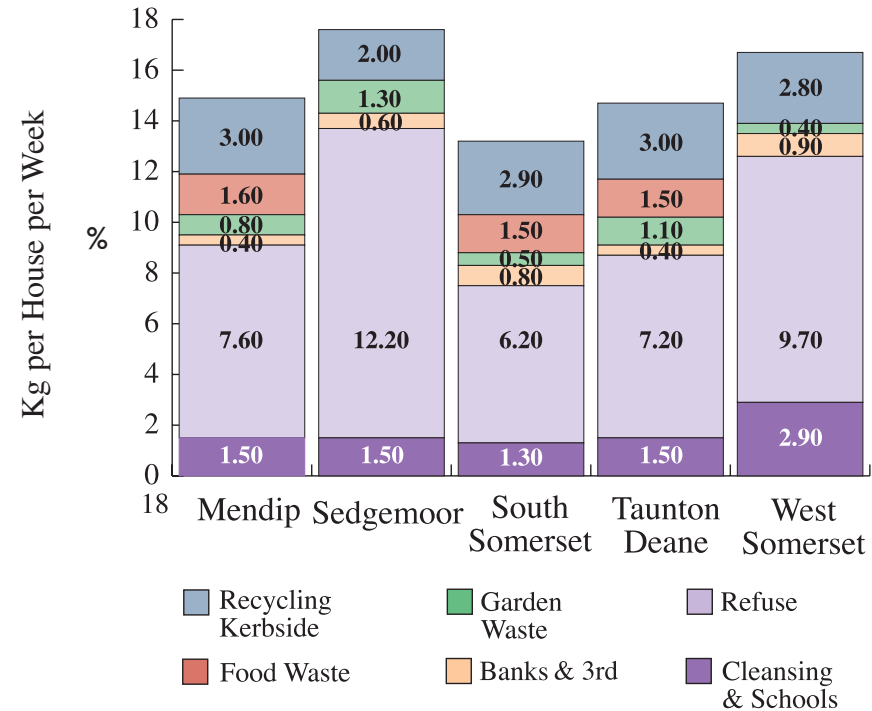
## Recycling Rates (excluding Composting)



## Percentage of new homes built on previously developed land



## Somerset Districts Waste 2006/07 - Kg/Hh/Wk



The Council has also had results from independent inspections by the Audit Commission as part of its Comprehensive Performance Assessment framework. In 2004, we received the top rating, being recognised as an 'Excellent' council, one of only four District Councils in the South West. In 2006, we were awarded a 'performing well' rating for how we use our resources. This score placed us in the top five in the South West for district councils and amongst the top 25% of district councils in the Country.

The full set of performance indicators showing our performance for 2006/07 is available on request by calling 01823 356397 or by visiting [www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/tdbcsites/polperf/AnnualReport.asp](http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/tdbcsites/polperf/AnnualReport.asp)

## Financial Performance

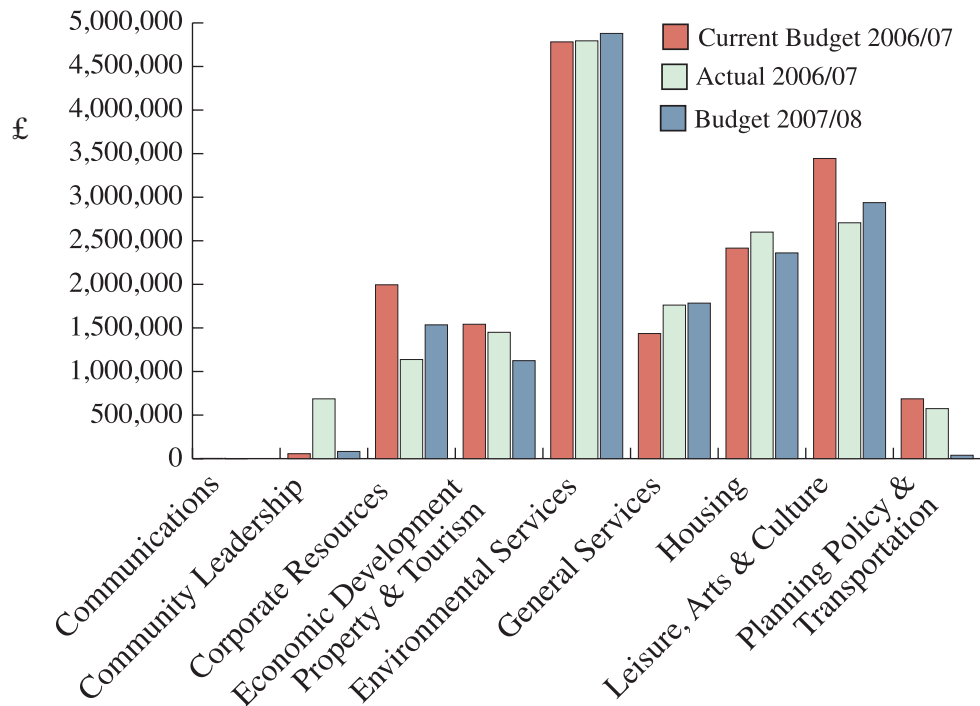
Please note the figures used in this summary are from the un-audited version of our accounts and are subject to approval by the Audit Commission.

### General Fund

For 2006/07 the Council's actual expenditure on services was £15.7m, which was £241,696 above the approved budget. The main reason for the overspend was the contribution made towards the Housing Transfer Project. If this is excluded then the Council actually under spent by £33k. The budget for 2007/08 has been set, with a focus on achieving our objectives as described under our 6 corporate aims. See page 23.

Below is a graph to compare the current budget 2006/07 with the actual 2006/07 and budget 2007/08.

### General Fund



## Housing Revenue Account

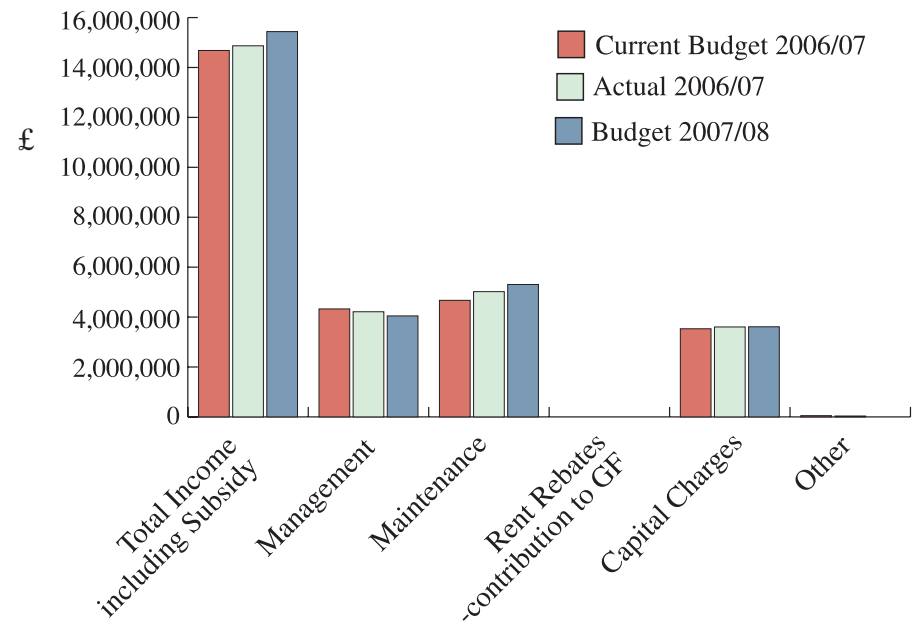
We account for Housing Revenue separately and for 2006/07 our total surplus for the year was £650,010 against a current budgeted surplus of £312,280.

The main reasons for the under spend were additional income collected on service charges, additional interest received and the transfer from the general fund for the stock transfer project costs.

The Council owned 6,127 properties at the 31 March 2007. It is required by law to pay for all the costs associated with these properties from the rental income received.

52 properties were sold to tenants during the year.

### Housing Revenue Account Outturn 2006/2007

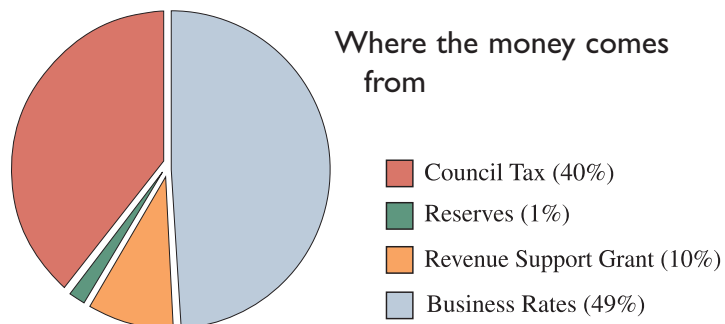


## Income and Expenditure Account

The Income and Expenditure Account below shows the cost of running Council services between April 2006 and March 2007.

Income and Expenditure Account	Net Exp £'000
Housing Services	1,096
Cultural Services	3,144
Environmental Services	4,790
Planning Services	2,457
Corp Costs inc Councillors	1,142
Central Services to the public	82
Unapportionable Costs	784
Collection of local taxes	783
Highways, roads and Transport	(728)
<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	<b>13,550</b>
Add: Interest Payable and Similar Charges	1,115
Add: Contribution of Housing Capital Receipts to Government Pool	2,735
Add: Parish Council Precepts	360
Add: Other Costs	104
Less: Gain on Disposal of Fixed Assets	(563)
Less: Interest and Investment income	(940)
<b>Net Operating Expenditure</b>	<b>16,361</b>
Net Additional Amount Required by Statute and Non Statutory Proper Practices to be Credited to the General Fund	(3,144)
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>13,217</b>

The pie chart shows where the money for this came from:



Below is the balance sheet for 2006/07. This details what the council owes and is owed.

Balance Sheet as at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2007	£'000
Buildings, Land and Vehicles Owned	487,039
Stocks Held	232
Cash and Investments	9,623
Money owed to the Council	8,077
Less: Money owed by the Council	(51,279)
<b>Total</b>	<b>453,692</b>

### Financed by:

Non-distributable Reserves	441,201
Distributable Reserves	12,491
<b>Total</b>	<b>453,692</b>

### Distributable reserves comprise the following:

General Fund	1,242
Other Reserves	6,682
Housing Reserve Balance	2,659
Collection Fund	(51)
Unapplied Capital Receipts	1,959
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,491</b>

### Cash Flow during 2006/07

	£'000
= Cash and Investments held on 31 March 2006	14,100
+ Cash In	144,730
- Cash Out	(149,207)
= Cash and Investments held on 31 March 2007	9,623

## Capital Expenditure

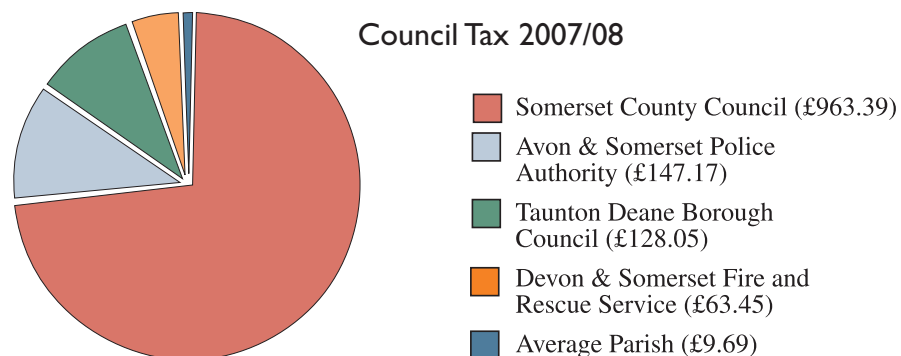
Capital expenditure is money spent by the Council on purchasing, updating and improving assets such as buildings, vehicles and machinery. The Council receives this type of expenditure over many years, so it is 'matched' in the accounts over those years. The table below shows the investment made by the Council during April 2006 to March 2007.

Capital Expenditure Summary 2006/07	£'000
Council Dwellings	4,035
Grants to Housing Associations	1,168
Capital Grants	1,245
Other Land and Buildings	2,594
Computer Software	788
Vehicles and Equipment	763
Other Misc	185
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,778</b>

## Council Tax 2007/08

The budget for Taunton Deane Borough Council for 2007/08 gives a Band D Council Tax of £128.05, which is a 2% increase (£2.51 more) on 2006/07. The Taunton Deane element of the Council Tax bill works out at £2.46 per week for a Band D Council Tax payer.

The relative proportions of Council Tax (Band D) received by each Council is shown below:



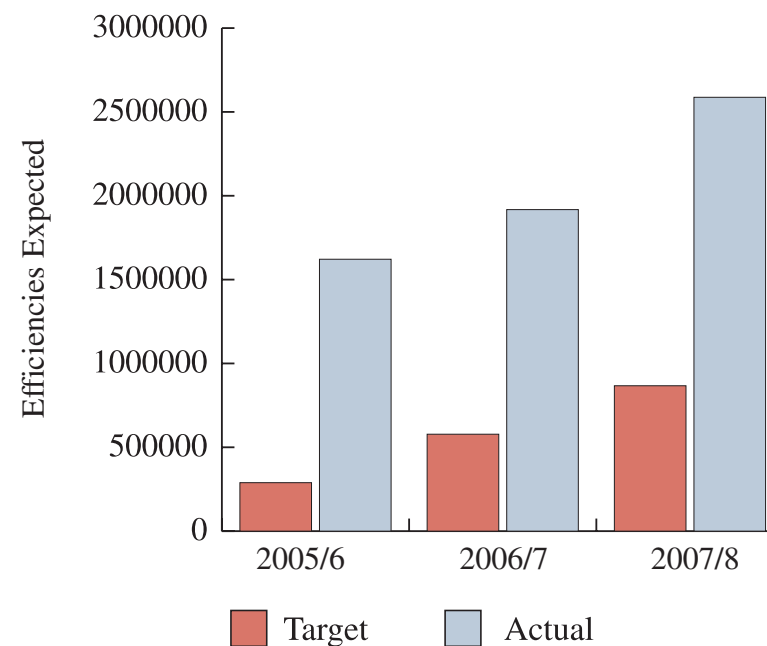
## Annual Efficiency Statement

A recent requirement from Central Government is for the Council to demonstrate 2.5% annual ongoing efficiencies each year. The Council has been issued target efficiency gains to achieve between 2005/06 and 2007/08.

The Council has made excellent progress in meeting these targets, through initiatives such as scrutinising the budget and using technology better.

This is illustrated below.

### Annual Efficiency Statement - Progress Against Targets



For a more detailed copy of the financial accounts please call on **01823 356421** or visit [www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/tdbcsites/finance/index.asp](http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/tdbcsites/finance/index.asp).

# How We Manage Performance

In this Annual Report we have presented our plans and targets to deliver our Vision of being a high performing Council, working in partnership to create a good quality of life for all Taunton Deane residents.

To achieve these targets we have a performance management framework to ensure the Council's performance is monitored effectively and corrective action taken when required. The key elements of this framework are as follows:

## Effective Consultation

Effective consultation is vital to ensure that we are meeting the needs of local residents. We ask residents annually for their priorities for the district and how we should set our forthcoming year's budget. Last year we undertook major consultation exercises on satisfaction levels within Housing Services, Benefits, Planning and general Council services. These results helped to shape our Corporate Strategy and determine our priorities and objectives for the future.

We recognise the need to improve the way we use consultation results and complaints feedback. We have improved our complaints handling procedures and are working further to ensure that analysis of complaints and consultation feeds into service improvement plans and results in real improvements for our customers.

## Performance Management System

Our Corporate Strategy contains our six corporate aims and twenty objectives for 2007 to 2010. Progress is reported quarterly to managers and Councillors, allowing them to challenge poor performance and redirect resources to achieve our targets.

We also report progress against our annual financial budget and 125 performance indicators (national and local) which measure performance across all services. An overview of our 2006/07 performance is provided in the Summary Performance section. The full results of our performance indicators are found on [www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/tdbcsites/polperf/AnnualReport.asp](http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/tdbcsites/polperf/AnnualReport.asp)

## Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)

The Council is periodically subject to independent inspection by the Audit Commission, called Comprehensive Performance Assessment. This is designed to rate the Council nationally and to identify its strengths and weaknesses.

A corporate CPA assessment in 2004 rated us as 'Excellent', and a 'Use of Resources' assessment in 2006 gave us a 3 out of 4 score. Both of these scores rate us amongst the best district councils in the Country. However, a number of areas requiring improvement were identified so we have developed improvement plans which we monitor and report against twice yearly to managers and Councillors.

## Your Local Councillors

Local elections are held every four years to elect the 56 Councillors who represent Taunton Deane's 27 wards. The Councillors' role is to represent the views of local residents, make sure that council decisions reflect local priorities and ensure that we provide quality services that meet residents' needs.

## The Executive

The Executive is comprised of the Leader of the Council, together with eight Executive Councillors from the ruling party, each responsible for distinct portfolio areas. Key Policy decisions on all Council issues are agreed by the Executive at monthly public meetings. The Executive Councillors and their portfolios are shown on the following page.

## Scrutiny

The remaining 47 Councillors represent their constituents through their work sitting on Scrutiny Panels. It is the role of these Councillors to both challenge and hold the Executive to account when necessary and to add value to the Council by helping develop new policies. The Review Board also scrutinise the Council's performance by analysing and challenging the quarterly performance reports.

Scrutiny aims to add value to the Council by representing the public and their concerns, helping develop policies, reviewing the work of the Council and its partnerships and ensuring that Councillors have a real opportunity to make a difference.

The chairpersons of the review panels and committees, and the other scrutiny Councillors are shown on the following page.



# Your Local Councillors

## Executive Councillors



Ross Henley  
Leader of the Council



Alan Wedderkopp  
(Deputy Leader)  
Community Development



Steve Brooks  
Communications



Simon Coles  
Planning, Policy &  
Transportation



Jefferson Horsley  
Economic Development,  
Property & Tourism



Richard Lees  
Leisure, Arts and Culture



Melvyn Mullins  
Environmental Services



Hazel Prior-Sankey  
Housing Services



Fran Smith  
Corporate Resources

## Chairs of Scrutiny Panels and Committees



John Williams  
Chair of Review  
Board and Corporate Governance



Mark Edwards  
Chair of  
Health & Leisure  
Review Panel



Joanna Lewin-Harris  
Chair of Strategic Planning,  
Transportation & Economic  
Development Panel



Terry Murphy  
Chair of  
Housing Review  
Panel



Alan Paul  
Chair of  
Community Leadership  
Review Panel



Mary Whitmarsh  
Chair of Resources  
Review Panel



To be  
Appointed  
Chair of  
Licensing  
Committee



Marcia Hill  
Chair of  
Planning  
Committee



Ken Hayward  
Mayor

## Scrutiny Panel Members



Jean Allgrove



Anthony Beaven



Cliff Bishop



John Bone



Robert Bowrah



Jayne Brockwell



Norman Cavill



Gloria Copley



Jean Court-Stenning



Peter Critchard



Brian Denington



David Durdan



Habib Farbahi



Anthony Floyd



Andrew Govier



Dr. Gerry Guerrier



Terence Hall



Catherine Herbert



Chris Hill



David House



Louise James



Sue Lees



Gwyneth Leighton



Tony McMahon



John Meikle MBE



Ian Morrell



Timothy Slattery



Peter Smith



Vivienne Stock-Williams



Phillip Stone



Nigel Stuart-Thorn



John Thorne



Peter Watson



Elaine Waymouth



Denise Webber



Danny Wedderkopp



Nicola Wilson



Julie Wood



Andrew Woolley

# Corporate Aims & Objectives 2007-2010

<p>Aim 1</p> <p><b>Economy</b></p> <p>Regenerating Taunton and strengthening the economy of the Borough.</p>	<p>Aim 2</p> <p><b>Transport</b></p> <p>Minimising the growth in traffic congestion.</p>	<p>Aim 3</p> <p><b>Crime</b></p> <p>Promoting safer communities and tackling anti-social behaviour.</p>	<p>Aim 4</p> <p><b>Healthy Living</b></p> <p>Promoting healthy and sustainable communities.</p>	<p>Aim 5</p> <p><b>Environment</b></p> <p>Safeguarding and enhancing the local environment.</p>	<p>Aim 6</p> <p><b>Delivery</b></p> <p>Delivering accessible, value for money services.</p>
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## Our Corporate Objectives *(Principal Objectives shown in Bold and above the line)*

<p>Stimulate the creation of 14,000 new jobs in the Borough between 2006 and 2026 (5% from the Creative Industries Sector). This includes 6,500 jobs at Firepool by 2010 through Project Taunton.</p>	<p>Support the County Council as lead agency, to limit the rate of growth of traffic congestion in Taunton (vehicle delay target of <b>2,414 vehicle hours by 2011</b>).</p>	<p>To reduce overall crime in Taunton Deane by 15% by March 2008.</p>	<p>To enable the building of 985 units of affordable housing between April 2006 and March 2011.</p>	<p>To increase to at least 78% the percentage of people who are satisfied with the cleanliness of their local environment by 2009.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>To encourage 30 new businesses to set up in Taunton Deane per year (5% from Creative Industries Sector)</p> <p>Develop the Cultural Offer of the Borough.</p> <p>Reduce deprivation in Taunton Deane, taking the four most deprived sub-areas out of the 25% national most deprived areas by 2020.</p> <p>Support the development of the rural economy through facilitating and supporting agricultural diversification projects, business activity and land development.</p>	<p>Support the County Council as lead agency to reduce the proportion of journeys to work made in Taunton by Single Occupancy Vehicles.</p>	<p>To reduce the incidence of violent crime in Taunton Deane by 15% by 2008.</p> <p>To reduce anti-social behaviour incidents by 15% from baseline figures by 2007/08.</p> <p>To reduce the fear and perceptions of crime by 5% per year to 2009 (from March 2007 baseline).</p>	<p>To reduce the number of homeless applications in temporary accommodation by 50% by 2010, with an emphasis on homelessness prevention.</p> <p>Promote healthy activities to meet the needs of the wider community, responding to the needs of different age groups.</p>	<p>To increase the percentage of household waste recycled to 45% by the end of 2008/9 and 47% by the end of 2009/10.</p> <p>To actively promote sustainability in Taunton Deane with a focus on climate change, energy efficiency and renewable energy, to reduce our carbon footprint on the environment.</p>	<p>To achieve level 5 of the Equality Standard for Local Government by the end of 2010.</p> <p>To ensure that 90% of service enquiries to the Council are resolved at the first point of contact by 2015.</p>

# Summary of ongoing Key Projects

## Project Taunton

During the current financial year, work has concentrated on appointing a lead developer for the Firepool site. We expect that this will be complete by September 2007, and work on site will start during 2008. This will create 500 new homes, a mix of restaurants, shops and cafes and attract 3000 new jobs.

We are making real progress on delivering Project Taunton. This is an exciting long-term initiative that will transform our County Town into a key economic and cultural centre in the South West region. The Council, working with its main partners, has set up a small team of people dedicated solely to turning Project Taunton into reality. Over the past twelve months they have dealt with issues as diverse as flooding, car parking, transport, culture and the arts. To contact the team call 01823 250807, visit [www.projecttaunton.co.uk](http://www.projecttaunton.co.uk) or email: [info@projecttaunton.co.uk](mailto:info@projecttaunton.co.uk).

## Improving Services in Somerset (ISiS)

The ISiS Programme is a partnership between ourselves, Somerset County Council, the Avon and Somerset Constabulary and IBM. We are working towards establishing a Joint Venture Company (JVCo) based in Taunton. The JVCo, which will be jointly owned by all the partners, will deliver a number of shared services for each authority, including Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology, Revenues, Benefits, Property Services, Design and Print, Office Services, Procurement and Customer Services.

The aim of the Joint Venture Company is to deliver the shared services more efficiently as well as supporting service and organisational transformation across all partners. A key driving force behind the partnership is also to improve customer access to services for our local community. Our aim is to be in a position to sign the contract setting up the Joint Venture Company between IBM and all partners at the end of September 2007.

## Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP)

The 6 SWP authorities have endorsed the decision to appoint a preferred and reserve bidder for a joint County-wide waste collection, recycling and disposable contract. There have been a number of meetings to clarify issues and enable the award of the Contract. The SWP Project Team have also met with members of each District Executive/Cabinets to discuss future service options.

Every SWP District would like to move to SORT IT!+, which would provide a broader service, if the addition of plastic and cardboard kerbside collections can be done more cost effectively.

Somerset are moving to the widest range of major materials being collected at kerbside anywhere in the UK, and so developing the most effective and efficient collection approach is key to making the enhanced services affordable for all SWP authorities. Preparations are well advanced for the SWP Executives who will meet again to consider the outcomes of the negotiations and to agree the final steps in the Governance arrangements that will create the Somerset Waste Board.

## Other key plans for 2007/08

Our corporate aims and objectives for 2007-2010 are listed in our Corporate Strategy, along with the key activities needed to deliver them. We have listed some of these below along with other specific plans for 2007/08, which will help us deliver these three year objectives.

### Corporate Aim: Economy

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

- Relocate the Livestock Market from Firepool and start development of the site.
- Work in partnership to launch a major business incubation centre for Taunton with facilities for up to 40 emerging micro and creative industries companies.

- Drive forward the Wellington Food Town initiative to promote Wellington as a regional centre of excellence for food and drink and supporting local food and agricultural industries.
- Work closely with our Local Authority partners in Somerset to improve the quality and effectiveness of the marketing and support for businesses wishing to locate within Somerset.
- Promote confidence and business skills in young people through supporting the three year Young Enterprise South West project, delivered to schools.
- Kick start the Cultural Quarter of Project Taunton by redeveloping Castle Green, Coal Orchard and Goodland Gardens, to include providing a new site for the County Council library and records office.
- Continue to work with our partners in the rural economy to support, diversify and strengthen the rural economy of the Borough.

### **Corporate Aim: Transport**

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

- Implement the Taunton car park strategy to operate up to 5 new strategically placed multi-storey car parks around the Taunton town centre.
- Deliver the actions in the Taunton Deane Borough Council Employee Travel Plan to reduce the use of Single Occupancy Vehicles (SOVs) by TDBC employees.
- Work closely with the County Council to identify a site for the Taunton East Park and Ride facility and to agree a clear timetable for delivery.
- Deliver the Congestion Reduction Strategy with Somerset County Council, including implementing the agreed car park charging policies to ensure the success of the Park and Ride Schemes.
- Improve rural transport by supporting County wide access projects including Rural Moped Loan Scheme, Slinky bus, Wivey Link and through Service Level Agreements.

### **Corporate Aim: Crime**

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

- Move towards Neighbourhood Policing – working closely with PCSOs, Local Action Teams and partners to provide a more co-ordinated and effective approach to tackling anti-social crime.
- In order to make pubs and clubs safer investigate the possibility of introducing ID Scan at the point of entry.
- Improve provision of CCTV through upgrading existing equipment and introduction of Automatic Number Plate Recognition system.
- Devise and deliver program of actions to tackle anti-social behaviour hotspots, identified through Taunton Deane database and partnership working.
- Continue identifying and implementing youth diversionary activities and facilities.
- Continue to support and empower Local Action Teams to identify local issues and create solutions.

### **Corporate Aim: Healthy Living**

#### **Promoting healthy and sustainable communities**

- Continue toward the target of all homes meeting the Decent Homes Standard by 2010, through a planned maintenance and repair programme.
- Focus on enabling more affordable housing to achieve the building of 985 units of affordable housing between April 2006 and March 2011.
- Reduce the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation with an emphasis on homelessness prevention.
- Promote and support health activities for the elderly, such as 'Flexercise' and health walks.
- Provide more free youth facilities in all areas in order to encourage children and young people to be more active.
- Develop a state-of-the-art Skate-Park in Taunton Deane, building it in 2007/08 and attracting a minimum of 5,000 visits in 2008/09, to increase annually.

## **Corporate Aim: Environment**

### **Safeguarding and enhancing the local environment**

- Expand the recycling service to include other types of waste. Collection point skips to be converted to take both cardboard and paper.
- Create an integrated waste collection and recycling contract with the other Somerset Councils and create a single client body
- Following our signing of the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change, we will establish a baseline of carbon emissions and carbon reduction targets. This will lead to a Climate Change Strategy to provide a joined-up approach to promoting sustainability, tackling climate change and reducing emissions.
- Review our existing buildings to ensure they are as 'green' as possible using renewable energy suppliers, water saving measures, waste separation, recycling and energy-saving light bulbs.

## **Corporate Aim: Delivery**

### **Delivering accessible, value for money services**

- Improve the engagement of black or minority ethnic communities through good service interface and equalities forums.
- Ensure that our key policies are rural-proofed in future to ensure that they have an appropriate focus on rural needs and circumstances.
- Work closely with our ISiS partners to modernise and improve transactional and back-office services, and improve access to, and delivery of, customer-facing services.
- Continue to provide 'Value for Money' through achieving a minimum of a level 3 rating for CPA annual assessment by implementing key recommendations from the Audit Commission assessment of the Council.

# How We will Address our Weaknesses

Despite the Audit Commission recognising us as an Excellent Council, they have identified weaknesses that we need to address. We are developing improvement plans to tackle these and monitor progress during 2007/08. The table below summarises the main identified weaknesses from the recent Audit Commission Annual Audit Letter and how we propose to address them.

Weakness	Action
Review systems for producing performance indicators, focussing initially on those it has identified as the key indicators.	We have reviewed our data quality systems during the year end collection 2006/07 of performance indicators.
The effectiveness of less formal partnerships and use of grants is still not being fully evaluated.	The Local Strategic Partnership will be operating under new governance arrangements from June 2007. We will review partnerships and SLAs to ensure their actions support key local priorities in the Community Strategy.
Monitor general fund expenditure very closely for the remainder of this year and throughout 2007-08, so that the Council can agree timely and effective action in response to any further overspendings against budget that arise.	We are closely monitoring this and working with officers and managers to address the overspend.
Carry out a thorough review of working balances on the Housing Revenue Account, taking account of the key financial risks the Council faces locally.	We will continue to monitor the Housing Revenue Account.
Ensure clarity and communication of the high level efficiency aims and workforce implications of the large scale transformation projects.	All staff have been briefed on our joint venture company. Regular updates are regularly communicated to staff. In scope staff have been briefed in depth on employment choices and opportunities.
Provide and enable the development of more affordable houses to meet identified need.	We have completed 53 units in 2006/07 and anticipate over 300 units in 2007/08.
The vision for the level of customer service lacks clarity. It is not clear what level of customer satisfaction the Council is aiming for; or how it will develop its enabling role.	New customer standards are currently being communicated and our customer charter is now available for all customers on the website and as a paper leaflet.
Scrutiny to date has had limited success in external results.	We will continue to develop scrutiny and move towards more Task and Finish reviews with more tangible outcomes. We are starting a Corporate Project on Scrutiny in June 2007 to be completed with improved outcomes by December 2007.
Continue to seek further efficiency savings to minimise the impact of budget constraints on the quality and levels of services provided.	An implementation plan for 'Team Somerset' will be delivered by September 2007, to deliver services in partnership across Somerset. This will include a clear focus on priorities and resources required. There is a Corporate Project focussed on reducing unnecessary bureaucracy to be completed by Dec 07 which will help free up resources.

# Statement on Contracts

We are required to state, where applicable, that all individual contracts awarded during the past year involving a transfer of staff, comply with the requirements in the Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in Local Authority Service Contracts.

For example, in 2006/07 the Council awarded contracts that involved the transfer of staff, as shown to the right.

Contract	Awarded to	Date	Staff transferred Out
Transfer of CCTV Parking Services	Sedgemoor District Council	1 August 2006	3

There were no staff transferred into Taunton Deane Borough Council during 2006/07.

# Guide to Acronyms

ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour	LTA	Lawn Tennis Association
BT	British Telecom	NIDR	Northern Inner Distributor Road
BV(PI)	Best Value (Performance Indicator)	ONS	Office for National Statistics
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television	PCSO	Police Community Support Officer
Cllr	Councillor	PI	Performance Indicator
CPA	Comprehensive Performance Assessment	RTPI	Royal Town Planning Institute
GB	Great Britain	SCAT	Somerset College of Arts and Technology
HRA	Housing Revenue Account	SCC	Somerset County Council
IBM	International Business Machines	SLA	Service Level Agreement
ID	Identification	SOV	Single Occupancy Vehicle
ISiS	Improving Services In Somerset	SWP	Somerset Waste Partnership
IT	Information Technology	TDBC	Taunton Deane Borough Council
JVCo	Joint Venture Company	TIC	Tourist Information Centre
Kg	Kilograms	UK	United Kingdom
LAT	Local Action Team	VAT	Value Added Tax
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership		



## TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING 11 DECEMBER 2007

### Part I

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

#### 1. COUNCILLOR HENLEY

##### a) Capital Programme

The Executive have considered a report which gave details of the resources available for both the General Fund (GF) and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

Additional receipts from sale of housing assets included £411k in respect of the sale of land at Poplar Road and other housing assets. It was felt that these resources should be earmarked to fund future affordable housing schemes. This means that these receipts will not be subject to the usual 50% pooling rules. The Council would then be able to retain and use all of the £411k capital receipt.

The table below sets out details of the proposed new schemes. Changes to the Capital Programme such as these are classed as Supplementary Estimates and therefore require Full Council approval.

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Scheme Cost £000</b>
Works Deane DLO Depot to support housing restructure	60
Renovation Works at Sneddon Grove	140
Works at Roland Close	15
Reinstatement of the Cash Incentive Scheme at a reduced rate (for 2007/08 only)	60
Additional Funding required for Integrated Housing Management System	63
Choice-Based Lettings Scheme System	160
Extension of Homelessness Hostel at Taunton Association for the Homeless (see para 5.3 below)	250
<b>Total</b>	<b>748</b>

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that the above listed schemes be included within the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Capital Programmes:

- a) General Fund – Plant Nursery relocation of £427k

b) Housing Revenue Account:

- To earmark the capital receipts from the sale of Poplar Road and other Housing land for affordable housing purposes
- To approve additional capital schemes totalling £748k as detailed in the table set out above.

**b) Legal and Democratic Services – Supplementary Estimate**

Following a review of this Council's Legal and Democratic services it has been decided to combine them in order to make for a more efficient service provision.

In order to achieve this, a sum of £258,860 of one-off funding is required. This will release £96,940k per annum of efficiency savings for the Council. The costs of the restructure will therefore be paid back in 2.67 years.

The one-off costs, and the ongoing revenue savings impact on both the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account. The fund analysis, based on best estimates, is as follows:-

	<b>One-Off Costs £</b>	<b>Ongoing Savings £</b>
Housing Revenue Account	30,727	2,960
General Fund	228,133	(99,900)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>258,860</b>	<b>(96,940)</b>

Due to the timing of the restructures the supplementary estimates from the Reserves would be £205,830 - less than the total one off costs of £258,860 shown above. This reflects the difference between the total costs and the cash flow impact. Traditionally, in service restructures, the savings released are immediately directed towards reserves to top them back up to the level prior to the restructure one-off costs being funded. In challenging budget times, it is appropriate to consider alternative options.

The Executive feel therefore that, in this instance, £60,000 from the ongoing savings is targeted towards the General Fund revenue budget gap from 2008/09 onwards. The remainder of the annual savings will be repaid to reserves. Reserves will still be reimbursed for the one-off costs, but this will be done over a period of 7 years, instead of 2.67 years. This is a prudent balance between managing the ongoing revenue budget gap, and maintaining reserves at an acceptable level.

It is therefore **RECOMMENDED** that a Supplementary Estimate of £205,830 be made (being £168,410 funded from General Fund Reserves, and £37,420 funded from Housing Revenue Account Reserve)

### **(c) Improving Services in Somerset**

This matter proceeded to contract signature on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2007.

In order to finalise this Council's internal arrangements supporting the deal, some financial approvals are required.

The negotiated deal is affordable for Taunton Deane Borough Council, and fully meets the financial formula requirements. However, there is a slight timing issue on the funding of the transformation projects. Whilst work on the procurement transformation project is already underway, it will take a little time for the procurement savings to materialise. Meantime, there is a need to start work on the other transformation projects in order to deliver the service improvements and transformation capability so required by the Councils.

This means that there is a requirement to cover a "cashflow" position. There is no requirement for the Council to take on any permanent debt or to permanently fund from reserves.

Cashflow issues arise as part of the normal day to day business of the Council, and the Chief Finance Officer has the authority and responsibility in the Financial Regulations to manage this position. This could mean taking on borrowing.

The cashflow issue resulting from the transformation projects is partly capital and partly revenue.

The capital cashflow requirement is £2m for a period of 5 years. This will be funded by borrowing, with the debts costs being funded from the procurement savings. This can be done within the existing Treasury Management Strategy.

The revenue cashflow requirement is £0.7m for a period of 2.5 years. This is effectively an "invest to save" initiative and will need to be funded from reserves. Again, this is a temporary "use" of reserves to fund an initiative that will fully repay the reserves within 2.5 years.

The revenue funding requirement of £0.7m could be funded from any of the Council's reserves. The transformation projects being delivered benefit all areas of the Council – affecting both General Fund and Housing areas. It is considered, therefore, that the £0.7m be supported from the following sources:-

General Fund Reserves	£200k
Housing Revenue Reserves	£200k
Self Insurance Fund	£300k

These amounts will be fully repaid to the reserves within 2.5 years. The Council's Chief Finance Officer is satisfied that the proposal is effective in using the Council's resources, and is prudent in leaving all reserves in an acceptable position.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that the revenue cashflow funding requirement be resolved by a Supplementary Estimates from the reserves. These would be

approved on an invest to save basis and repaid within 2.5 years. The reserves were:-

General Fund Reserves	£200k
Housing Revenue Reserves	£200k
Self Insurance Fund	£300k

2. the capital cashflow funding requirement, and the proposed solution outlined above be noted.

Councillor Ross Henley

## **2. COUNCILLOR MULLINS**

### **Licensing Policy**

The Licensing Act is supplemented by guidance issued by the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS). The guidance sets out what should and should not be included in a licensing policy. The starting point of the Licensing Act is that 24 hour licensing is permissible and that there are four objectives to the Act. These objectives are:

- (1) the prevention of crime and disorder;
- (2) public safety;
- (3) the prevention of public nuisance;
- (4) the protection of children from harm.

The Act and guidance also states that conditions should not be attached to licences that do not relate to the licensing objectives and that are covered by other areas of legislation. There should be no fixed closing hours and no zoning of areas.

If the guidance and Act is to be followed explicitly it would mean that any premises wishing to sell alcohol for consumption on or off the premises, provide food, provide entertainment, exhibit films or perform a play, could do so up to 24 hours each day. The only conditions that could be attached to the licence must directly relate to the four licensing objectives.

The aim of this Council's Licensing Policy is to provide guidance on what would normally be approved in relation to an application for a licensed premises. This guidance would not be restricted to the applicant but would also provide advice for other interested parties such as nearby residents and businesses.

The revised licensing policy is submitted as an Appendix to this report. The key

differences are:

- The revised licensing policy does not duplicate legislation or the Secretary of State's guidance.
- The revised policy does not include any references to the transitional arrangements, as they are no longer applicable.

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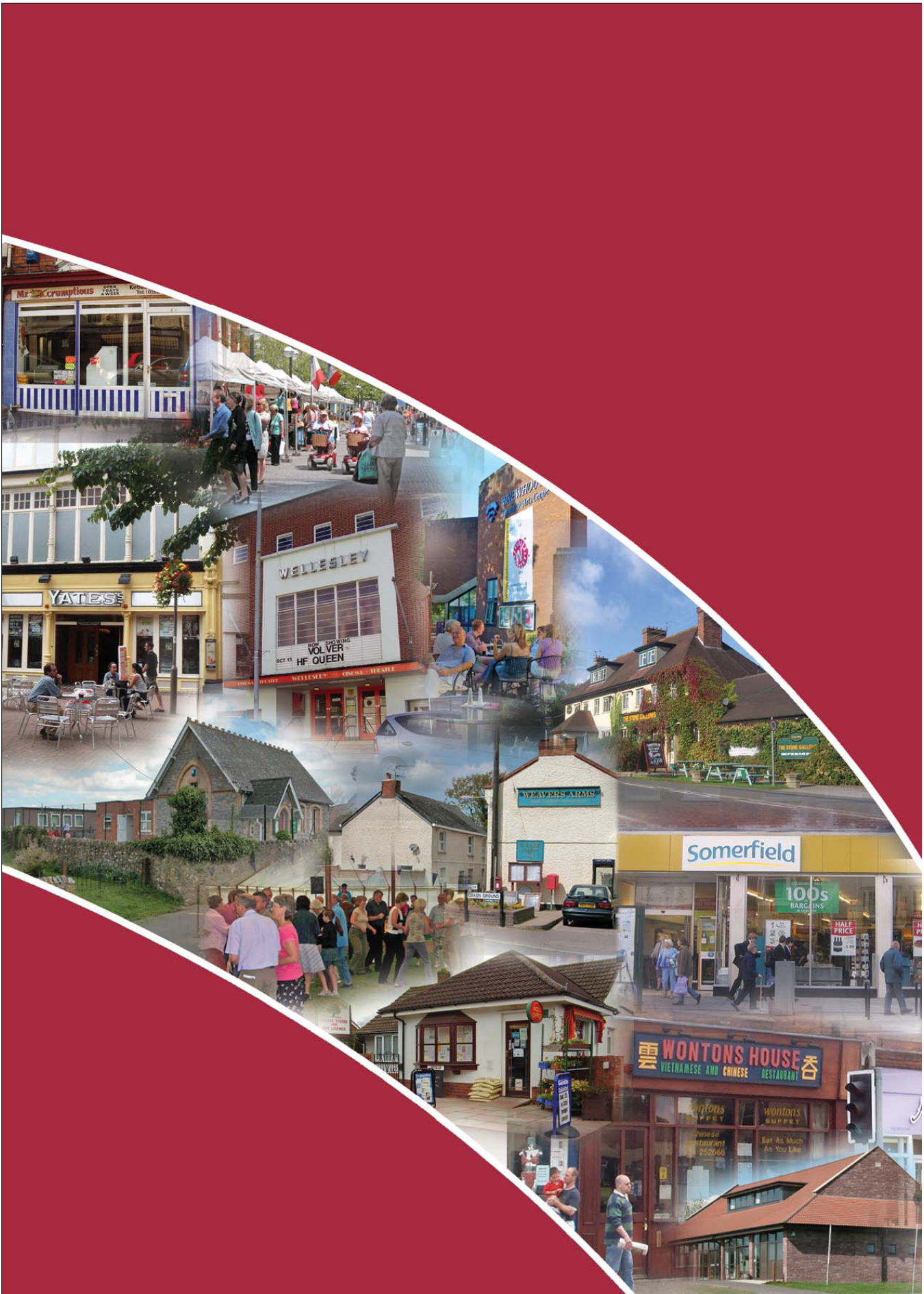
The specific changes in the policy are:

- The revised licensing policy places a presumption that there will be a last time of entry (1am) to licensed premises.
- The revised licensing policy encourages applicants to give more consideration to noise related issues, glass related injuries, smokers, smoking outside their premises and underage sales.

All stakeholders, including licensed premises and responsible authorities, have been consulted on the proposed revised policy. The draft policy had also been considered by the Licensing Committee at its meeting on 6 November and the Executive on 14 November.

It is therefore **RECOMMENDED** that the revised Licensing Policy be agreed and the wording be amended to read, "that applicants for late licensed premises will be expected to provide detailed reasons in their operating schedules for seeking to allow any new entry to the premises after 1am."

Councillor Mel Mullins



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If you wish to make comments on this Licensing Policy or if you want further information regarding the Licensing Act 2003 please contact:

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Information is also available from:

The Department for Culture Media and Sport, 2-4 Cockspur Street, LONDON, SW1Y 5DH.  
Telephone: 020 7211 6200 E-mail [enquiries@culture.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@culture.gov.uk) Internet: [www.culture.gov.uk](http://www.culture.gov.uk)  
The Licensing Act can be viewed at: [www.hms0.gov.uk/acts/acts2003/20030017.htm](http://www.hms0.gov.uk/acts/acts2003/20030017.htm)

The Secretary of State's Guidance can be viewed at:  
<http://www.culture.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/597B72E2-61BC-44AD-98D2-6BC7208FD740/0/RevisedGuidanceJune2007.pdf>

## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Background

1.1.1 Taunton Deane Borough Council (the Council) is the Licensing Authority under the Licensing Act 2003 (the Act). It is empowered to administer the following in respect of the sale and/or supply of alcohol and the provision of regulated entertainment and late night refreshment within the District:

- premises licences including provisional statements, variations, transfers, interim authorities and reviews
- club premises certificates
- temporary events notices
- personal licences

1.1.2 Unless otherwise stated this licensing policy will not depart from the revised Secretary of State's Guidance laid before Parliament on 28 June 2007. Therefore to reduce repetition if matters are detailed in the Guidance they may not be included in this policy.

### 1.2 Aim

The Act requires the Licensing Authority to carry out its various licensing functions so as to promote the four licensing objectives.

The aim of this Licensing Policy is to set out how the Licensing Authority seeks to promote the four licensing objectives, which are:

- the prevention of crime and disorder
- public safety
- the prevention of public nuisance
- the protection of children from harm

These four objectives will be the paramount considerations when determining a course of action in relation to the Licensing Authority's licensing functions. Each objective will be given equal importance.

### 1.3 Purpose

The main purpose of this policy is to provide clarity to applicants, interested parties and responsible authorities on how the Licensing Authority will determine applications to supply alcohol, provide regulated entertainment and operate late night refreshment.

### 1.4 Consultation

1.4.1 Before determining its policy for any three year period, the Licensing Authority will consult the following:

- the Chief Officer of Police
- the Fire Authority
- persons/bodies representative of local holders of premises licences
- persons/bodies representative of local holders of club premises certificates
- persons/bodies representative of local holders of personal licences
- persons/bodies representative of businesses and residents in the District



- 1.4.2 The Licensing Authority may consult beyond the statutory requirements, and seek comments from additional bodies, groups or individuals.

## 1.5 Fundamental Principles

- 1.5.1 This Policy sets out the Licensing Authority's general approach to the making of licensing decisions and is consistent with the provisions of the Act. Nothing in the Policy will undermine the right of any individual to apply for permissions and to have any such application considered on its individual merits. Similarly, nothing in the policy will override the right of any person to make representations on an application or to seek a review of a licence or certificate where provisions have been made to do so in the Act.
- 1.5.2 The Licensing Authority may only impose conditions on a premises licence if they are consistent with the operating schedule or after receiving relevant representations and only if a Licensing Committee or Licensing Sub-Committee determines the matter. Any conditions attached to the licence must relate to the promotion of the Licensing Objectives.
- 1.5.3 The Licensing Authority acknowledges that the Government believes that in some circumstances flexible hours for the sale of alcohol can help to ensure that the concentrations of customers leaving premises simultaneously are avoided.
- 1.5.4 It is necessary to consider national guidance in the context of local circumstances. Where licensed premises are surrounded by housing, unrestricted extensions of hours could extend the time of such disturbance to later in the night. The Guidance acknowledges that tighter control may be justified in residential areas and the Licensing Authority considers that this is particularly relevant to parts of its administrative area, always having regard to the individual merits of any application.
- 1.5.5 In general terms the Licensing Authority will closely scrutinise applications for premises licences showing a late terminal hour so as to be satisfied that they will have no adverse impact on the licensing objectives.
- 1.5.6 Once people are beyond the control of the individual, club or business holding the relevant authorisation licensing law is not the primary mechanism for the general control of nuisance and anti-social behaviour. Licensing law will always be part of a holistic approach to the management of the evening and night-time economy in this Borough.

## 2. General Principles

In all applications relating to premises, the Legislation requires applicants to specify methods by which they will promote the four licensing objectives in their operating schedules. The operating schedule should include reference to the measures the applicant intends to use to promote the licensing objectives.

### 2.1 Revisions to Policy.

- 2.1.1 The Licensing Authority have a duty to review their Licensing Policy and have therefore consulted with Responsible Authorities and other stakeholders since the implementation of the legislation in order to identify topics that may need to be added or removed from the Licensing Policy.
- 2.1.2 Specific areas of concern include:
- **Sales of alcohol from "On" and "Off" licensed premises to underage drinkers.**
  - **Glass related injuries.**
  - **Noise from music on the premises.**
  - **Nuisance and disturbance from smokers immediately outside premises.**

- 2.1.3 Applicants for a premises licence are advised to include in their Operating Schedule, (where applicable) specifically how they prevent sales of alcohol to persons under 18, minimise glass related injuries and or assaults, prevent noise from licensed premises become a nuisance and manage customers outside their premises who are smoking.
- 2.1.4 **Crime Statistics locally indicate that a last time of entry condition is assisting in the promotion of the licensing objectives. It is therefore expected that applicants for late licensed premises will be expected to provide detailed reasons in their operating schedules for seeking to allow any new entry to the premises after 1am."**

## 2.2 Children and cinemas

- 2.2.1 The Act requires applicants for premises licences and club premises certificates to copy details of their applications to a body which:
- represents those who, in relation to any such area, are responsible for, or interested in, matters relating to the protection of children from harm, and
  - is recognised by the Licensing Authority for that area for the purposes of this section as being competent to advise it on such matters.
- 2.2.2 The Licensing Authority's policy is that the "Responsible Authority" in relation to the protection of children from harm will be Somerset County Council's Social Services Department at County Hall, Taunton, TA1 4DY. Further details will be available in the Licensing Authority's guidance documents.
- 2.2.3 The Licensing Authority will expect licensees of premises giving film exhibitions to include, in their operating schedules, arrangements for restricting children from viewing age restricted films. Such premises will be subject to a mandatory condition requiring that access will be restricted to only those who meet the required age limit in accordance with any certificate granted by the British Board of Film Classification, (BBFC) or in specific cases where such certificates have not been granted, the Licensing Authority.
- 2.2.4 The Licensing Authority does not intend to adopt its own system of film classification but reserves the right to amend the classification imposed by the British Board of Film Classification.
- 2.2.5 If the Licensing Authority attaches an age-restriction to any film that differs from the BBFC classification or attaches one to an unclassified film, the information about the Licensing Authority's classification will be published on the Council's website at [www.tauntondeane.gov.uk](http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk).

## 2.3 Licensing Hours

- 2.3.1 With regard to licensing hours the Licensing Authority will consider each application on its individual merits.
- 2.3.2 Applications for premises licences with a terminal hour later than 12 midnight where the sale or supply of alcohol for consumption on the premises is the main activity or where the sale or supply of alcohol is accompanied by musical entertainment, will be subject to close scrutiny by the Responsible Authorities to ensure that there will be no adverse impact on the licensing objectives. Specifically, the applicant should ensure that the operating schedule for such a premises demonstrates how the licensing objectives will be met. Applicants are strongly recommended to seek the advice of both the Council's Licensing Officers and the Police in this regard.

- 2.3.3 This is a general policy and does not automatically mean that all applications will result in licences being granted until midnight or that no applications will be granted with a closing hour after midnight.
- 2.3.4 In considering these issues the Licensing Authority will give careful consideration to the nature of the venue proposed. For example, the Council is keen to promote establishments at which the service and consumption of alcohol is not the primary activity. These may include restaurants, theatres, cinemas, comedy clubs, galleries, museums, and similar venues. **The Licensing Authority's experience is that such venues are liable to give rise to fewer public concerns.**
- 2.3.5 The Licensing Authority will pay special regard to the proximity of residential uses to the proposed premises, the parking areas and routes taken by customers when arriving at and leaving the premises. Consideration will be given to the imposition of stricter noise control conditions, if representations are received in areas with a concentration of residential property.
- 2.3.6 The Licensing Authority considers that these issues will be of less significance where proposed premises are not within 250 metres of any residential property.
- 2.3.7 The Licensing Authority will expect premises to be cleared of patrons within a reasonable time of the terminal hour set for the premises. Applicants should state in their operating schedule the time they require to clear the premises. In normal circumstances, this will not exceed 30 minutes from the last sale of alcohol. Where the applicant can show that an extended period would assist in the promotion of the licensing objectives, the Council will consider permitting longer than 30 minutes.
- 2.3.8 Shops, stores and supermarkets will generally be free to provide sales of alcohol for consumption off the premises at any times when the retail outlet is open for shopping, unless there are good reasons for restricting those hours. An example would be where the Police make representations that the premises are a focus of disorder and disturbance.

## 2.4 Maximum Capacities

- 2.4.1 The type of entertainment offered on licensed premises and the closing hour of premises permitted to provide alcohol to the public often have a direct link to crime and disorder, public nuisance and public safety issues. For example, there is generally more likelihood of crime and disorder and public safety problems occurring in a music and dance venue permitted to sell alcohol and open until 3 am than there is in a well managed public house located in a quiet back street that provides limited regulated entertainment and closes at 11 pm.
- 2.4.2 The Licensing Authority believes that some of the problems that may occur in late night licensed premises may be controlled by good management practices. However, controlling the numbers of customers allowed into the premises will also assist in promoting the following three licensing objectives:
- the prevention of crime and disorder
  - public safety
  - the prevention of public nuisance

## 2.5 Late Night Refreshment

The Licensing Authority will expect applicants for licences, in respect of late night refreshment premises, to detail in their operating schedules how they intend to promote the licensing objectives and in particular how they intend to address queue management, litter and noise disturbance.

## 3.0 Licensing Approach

### 3.1 Partnership Working

- 3.1.1 The Council recognises that Licensing functions are not the only means of promoting the licensing objectives. Delivery must involve working in partnership with Planning, Environmental Health, the Police, the Fire Authority, the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, the Town Centre Manager, Pubwatch, local businesses and residents, Somerset County Council, transport operators and those involved with child protection.
- 3.1.2 The Council recognises that co-operation and partnership remain the best means of promoting the licensing objectives.

### 3.2 Integrating Strategies

- 3.2.1 There are many stakeholders involved in the leisure industry and many are involved in the promotion of the licensing objectives. A number of stakeholders' plans and strategies deal with matters related to the licensing function. Where this is the case the Council will aim, as far as possible, to coordinate them.
- 3.2.2 Cultural Strategy – The Council will monitor the impact of any decisions on the provision of regulated entertainment. The aim is not to deter live music, but to ensure that the licensing objectives are promoted. The Council will monitor the effect of licensing on the provision of regulated entertainment, particularly live music and dancing, to ensure that any licensing conditions that impose any restrictions, on such events, are proportionate and reasonable.
- 3.2.3 Racial Equality – The Council is required under race relations legislation to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups. The impact of these issues on the Licensing Policy will be monitored and amendments will be made as necessary.
- 3.2.4 Enforcement Policy – All licensing enforcement will be conducted in accordance with the Enforcement Concordat and the Environmental Health Enforcement Procedures.

### 3.3 Avoiding Duplication

- 3.3.1 The Licensing Authority recognises the need to avoid, so far as possible, duplication with other regulatory regimes such as health and safety at work, fire safety, building control and planning. Conditions will not be imposed if the matters concerned are already provided for in other legislation. However, other legislation may not always cover the unique circumstances that arise in connection with licensable activities and in such cases tailored conditions may be necessary but only if relevant representations are received.
- 3.3.2 Non-compliance with other statutory requirements may be taken into account in reaching a decision about whether or not to grant a licence but only if relevant representations are received.

### 3.4 Vicinity

- 3.4.1 The term “vicinity” is used in the Act on a number of occasions and, in particular, with reference to those “interested parties” who may lodge objections to applications for premises licences and who may make representations concerning existing premises licences. The Act defines an “interested party” as being “a person living in the vicinity, a body representing persons living in the vicinity, a person involved in a business in the vicinity or a body representing those persons”.

However, the Act does not define the term “vicinity”.

- 3.4.2 The Licensing Authority has decided that in order to assist applicants and residents it would be helpful to provide guidance as to how it will approach the meaning of the term “vicinity.” The Licensing Authority will normally treat the term “vicinity” as meaning within a 100 metre radius of the premises in question. However, it is open to an applicant to argue that, in particular instances, an objection from an “interested party” within this radius is not relevant, for example, where a major traffic route lies between the resident and the premises and noise from the premises is highly unlikely to affect the resident. It is also open to an “interested party” located outside of this radius to argue that a representation is valid, for example, where the resident lives on the route from the premises to bus stops or main taxi ranks.

### 3.5 Conditions

- 3.5.1 Conditions may only be attached if relevant representations are received, any such conditions attached to licences and certificates will be tailored to the individual style and characteristics of the premises and events concerned.
- 3.5.2 However, where it is considered necessary to promote one or more of the licensing objectives the Licensing Authority will consider attaching conditions, if relevant representations are received, drawn from the Pool of Model Conditions set out in Revised Secretary of State’s Guidance. This list is not exhaustive and additional conditions may be attached to any licence or authorisation, if a representation is received.

### 3.6 Enforcement

- 3.6.1 The Council is a signatory to the Enforcement Concordat and will follow the principles set out in it or any successor published by the newly formed Local Better Regulation Office.
- 3.6.2 The Council intends to use appropriate enforcement to promote the licensing objectives. Once licensed, it is essential that premises are monitored to ensure that they are run in accordance with their operating schedules, in compliance with the specific requirements of the Act and any licence conditions. It will also be important to monitor the District for unlicensed activities that require a licence.
- 3.6.3 The Licensing Authority has established protocols with Avon and Somerset Police Authority, Somerset County Council Trading Standards and Devon and Somerset Fire Authority on enforcement issues to ensure an efficient deployment of Police and Council officers.

### 3.7 Live Music, Dancing and Theatre

- 3.7.1 The Council recognises the need to encourage and promote a broad range of entertainment, particularly live music, dancing and theatre for the wider cultural benefit of the community and, in particular, for children and young people.
- 3.7.2 When considering applications for such events and the imposition of any conditions if representations are received on licences or certificates, the Licensing Authority will carefully balance the need to promote the licensing objectives against these wider cultural benefits.

## 4.0 Administrative Issues

### 4.1 Temporary Event Notices

- 4.1.1 The Act states that the organiser of a Temporary Event must give the Licensing Authority a minimum of 10 working days' notice. However, in a significant number of cases this time period would not allow enough time for the organiser to liaise with the fire authority, the police and the relevant Council officers to ensure that the event passes off safely with minimum disturbance to local residents.
- 4.1.2 The Licensing Authority recommends that the Licensing Authority and the Avon and Somerset Police receive Temporary Event Notices at least 28 days before the planned event.

### 4.2 Applicants for Personal Licences

The Licensing Authority places particular emphasis on the role of premises supervisors and licensees and, where the Police object, on the grounds of prevention of crime and disorder there will be a presumption against issuing a personal licence to any applicant with an unspent conviction for a relevant offence. If the applicant can demonstrate exceptional and compelling reasons for disregarding the conviction, this will be taken into consideration.

### 4.3 Large Scale Events

Large Scale events of a temporary or more permanent nature will generally require detailed planning and more consultation with responsible Authorities and possibly representatives of other organisation concerned with safety. For such events it is therefore recommended that applicants for large scale events follow the procedure as detailed in Large Scale Event Procedure which can be seen at [www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/licensingact2003/largeevents](http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/licensingact2003/largeevents) a hard copy of the document can be obtained by requesting a copy in writing to The Licensing Unit, The Deane House, Belvedere Road. Taunton. TA11HE.

### 4.4 Reviews of Licence or Club Premises Certificate

- 4.4.1 The Licensing Act details that; where a premises licence or club premises certificate has effect, an interested party or a responsible authority may apply to the relevant licensing authority for a review of the licence. The relevant licensing authority may, at any time, reject any grounds for review specified in an application under this section if it is satisfied that the ground is not relevant to one or more of the licensing objectives, or in the case of an application made by a person other than a responsible authority, that the ground is frivolous or vexatious, or the ground is a repetition.
- 4.4.2 The Licensing Authority can, on review of licence or certificate, revoke the licence or certificate, suspend the licence or certificate, remove the DPS, reduce hours or licensable activity or add conditions to the licence or certificate.
- 4.4.3 The Licensing Authority recommends that Persons or Bodies considering seeking a review should discuss the matter with the Licensing Unit to discuss possible alternatives and to ascertain the correct procedure.

### 4.5 Administration, Exercise and Delegation of Functions

- 4.5.1 The Council has a Licensing Committee, consisting of 15 elected members, to carry out its licensing functions and to make licensing decisions, except those functions relating to the making of a statement of licensing policy.

- 4.5.2 In the interests of speed, efficiency and cost-effectiveness the Committee will delegate certain decisions and functions to sub-committees and officers.
- 4.5.3 For example, where there are no relevant representations on an application for the grant of a premises licence or club premises certificate or Police objection to an application for a personal licence or to an activity taking place under the authority of a temporary event notice, these matters should be dealt with by officers.
- 4.5.4 The following table sets out the agreed delegation of decisions and functions to the Licensing Committee, Sub-Committees and officers.
- 4.5.5 This scheme of delegation does not prevent the referral of matters to a higher authority if considered appropriate in the circumstances of any particular case.

<b>MATTER TO BE DEALT WITH</b>	<b>SUB-COMMITTEE</b>	<b>OFFICERS</b>
Application for personal licence	If an objection is made	If no objection is made
Application for personal licence, with unspent convictions	All cases	
Application for premises licence/club premises certificate	If a representation is made	If no representation is made
Application for provisional statement	If a representation is made	If no representation is made
Application to vary premises licence/club premises certificate	If a representation is made	If no representation is made
Application to vary designated premises supervisor	If a police objection is made	All other cases
Request to be removed as designated premises supervisor		All cases
Application for transfer of premises licence	If a police objection is made	All other cases
Application for interim authority	If a police objection is made	All other cases
Application to review premises licence/club premises certificate	All cases	
Decision on whether a complaint is irrelevant, frivolous, vexatious, etc		All cases
Decision to object when local authority is a consultee and not the relevant authority considering the application	All cases	
Determination of a police objection to a temporary event notice	All cases	

## APPENDIX A

### GLOSSARY OF TERMINOLOGY

Club Premises Certificate	means a certificate granted to a qualifying club under the Act in respect of premises occupied, and habitually used for the purposes of a club. Alcohol must not be supplied other than to members by or on behalf of the club.
Entertainment facilities	are defined as facilities for enabling persons to take part in entertainment for the purpose of being entertained. The descriptions of entertainment are making music, dancing, and entertainment of a similar description to that falling within those mentioned above. This definition is subject to Part 3 of Schedule 1 to the Licensing Act 2003 (interpretation).
Hot food or hot drink	<p>food or drink supplied on or from any premises is “hot” for the purposes of Schedule 2 to the Act if the food or drink, or any part of it:</p> <p>(i) before it is supplied, is heated on the premises or elsewhere for the purpose of enabling it to be consumed at a temperature above the ambient air temperature and, at the time of supply, is above that temperature,</p> <p>or</p> <p>(ii) after it is supplied, may be heated on the premises for the purpose of enabling it to be consumed at a temperature above the ambient air temperature.</p>
Interested Party	<p>is defined as:</p> <p>(i) a person living in the vicinity of the premises</p> <p>(ii) a body representing persons who live in that vicinity</p> <p>(iii) a person involved in a business in that vicinity</p> <p>(iv) a body representing persons involved in such businesses.</p>
Licensable activities and qualifying club activities	<p>are defined in the Licensing Act as:</p> <p>(i) the sale by retail of alcohol</p> <p>(ii) the supply of alcohol by or on behalf of a club to, or to the order of, a member of the club</p> <p>(iii) the provision of regulated entertainment</p> <p>(iv) the provision of late night refreshment - for those purposes the following licensable activities are also qualifying club activities:</p> <p>(i) the supply of alcohol by or on behalf of a club to, or to the order of, a member of the club for consumption on the premises where the supply takes place</p> <p>(ii) the sale by retail of alcohol by or on behalf of a club to a guest of a member of the club for consumption on the premises where the sale takes place</p> <p>(iii) the provision of regulated entertainment where that provision is by or on behalf of a club for members of the club or members of the club and their guests.</p>



Operating Schedule	<p>means a document that must be prepared by or on behalf of an applicant for a premises licence or club premises certificate containing a statement including the following matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the relevant licensable activities</li> <li>• the times at which licensable activities are to take place and any other times the premises are to be open to the public</li> <li>• information about the Designated Premises Supervisor</li> <li>• whether any alcohol sales are on and/or off sales</li> <li>• the steps being taken to promote the licensing objectives.</li> </ul>
Personal Licence	<p>authorises an individual to supply or authorise the supply of alcohol in accordance with a premises licence.</p>
Premises Licence	<p>authorises the premises to be used for one or more licensable activity.</p>
Provision of late night refreshment	<p>is defined as the provision of hot food or hot drink to members of the public, or a section of the public on or from any premises, whether for consumption on or off the premises between 11 pm and 5 am</p> <p>or</p> <p>at any time between those hours when members of the public, or a section of the public, are admitted to any premises, a person supplies, or holds himself willing to supply, hot food or hot drink to any persons, or to persons of a particular description, on or from those premises, whether for consumption on or off the premises.</p>
Regulated Entertainment	<p>is defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) a performance of a play</li> <li>(b) an exhibition of film</li> <li>(c) an indoor sporting event</li> <li>(d) a boxing or wrestling entertainment</li> <li>(e) a performance of live music</li> <li>(f) any playing of recorded music</li> <li>(g) a performance of dance</li> <li>(h) entertainment of a similar description to that falling within paragraph (e), (f) or (g) where the entertainment takes place in the present of an audience and is provided for the purpose, or for purposes which include the purpose, of entertaining that audience. Any reference to an audience includes a reference to spectators. This definition is subject to Part 3 of Schedule 1 to the Licensing Act 2003 (interpretation).</li> <li>(i) Entertainment Facilities. This definition is subject to Part 1 of Schedule 1 to the Licensing Act 2003 (interpretation).</li> </ul>
Responsible Authority	<p>is defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Chief Officer of Police for any Police area in which the</li> </ul>

	<p>premises are situated</p> <p>(ii) the Fire Authority for any area in which the premises are situated</p> <p>(iii) the enforcing authority within the meaning given by section 18 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 for any area in which the premises are situated</p> <p>(iv) the local planning authority within the meaning given by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (c.8) for any area in which the premises are situated</p> <p>(v) the local authority by which statutory functions are exercisable in any area in which the premises are situated in relation to minimising or preventing the risk of pollution of the environment or of harm to human health</p> <p>(vi) a body which:</p> <p>(a) represents those who, in relation to any such area, are responsible for, or interested in matters relating to the protection of children from harm, and</p> <p>(b) is recognised by the licensing authority for that area for the purposes of this section as being competent to advise it on such matters</p> <p>(vii) any licensing authority (other than the relevant licensing authority) in whose area part of the premises is situated</p> <p>(viii) in relation to a vessel:</p> <p>(a) a navigation authority (within the meaning of section 221(1) of the Water Resources Act 1991 (c.57)) having functions in relation to the waters where the vessel is usually moored or berthed or any waters where it is or is proposed to be, navigated at a time when it is used for licensable activities</p> <p>(b) the Environment Agency</p> <p>(c) the British Waterways Board, or</p> <p>(d) the Secretary of State</p> <p>(e) a person prescribed for the purpose of this subsection.</p>
Temporary Event	is defined as the use of premises for one or more of the licensable activities during a period not exceeding 96 hours usually where a premises licence covering the licensable activity is not in place.
Temporary Event Notice	a document giving notice to the Licensing Authority of intention to hold a temporary event.

## **PART II REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE**

### **COUNCIL MEETING - 11 DECEMBER 2007**

#### **Report of Councillor Ross Henley – Leader of the Council**

Since my last report many things have happened and a lot of issues have positively progressed.

One of these is the Team Somerset Agenda following the unitary decision. The 5 District Councils and the County Council pledged to work closer together towards a programme of closer co-operative working to deliver joint efficiency savings.

Now of course we in Somerset are way ahead of the game with our Waste Partnership and our ISIS Initiative. After an unnecessary delay, ISIS has launched and become Southwest One and will, I hope, become the success we all hope for. Just this week the remainder of the staff seconded to work for Southwest One started their new roles. 650 staff in Somerset from the County, IBM and Taunton Deane working together on this project. IBM will also open a new office in Taunton. I am really excited at the prospects of the efficiency savings Southwest One can bring for the Taunton Deane taxpayer.

The Waste Partnership goes from strength to strength and we look forward to trials in the New Year of doorstep cardboard and plastic recycling in Taunton Deane. Something we can all celebrate. The trials will follow several different collection systems. The nature and location of the different trials will be advised later.

#### **THE BUDGET**

The Executive will report to Overview and Scrutiny proposals on Thursday to totally close the budget gap. This has not been an easy process but much work has done by the Executive and Directors to get to this position. I am confident that these proposals are sustainable and robust and that is the view also of Directors. To totally close the budget gap which stood at £1.1 million before Christmas is, I think, an achievement. The pressure put on this authority by the unfair funding of the concessionary bus fares scheme. Government should pick up the bill for all the cost of the tickets used and not expect local councils to find huge amounts of money which is crippling many Councils. That is also the view of the South West Local Government Association as well and they have written to Government on these lines. I will stress though that this is a wonderful scheme and I totally support it. It was a great decision by the Government to introduce this but we now need them to fund it properly.

## NORTH CURRY

This week sees the Public Inquiry at North Curry Village Hall regarding the gypsy incursion. It is very frustrating for all to see this problem rumble on and on. However, this administration totally supports the residents of North Curry and will continue to pursue this matter with the utmost diligence. I have held a meeting with the County Portfolio Holder for Resources to see if there can be found alternative gypsy provision in the Borough. This is crucial to this whole problem.

## COTFORD ST LUKE

It is understandable that residents of Cotford St Luke were so concerned at an unauthorised planning incursion recently onto a farmer's field. This Council moved like lightening to ensure that a Stop Notice was issued on this site and that the relevant legal and Enforcement Officers were dispatched to the site that weekend. I would like to thank our staff who worked so hard that weekend to ensure everything that could be done. I also thank Tony Beavan who phoned me and kept me informed of all developments as they progressed that weekend. I attended a public meeting last Wednesday to talk to residents to discuss their concerns.

## THE MARKET

This month marks the end of an era for the market in Taunton with the last sales on site at Priory Bridge Road. This is a sad day for many people but will also open up other opportunities for that site. Project Taunton will ensure we get the best return of this land after the market vacation.

## THE BREWHOUSE

Just to say I have attended two really good shows at the Brewhouse recently and it was a reminder of what a good night out the place is and how important the theatre is to our long term future for Taunton. We will continue to support them through the difficult times the Brewhouse has had and will. Give them all the encouragement they need.

## FINALLY

I would like to wish all of the staff and members a very Happy Christmas and New Year and thank everyone for all the support I have had as Leader since my appointment in May.

Councillor Ross Henley

## **Council Meeting 11 December 2007**

### **Report of Councillor Steve Brooks - Communications**

#### **Public Relations**

The latest edition of Deane Dispatch has now been produced and distributed to local residents. I would like to thank Debbie Rundle for all the hard work she put into producing this publication.

We continue to maximise public relations opportunities across the Council. Over recent weeks, we have been promoting issues as varied as tackling gulls in Taunton town centre to the introduction of the new, cashless parking payment system. Between April and the end of October we issued a total of 94 press releases and the Council received coverage in 793 newspaper articles. Over the same period we dealt with an average of 9 media enquiries a week. The majority of the enquiries continue to be in the areas of Environmental Services and Planning Policy and Transportation. We keep a copy of all newspaper clippings which is available on request.

A media briefing involving the Council, Summerfield Homes and the National Trust was held on the affordable housing proposals for a site off Cheddon Road, near Ladymead School. The briefing attracted the County Gazette and the Western Morning News while the Western Daily Press photographer attended at Fyne Court and at the Deane House. The story was carried prominently by the Western Daily Press and Western Morning News, the two major regional newspapers, and both stories were positive. Further coverage is expected when the consultations are held on 17 January at Ladymead School.

Over the coming weeks, one of our priorities will be the promotion of the work to be undertaken by the various Task at Finish Reviews. We want to encourage local people to get involved in some of these reviews, so as part of the pilot project we will be using public relations to promote the changes.

We also continue to work closely with partners, including Project Taunton and Somerset Waste Partnership enabling effective partnership public relations for each of the Projects.

#### **Website**

At the moment our focus is on keeping the website up-to-date. Fiona Baker is currently on maternity leave and we are in the process of identifying someone to provide temporary cover until she returns.

#### **Consultation and Information**

We are working on a Data Segmentation project. This project follows on from the work TDBC has done with the Local Government Association on "Measuring Customer Satisfaction" earlier this year.

The LGA project recommended that local authorities should work to understand differences in the way communities in their areas feel about the area and experience the Council's services.

We are currently looking into which groups of TDBC residents are least satisfied with the Council. This involves segmenting the data from the Best Value User General survey by:

- ward
- age
- gender
- ethnic group
- disability

The first stage is to develop an interactive way of showing the differences in satisfaction with the Council and our services in the different ward. This will also support the work of the Area Working Partnerships.

The LGA project also developed a Data Protocol. A data protocol is a standard way of keeping data. In the case of this project the data is about people who use local services. The data is recorded in a standard way prescribed by the protocol so that they can be stored and compared with other data. In this way, information from several different sources, such as other surveys and information about the local area, can be brought together and analysed. This enables us to build up a clear picture of people in a local area and their preferences, opinions, and experience of services. We are working on implementing this Data Protocol here at TDBC.

### **Other Communications**

We continue to support the communications connected with the ongoing changes within the Council as our staff second over to Southwest One. Communications will continue to be a key priority during this transition phase.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish all of you a very happy Christmas and we look forward to working together in the New Year.

## **Council Meeting 11 December 2007**

### **Report of Councillor Simon Coles – Planning and Transportation**

#### Park&Ride East Taunton

Somerset County Council have submitted a planning application for a Park&Ride site at Cambria Farm and this scheme is now out to consultation with the Public. Should this application be approved it is envisaged that work would commence at around Easter 2008 and be completed around the end of January 2009.

#### Ringo cashless parking comes to Taunton Deane

I am pleased to announce that following discussions held with the manufacturer we have decided to install the Ringo payment by phone system in most of our car parks it is hoped that these will be installed and operational by Christmas. This system allows motorists to pay for or extend their stay in any of our car parks that have a Ringo sign on the notice board by the simple placing of a phone call and paying by card, thus removing the need for racing back to the car park for a specific time to avoid a potential overstay. Needless to say our Parking Attendants will have all the required equipment to be able to ascertain if any particular vehicle has had a valid ticket purchased for it.

#### Development Management Staffing

We are still recruiting for two Area Planning Manager posts. Advertisements have been placed and when the responses have been evaluated suitable candidates will be interviewed and hopefully appointments made. In the meantime we continue with our current arrangement of using two part time staff to ease the workload.

#### Monkton Heathfield Major Planning Application

The consortium leading this application had its application turned down by the planning committee at the planning meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2007. This matter will now go to the planning inspectorate for determination, a date for which is expected any day now, but it is envisaged that this will be around Easter 2008

Taunton Cider Factory Norton Demolition work of the factory buildings and site clearing on this important site continue apace. The first phase of ground works have been started and it is hoped that the building work will now speed up and the 370 houses will be completed without any further delay along with employment and community facilities all of which are to be welcomed in Norton Fitzwarren.

It just remains for me to wish everyone a Happy Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous 2008

Councillor Simon Coles





## **Council Meeting 11 December 2007**

### **Report of Councillor Jefferson Horsley – Economic Development, Tourism & Property**

We have decided to divide the report into 2 Parts. The first part highlights the involvement of the Portfolio Holder and the second part concentrates on the work of the Economic Development Unit carrying out the corporate priorities of the Council. The two parts coalesce, of course, both striving to fulfill the needs and ambitions of the council.

#### **PART 1**

##### **a) Property**

This part of the portfolio has been for far too long the “Cinderella” of the Council. As we become more and more involved in attaining desirable economic, social and environmental goals, it will be necessary for the Council to devise a strategy which looks at property as assets which can work for the Council at all levels. The position is becoming even more vital with the establishment of South West One.

For us to obtain both our political requirements and funding future needs, we need to move towards a much more commercial approach to property ownership. Accordingly I have asked the Chief Executive to reinstate the importance of the Asset Management Plan and give it a much higher priority than it has had hitherto. I am also asking colleagues to ensure that the possible disposal of all properties (with the possible exception of those in the Housing Revenue Account) is immediately referred to the department and we can professionally have it looked at. We should be considering, where appropriate, acquiring property for the long term future.

##### **b) Project Taunton**

Apart from the understandable delay until next March/April of the choice of the preferred developer for us on the Firepool site, this has been a month of intense activity for the team.

Somerst County Cricket Club will be starting their (slightly) delayed work on the eastern end of the Coal Orchard car park now that our sale to them has been completed. We need a debate on the name we give to the public area which will emerge at the end of the scheme. I don't think Somerset Square is an appropriate one for what is so obviously something less than a triangle!

The work on the cultural quarter will require a commitment from Taunton Deane if the County is to get its Heritage Lottery Bid accepted for the museum, to find the

cash to develop Castle Green and Goodland Gardens in a way to bring the area into keeping with the ambitions. This means a real dilemma for the Council as Castle Green is a considerable revenue provider to the car parking revenue and the capital cost will also be large. Our experience in funding the land behind the Brewhouse (Somerset Square) is indicative of this.

Many of us visited the Princesshay shopping development in Exeter earlier this month. This illustrated for us the challenge that is before us to realise the vision for our primary shopping area both east and west of our High Street. It was put before us by Peter Clayton of Savills at the presentation given on 30 October. I am confident that Project Taunton will rise to this challenge.

The car parking report from Parsons Brinkerhoff is in draft form and has been presented to the Project Taunton Advisory Board. Much more work has to be done. It is fair to say that meeting the required shopping goals for the long term will see deficits in the number of car parking spaces for shopping especially between 2011 and 2014 whilst the redevelopment of the main shopping area is undertaken.

#### **c) The In2Somerset (Inward Investment Company)**

It has successfully recruited Honour Chapman as its Founding Chairperson, and is currently in the process of recruiting the staff team. It is hoped that the organisation will be up and running in February 2008 but there has been a delay in the appointment of a Chief Executive. I hope to be able to report to the Council the latest position after the next meeting of the Board on 6 December.

#### **d) Somerset/Taunton Chamber of Commerce**

Steve Kendall gave a presentation of the work of the department to a business breakfast of the chamber(s) on 28 November at the Wellsprings Centre. I supported him at this function. The relationship is good and needs careful nurturing if we are to enable businesses to succeed. There is little doubt that the establishment of the Taunton Town Centre Company has allowed the Chamber to unshackle itself from its former obsession with the town centre and retailing in particular. It now serves a much wider business diaspora and is more broadly representative of the local business scene. It also works well with the Somerset Chamber of Commerce and augurs well for the economic wellbeing of the County.

### **PART 2**

#### **a) Local Authority Business Growth Initiative (LABGI)**

Members will be aware that for the past two years this Council has received from Central Government significant grant funds to develop further business support and development projects. Initially announced as a three-year Programme,

Government has decided to close the Scheme early, and use the 'final year' to consult and re-define the Grant in readiness for its re-introduction in April 2009.

This decision has major implications for much of the work of the Economic development Unit, as projects such as Wellington Food Town, Community-based economic development, and a wide range of small-scale business initiatives have been supported by, or initiated by this Council using LABGI funds. In the current financial year some £330,000 was available through the grant, and an urgent review of avoidable commitments is currently underway in order to enable established three year funding agreements to be honoured.

**b) The Council's Economic Development Team has focused on a number of key activities over recent weeks::**

**1) Tourism**

- a) Work has started on the production of a new "welcome to Wellington leaflet" that will raise the profile of the Town on the back of the Wellington Food Town initiative, with the support of a number of businesses from the Town and surrounding area. The leaflet will be available in TIC's throughout Somerset, with a number available for distribution in shops and Farm shops in the Town and surrounding area.
  
- b) Work continues to develop the Destination Management products, and the development of a single Somerset Visitors guide for the 2008/09 Year. In addition a new DVD promoting Somerset has been produced and will be distributed through the national TIC network.

**2) Business Support**

- a) Members will be aware, and share my disappointment that the Waterlinks Project Bid for Lottery Funding has not been selected to proceed to the televised finals stage of the competition. Economic Development Staff have been working closely to develop two of the project proposals for Taunton (The WonderTree project and the Business Incubation Centre). Individual project reviews are underway to assess the potential to continue to deliver these projects without the Lottery funding.
  
- b) The Young Enterprise Primary Programme moves into its second year as a result of agreement at the Executive to continue to support the second year of the Programme. 24 Schools are expected to join the scheme this academic year. The first year of operation proved difficult for Young Enterprise to attract sufficient

'mentors' for the school groups, and an early request for Members of this Council to come forward as mentors has been issued.

- c) The Economic Development Unit has part funded and been instrumental in the organisation of the Somerset Careers fair, providing careers advice and access to a range of service providers for 13-19 year olds throughout the County, and held in Taunton during October this year. More than 60 exhibitors attended, and in excess of 1,000 people visited the event.
- d) A further round of Business Development Grant applications has been appraised in September, with 12 interested business owners attending business development training sessions delivered by Business Link, of which 6 business proposals proceeded to a formal application. 6 Grants of £2,000 have been offered to these companies.

### **3) Rural Economic Development**

- a) The EDU continues to support the development of the Wellington Food Town and Market and Coastal Town Initiative Steering Groups.

#### **Market & Coastal Towns**

A 'Visioning Event' is to be held in Wellington on 20 November, where over 100 representatives of local groups and organisations will be invited to give their views on the projects and activities that will significantly improve the experience of living in Wellington. The MCTI project intends to appraise proposals and to develop a range of key projects, which it is hoped that SWERDA will finance studies to determine costs, issues and deliverability for each. This process is expected to be largely complete in Summer 2009.

#### **Agriculture Sector Support**

The Council has organized a number of courses for Farmers this winter. On our 'IT for Farmers' programme eleven weekly half-day sessions are due to run between Mid-November and Mid-February for 24 delegates. As in previous years demand is strong and suggests that farmers are finding it valuable in streamlining and modernizing their businesses.

The Rural Team continues to work with the monthly Sheep Farmers Group, where a number of national experts have visited to talk on practical issues around veterinary and husbandry matters.

Although the recent movement restrictions following Foot and Mouth and Blue Tongue have impacted on our ability to visit and

discuss business issues with Farmers, it is clear that a high level of anxiety exists over the impacts of both diseases on the business viability of many farms in the Borough. We are continuing to monitor the situation.

Members of the Rural Team continue to work with local groups developing significant local projects, such as the Ten Parishes Centre Group and separate Children's Centre Group in Wiveliscombe.

#### **4. General Work of the Unit**

- a) The Unit is supporting the work of a number of Council Task and Finish groups, and it is hoped that the work of the initial round of Group work will be completed and reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel during the final quarter of this year.
- b) At the end of November 2007 we were advised that a joint bid to Government with Taunton East Development Trust for a proposal to develop a model to examine and support the transfer of council-owned assets to the voluntary sector had been successful. This project, which will not involve any direct transfer of assets during its lifetime, and involve no funding from the authority other staff time, will commence in January 2008.

**JEFFERSON HORSLEY  
30 NOVEMBER 2007**

## **Council Meeting 11 December 2007**

### **Report of Councillor Richard Lees – Leisure, Arts and Culture**

I herewith present my third report to Full Council as follows:-

#### **The Deano**

The Christmas edition of the Deano is currently being sent to every primary school aged child in Taunton Deane a copy has also been published on the Council's web site.

#### **Creative Business Exchange**

I was delighted to attend, for part of the time, the Creative Business Exchange held on Thursday 15 November at the Somerset College Centre for Enterprise. It was highly successful. This was Somerset's first creative business exchange to bring together artists, designers, performers and others to showcase their creative work and services. At the end of the evening many of the people attending wished me to thank Caroline Corfe the officer responsible for most of the arrangements, so I would like to do that here in my report - "Thank you Caroline".

#### **Play at Higher Holway**

Research for our new Play Strategy this year discovered that in the Holway and Blackbrook ward there is a combination of factors making it one of the most deprived wards in terms of play provision. This gives the project underway to develop play provision on the Higher Holway Open Space extra importance.

Currently tenders are being invited for a comprehensive project to involve children and young people in the design of the play provision and to construct the agreed design in time for the summer of 2008. Tenders will be received in early January followed by interviews for the shortlisted tenders with a start date for the project shortly afterwards.

#### **Allotments in Taunton Deane**

Work on the Strategy for allotments is nearing completion. The demand for plots is growing nationally and locally and there is a recognition of the wide ranging value that allotments can deliver - meeting people especially those from different backgrounds, learning new skills and passing them on, outdoor exercise to help combat obesity and other health problems, a low cost way to have a healthier diet, a reduction in food-miles and food packaging, reuse of materials, a refuge for wildlife. There are also other benefits not yet delivered by our allotments to be explored such as provision for people with disabilities and encouraging schools to use plots as an outdoor classroom.

The Draft Strategy will be going to the Scrutiny and Performance Panel in February for consideration.

### **Vivary Sensory Garden**

The Park Rangers for the town centre parks are working with pupils from Ladymead School to design a sensory garden for the park. This will provide interest and enjoyment through colour, texture, scent, sound and will be accessible to all. As someone who knows just how beneficial such a provision can be for the appropriate people it seeks to support and the wider community, I can only say how much I feel this provision is needed within our major park in Taunton.

### **French Weir Park**

North Town Primary School pupils will be planting crocus and daffodil bulbs in the park with the Park Rangers on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> December at 3.30pm. This will provide spring colour in the park for everyone to enjoy. A superb initiative involving pupils from a primary school

### **Vivary Tennis Courts**

Work is nearing completion on the Tennis Courts in Vivary Park. The surface and fencing has been replaced and it is anticipated that painting of the surface will take place this month. The work is being funded from the Vivary Park Trading Account and through developer contributions.

### **Football Foundation Applications**

It is with tremendous pleasure that I can announce that the Council has been successful in securing £532,656 towards the construction of new sports pavilions on Hamilton Gault and Galmington Playing Fields. The Football Foundation has awarded the grant with the necessary balance coming from Planning Gain contributions. It must be added here that Steve Hughes the officer concerned has put in a fantastic amount of work to help secure this funding and I feel here we should record the Council's appreciation for that hard work. The contract has been won by Bluestone and it is anticipated that the buildings will be completed in time for the 2008/09 football season.

It needs to be added here too, the Taunton & District Saturday League has won the Charter Standard Umbro Challenge as the league having the most clubs to have gained the Charter Standard Award. This has a monetary prize for the League and is a result of the close working relationship that has enabled the Council to have gained Football Foundation support and the League to win this award.

## **TONE LEISURE (TAUNTON DEANE) LIMITED ACTIVITIES**

### *Facility News*

- **Blackbrook Pavilion and Taunton Tennis Centre**

The third School Sports Festival took place at Blackbrook Pavilion and Taunton Tennis Centre in September. The festival, run in partnership with the Tone Schools Partnership, attracted over 1,000 year 5 children and 1,200 year 7 children to the facilities. Groups had a choice of 11 sports including golf, basketball and tag rugby, through to dance mats. The activities were led by 200 young sports leaders from local secondary schools, colleges and staff from the Tone Schools Partnership and Tone Leisure. All the children received an activity and club link brochure, giving details of how they can take up any of the activities they have tried.

Work is under way to resurface outdoor tennis courts at Taunton Tennis Centre.

- **Station Road Swimming Pool**

Station Road Swimming Pool has received the Institute of Sport and Recreation Management's (ISRM) National Pool Safety Award (NPSA). The award ensures the delivery of a safe, reliable service to customers. The NPSA is a voluntary scheme, open to all swimming pools in the UK. Station Road Pool is one of 31 pools in the UK to achieve the award and will use it as an internal assessment and improvement plan. The award scheme provides a robust examination by industry experts of the degree of compliance to a wide range of industry good practice requirements.

### **Forthcoming Events**

Forthcoming events include:

- The ever popular BIG Christmas Parties, which are running for six nights this year and will cater for approximately 2,500 customers. This year's experience includes a six-course dinner, chocolate fountain, live entertainment and disco.
- BBC stars of Strictly Come Dancing, Matthew and Nicole Cutler, bring Strictly Dance to Wellsprings on 8th March 2008. The evening will feature a five-dance entertainment section, followed by an audience participation dance, with professional dancers on hand throughout the evening.



## **Programme Initiatives**

As ever Tone Leisure has been looking at new ways to get more people into activity over the last few months. Programme initiatives include:

- Socca-tots, a football coaching programme, tailored to give toddlers the skills and co-ordination needed to play football. The programme was launched at Wellsprings, with an average of 12 children now taking part each week.
- Body Vive™, a low impact, 55 minute class integrating aerobic exercise for heart fitness, resistance training for strength and mobility for flexibility, has been successfully launched at Wellington Sports Centre and Wellsprings Leisure Centre. The course, currently run twice a week, is being expanded to cope with demand.

### *Sports and Health Development*

- **Taunton Deane Foot Anstey Aquathlon** - The Taunton Deane Foot Anstey Aquathlon, organised by Tone Leisure and Somerset RC Tri club, is being held on Sunday, 24th February 2008 at the Wellington Sports Centre and has widened its appeal for 2008 by encouraging team entries and launching its first ever 'Corporate Challenge'. Teams, either all female, all male, or mixed, share the challenge as one competitor completes the swim and the other the run. We hope this will make the event even more accessible to those who want to take part but who are not so confident in one of the disciplines. Businesses that enter a team in each of the three categories can also enter the 'Corporate Challenge'. This new challenge provides an opportunity for local businesses to get involved and compete against each other to see who will take home the inaugural Foot Anstey Corporate Challenge Trophy.

The Aquathlon involves two disciplines, swimming and running, in a continuous race against the clock. The race caters for varying levels of fitness with two distance options of short (500m swim/5k run) and long (1,000m swim/10k run). To make it completely fair, those who enter the traditional individual race doing both disciplines will compete in their age categories, which range from Youths 14-15 years to Vintage Vet at 60+. The entry forms are now available in all Tone Leisure Centres and on the event website [www.tauntondeanetri.co.uk](http://www.tauntondeanetri.co.uk).

In conclusion, may I take this opportunity to wish you all the very best as we enter the festive season.

Councillor Richard Lees

## **Council Meeting 11 December 2007**

### **Report of Councillor Mel Mullins – Environmental Services**

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

##### **1.1 Food Safety.**

###### Scores on the Doors

The Food Team are making good progress with 'Scores on the Doors'. Officers have already issued around 100 ratings for the Somerset Food Hygiene Star Rating scheme and have been providing businesses with information leaflets and a window sticker at the end of each routine food hygiene inspection. So far 12 premises have achieved the top 5 star rating, which means they comply fully with food hygiene requirements. The response from businesses has so far been overwhelmingly positive, with only one negative comment received.

###### Prosecution

In October, Dean Singer, Proprietor of the Royal Oak, Hilcommon pleaded guilty to food hygiene offences and was ordered to pay a total of £7100 in fines and costs.

###### Sampling Results

The food sampling programme is on target and so far this year surveys of raw eggs, fresh herbs, edible seeds, dishcloths, pies, salads from kebab shops, sandwich bars and self service salad bars have been carried out. All the results were satisfactory except for some of the fresh herbs, which were later re sampled and found to be satisfactory. A press release on sampling was issued.

##### **1.2 Environmental Protection Team**

###### New Public Sewer

Since the construction and completion of the public sewer project in Blagdon Hill the degree of pollution to the environment has dramatically reduced, as many residents opted to connect into the sewer. However, a few residents have decided not to connect in, and the Environmental Protection Team will continue to deal with pollution problems relating to old, defective septic tank systems as they arise.

###### Pest Control

The Council's Press Officer spent an enjoyable day with Pest Control recently, which will result in an article about the service being submitted to the local press. She saw the officers deal with rodent and insect infestation treatments and heard a few "interesting case" stories along the way.

### Dog Warden Service

The Environmental Protection Team has hosted an exercise, in which our Dog Warden Service was benchmarked against 32 other participating Authorities. The results show that our Services compare favourably in terms of extent, diversity and value. We are now actively working with other Somerset Authorities to find the best way to implement new duties that will be imposed upon all Councils in April of next year to deal with stray dogs outside of office hours, a transfer of responsibility from the Police.

### Gull Control

An article on the conclusion of the 2007 Gull control programme was released to the Press. The programme has again been very successful, with a total of 167 eggs being removed from 81 nests. We remain well on course for preventing the predicted increase in gull colony numbers, of 30%, year on year.

### Pollution Control

New Regulations will replace the existing Pollution Prevention Control (PPC) programme in April 2008. The new system, affecting all potentially polluting industries and processes, will streamline and combine the Waste Management Licence and PPC Permit, creating a common approach to applications, maintenance, surrender and enforcement.

### Sewer Incident

The Environmental Protection Team received a call from Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service on 15 November at 12.50 re: noxious smells possibly arising from the drains in East Street. As a precaution the area was evacuated from Woolworths to the end of East Street. The Fire Service did not request the attendance of Environmental Health. The two substances identified as causing the smells were Styrene and Hydrogen sulphide, the source of which was from nearby Wessex Water works. Wessex Water teams carried out forced ventilation to atmosphere using fans and the incident was brought under control at 18.55 same day. Shop owners were advised to ventilate their premises the following morning if residual smells were detected.

## **1.3 Health and Safety**

### Christmas Stocking Checks

The Health and Safety team will be checking up on the Christmas stocking to make sure the festive season is not spoiled by accidents. They will be visiting retail businesses in the run-up to Christmas, checking on stock rooms and public areas looking at storage and handling procedures and making sure that walkways are clear to prevent trip accidents. The team will offer practical advice to businesses on how to operate safely in the busy pre-Christmas season and ensure that agency staff, and young workers in particular, are given health and safety advice and supervised, where necessary, so they can work safely.

### Workplace Health and Safety Strategic Planning Event.

Along with two members of staff from Environmental Health, I recently attended the above event in Bristol organized by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The event was to consider more opportunities to extend local authority and HSE partnership working that has been so effective in the last two years, that utilises a range of joint interventions to promote health and safety compliance in businesses to meet national occupational accident and ill health reduction targets. The event also considered how health and safety inspectors could link up better with other regulators to target issues and organisations of joint concern and how regulators can engage with and contribute to the current Local Area Agreement process.

Councillor Mel Mullins

## **Council Meeting 11 December 2007**

### **Report of Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey – Housing Services**

#### **Deane Helpline**

I reported last time that a new contract had been negotiated with Tunstall to upgrade the system at the Control Centre from PCN4 to the new generation PCN5, which will provide the capacity to monitor new tele-care contracts coming on to the market. This contract was negotiated at virtually nil cost to Deane Helpline, but would have otherwise cost the Council approximately £61,000.

I am extremely pleased to report that as a direct result of this decision, Deane Helpline has been successful (out of 18 Control Centres) in winning new business in Devon. Devon County Council, in partnership with Tunstall, have around £700,000 of rolled over Preventative Technology Grant to spend on Telecare equipment over the next 18 months. The range of Telecare equipment will include smoke detectors, fall detectors, gas detectors, bed/chair occupancy sensors etc.

Deane Helpline will provide all the monitoring for the first six months during the pilot phase, and is likely to be well placed to become the long term supplier. Business from this contract is forecast to generate approximately £4,000 in additional revenue for Deane Helpline in 2007/08, building gradually to a potential £30,000 in 2008/09. It is particularly important for the business to gain early experience and reputation in this expanding area of new business, which is why this news is particularly welcome.

#### **Towards a Positive Housing Future**

Members will each have received a copy of the report by Steve Partridge of the Housing Quality Network entitled, *Towards a Positive Housing Future*. This is a report by a leading national housing finance expert who has looked specifically at the financial position of Taunton Deane Borough Council, and recommends ways in which we may be able to exploit the very significant changes in housing policy which are occurring at national level. Members who attended his briefing sessions on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2007 will, I'm sure, agree that the sessions were informative and stimulating, and most importantly gave us some of the ingredients of an exciting vision for the future. The Chief Housing Officer will be progressing this vision in a report to members in the new year.

## **New Lettings**

I have recently taken the opportunity to shadow the Rent Voids Recovery Team, which deals with the management of vacant properties and the re-letting of properties to incoming tenants. I was keen to see vacant properties being prepared for re-let with my own eyes. Despite the significant cut to the Re-let Budget, made as a contribution to the 1.85 million pounds per annum savings being re-invested to achieve the Decent Homes standard, the standard of re-let properties is generally reasonable. I intend to shadow other teams in the Housing Service during the new year in order to gain further experience of the service customers are actually receiving.

## **National and Local News: RSL “Merger Mania”**

There has been a lot of discussion in the housing press recently about the increasing numbers of Housing Associations which are merging and creating group structures. On the plus side, merging Housing Associations will argue that they are attempting to reach a size of optimum and regional efficiency, whilst other commentators say that huge landlords are being created which are out of touch with their communities. Locally, the LSVT South Somerset Homes is in talks with Arcadia Housing Group (main operating company Knightstone Housing Association) and consulting tenants with a view to possibly coming together in the new year.

## **National News: The Calcutt Review of Housebuilding Delivery**

The Calcutt Review, which was referred to in the Housing Green Paper, reported on 22<sup>nd</sup> November. Its purpose was to examine how new homes supply is affected by the housebuilding industry. The following points from the report may be of interest to members:

- The housebuilding industry is considered to be in shape to deliver the homes we need for future generations, and capable of delivering 240,000 homes per annum
- There are individual cases where housebuilders hold land for longer than they need, but the current evidence does not support the suggestion that this practice is widespread
- Preferred housebuilding partners should be invited to engage with the Local Strategic Partnership

Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey  
Housing Executive Member

## **Council Meeting 11 December 2007**

### **Report of Councillor Francesca Smith**

#### **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

Work on the Member Charter is continuing and the Council's Action Plan has now been submitted for approval. Members will have received details of a draft skills framework and I would encourage everyone to respond if they have any views or comments.

Officers have been working in partnership with 40 Commando Royal Marines in planning an event to mark their return from active service in Afghanistan next year. Following a request from the Marines, they will be exercising their Freedom and parading through the town to an open air Thanksgiving Service. Further details will be notified to members just as soon as they become available.

David Greig, the Council's Parish Liaison Officer has been continuing his regular visits to meetings of parish councils. He has been taking the opportunity to deliver ethics and probity training at each meeting which has proved an excellent way of giving this important subject as much coverage as possible within the parish councils.

New legislation has created a new framework for local authority Standards Committees to take on greater responsibility for upholding ethical standards locally. Our Standards Committee are currently working on procedures and protocols for delivering this new method of local regulation.

#### **PERSONNEL**

##### **JOB EVALUATION**

The formal appeals process is now underway with almost all informal appeals now having been heard. Formal appeals are considered by a panel of trained employees with a JE expert. Once all of panels have been completed and the results are known individuals will be notified of their individual result. This will be early in 2008.

##### **ABSENCE**

New measures to try and cut absence are currently being trialled in 4 areas of the Council. This involves people phoning a Director on their first day of absence. Steady progress is also being made generally to reduce the average days lost due to sickness. The Absence Working group and the Healthy Workplace group have been merged into one working group and their first re-launched meeting was successful.

A re-launch of the 'Wellbeing' package is planned for April 2008

Introduction South West One - From 1 December the HR team will be part of South West one and induction events will be taking place during the week commencing 3 December.

Policy Development - A number of HR policies are being reviewed in the light of new requirements and keeping pace with developments and the needs of the Council.

Partnership Working - Professional HR support to areas of the Council looking at more partnership working with other Authorities is taking place. The main emphasis

has been in the contractual and legal position for employees transferring to or working with other organisations.

## **CORPORATE SUPPORT SERVICES**

Work on the Southwest One project still continues and meetings with IBM on service delivery and transformation projects for Customer contact, plus work streams for Customer Contact, Corporate Administration and WP, Design and Print and Facilities have been on-going with relevant key project leads within IBM. Majority of the time for the Corporate Support Services Manager has been taken up with these tasks and with ensuring that the services can deliver the day job as well.

### **Customer Services:**

From 1<sup>st</sup> October – 28<sup>th</sup> November 26,242 calls were managed through the contact centre with 59% being dealt with entirely within Customer Services. A total of 5,028 people have been helped at Main Reception and 1,108 at Planning Reception. 4,806 people visited Wellington Community Office.

Customer Services started to pilot the new sickness absence monitoring arrangements on 1<sup>st</sup> October, however from an operational point of view there has not been a great change in the absence rates.

### **Design and Print:**

Work continues with assisting services on their professional design and print requirements. Throughput of work is slightly down on this time last year but it is expected to even out by year end. Design and Print have managed to get the litho printer back up and running for a minimal amount of work (i.e. letterheads) and this will assist to keep costs down.

### **Corporate Administration/Facilities/WP:**

Corporate Administration continue to work with services on providing cost effective solutions for large mail requirements and have been working with services to see how they can assist with new initiatives in the coming year.

Facilities continue to work with agency staff covering the morning opening and evening closing of Deane House.

All posts covered by temporary staff are under discussion with IBM to agree how these will be filled in the future.

## **ICT SERVICE**

The majority of ICT service work is connected with Southwest One. The ICT service went through service take on, and effectively went live on 1st November, and in the lead up to and since that date ICT have been working closely with new colleagues from Somerset County Council and with IBM to start making the many changes that will be maturing over the coming weeks and months

The main issues/event from an operational perspective is the HMRC records loss incident. Whilst TDBC have robust controls in place for our data storage and management processes, we cannot be complacent over this. The ICT Manager Simon Kirkham has been working with Chris Gunn (of South West Audit) on a review of all existing processes where data is exchanged with other organisations. As part of that, work is being undertaken with all Service Managers about what we currently do, once we have completed the review I will report back to Full Council



## **REVENUES & BENEFITS SERVICE UNIT**

As Members will be aware, there have been two information reports issued recently on the Revenues & Benefits Service's performance. The first is a quarterly update on our progress against collection targets. This shows that while we may be slightly behind our targets for "in-year" collection for Council Tax and Business Rates at the end of September 2007, we hope to achieve the desired out-turn by 31 March 2008. It is pleasing to see how well Taunton Deane is performing in comparison with neighbouring Somerset Authorities in this area.

The second information report focuses on performance in Housing & Council Tax Benefit administration. Given the understandably poor results in Best Value Performance Indicators last year, following the migration of data from the Revenues & Benefits in-house system to new software, the service has demonstrated remarkable improvement showing that at the end of the second quarter, performance was the top quartile in many areas.

One of the more notable cases appearing before the Court this month for Benefit Fraud involved a woman who failed to declare savings of over £53k. Because of her false declarations, we overpaid Housing and Council Tax Benefit of £11k. The Judge in the case decided to defer sentencing for her offence until December 2007 to ensure the cheques she gave us to repay the overpaid benefit are against cleared funds.

## **FINANCIAL SERVICES**

In recent weeks the finance service has been concentrating on the detailed work behind the budget, this has included meeting with budget holders and managers and firming up the assumptions behind the Medium Term Financial Plan. Financial Services have also been providing support to Managers in the preparation of savings plans which will be necessary to close the anticipated budget gap for 2008/09. Recruitment of a new Housing Accountant is underway and Financial Services have also been working with IBM/SouthWest One in anticipation of service take on by SouthWest One on 1 December. Financial Services have also recently been working with external auditors, the Audit Commission, following up the recommendations that they have made on their Final Accounts and Use of Resources judgements for 2006/07. It is pleasing to note that the Council continues to score 3 out of 4 for Use of Resources - especially when there has been so much going on recently with the start of SouthWest One.

## **Legal Services**

Legal Services have been heavily involved with a number of issues, the forthcoming planning enquiry into the planning applications for the "gypsy" site at Oxen Lane North Curry. Legal Services have also been involved in the report that went to the Planning Committee concerning the development proposals for Monkton Heathfield and it is likely that there will be a significant public enquiry into the non-determination of the planning application early in the spring next year. There has been on-going involvement with elements of the projects under the Project Taunton banner together with various social housing developments. The Land Charges unit is undergoing a review and the results of which will be reported in the near future.

## **Scrutiny and Performance Management**

### **Scrutiny**

The Scrutiny Pilot under the new working arrangements is continuing. Councillors started on four new Task and Finish Reviews in November – Renewable Energy; Delivery of larger housing schemes; Housing and anti-social behaviour; and Rural Stagnation. There are more in the pipeline to commence shortly.

### Performance / CPA

The Annual Report 2006/07 has been published which details TDBC achievements over the past year and our plans for the next year. This is a statutory publication and includes all of our performance indicators and targets, a statement on our contracts and details how we plan to address our weaknesses.

The half year update of performance against our Corporate Strategy objectives, performance indicators and budget position will be taken to the Strategy and Performance Panel on the 18<sup>th</sup> December for Scrutiny.

The Audit Commission have sent us their draft 'Use of Resources Judgement' report for 2006/07. This report still awaits moderation, however early indications of performance are good with the Council being awarded the same scores as last year (all scores out of 4) – Financial Reporting 3; Financial Management 3; Financial Standing 3; Internal Control 2; Value for Money 3.

The Audit Commission have also sent us their draft 'Data Quality' report. Again the conclusions are mostly positive and our "management arrangements for data quality continue to meet minimum requirements".

For both of these reports, we will respond to the Audit Commission on their findings and will discuss recommendations with the portfolio holder and send the final published reports to the Executive for information.

The Annual 'Direction of Travel' assessment by the Audit Commission starts now! Their first meeting is with the Executive and they will finish on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> December. They will come to an opinion on whether we are improving as an organisation and delivering the right outcomes for our community.

Michelle Hale, the Corporate Performance Officer, continues to be seconded to ISiS until the end of December.

### Corporate Strategy

The Draft Corporate Strategy is 90% complete and has been through Overview and Scrutiny. The Final version will be taken to the Executive in January for approval.

### Procurement

The new SW1 Strategic Procurement Function is being developed and Procurement is being fast-tracked to try and identify some early savings. Procurement is being broken down into eight 'categories' (e.g. 'Construction') across the Councils, and project groups will look at each category in detail to identify savings opportunities. Structures are being put in place to be able to agree and authorise savings and to then remove them from budgets.

Councillor Fran Smith

## **Council Meeting 11 December 2007**

### **Report of Councillor Alan Wedderkopp - Community Leadership.**

Much of the activity within the Community Leadership Portfolio relies upon partnership working, and there has been a great deal of progress within these partnerships as follows:

In October '07 we embarked on our South West One Partnership with IBM and the County Council (and possibly Avon and Somerset Police soon too). At the same time Leaders and Chief Executives of the five District Council and the County Council have been meeting as Team Somerset to formulate ways of sharing expertise and services across the County. There is a feeling of co-operation and a desire to produce the very best services for the people of Somerset through joint working.

Meanwhile Taunton Deane Borough Council continues to work closely with the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), which includes the public, private, voluntary and community sectors, to improve the quality of life for the people of Taunton Deane. The LSP published its Sustainable Community Strategy earlier this year. The Strategy sets out the LSP's 21 priorities and, to ensure that projects take place to help deliver against these priorities, the LSP is inviting applications for funding. The LSP has approximately £73,000 to allocate to projects that fulfill its criteria.

Progress is being made on the new Local Area Agreement (LAA). The LAA is a multi-agency action plan that seeks to address the priorities from the Districts, and County Council's Sustainable Community Strategies. A new LAA will commence June 2008 and so a lot of consultation and information gathering has been happening over recent months. The 'longlist' of issues which will form the basis of the new LAA was presented to the LSP, and other interested parties, last week to test whether all the issues that matter within Taunton Deane have been included.

There was a very successful Local Action Teams/Neighbourhood Watch Network Event at Wellsprings Leisure Centre on Saturday 1 December. A large number of people attended. It was heartening to see the two groups developing a better understanding of the others role, and as a consequence seek ways to co-operate and work together. Along with the Local Action Teams we continue to work with the Police Constable Support Officers, the County Youth Workers and others to actively support young people and encourage them to be a cohesive force in the community. We are particularly pleased that there will be two PCSO's dedicated to monitoring licensed premises and off-license outlets, looking out for people selling to under age children and young people.

The Community Restorative Justice Panel for the Wellington area continues to develop. We will be interviewing for the Panel Coordinator in December. Once this key member of staff is in place the recruitment of volunteers can

take place and, all being well, the scheme should be up and running in the spring.

For further information about any of the issues in this report please contact me.

Councillor Alan Wedderkopp