



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 15TH APRIL 2008 AT 18:30.

AGENDA

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

1. To receive the Minutes of the Meetings of the Council held on 19 February 2008 (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. Part 1 - To deal with questions to and receive recommendations from the Executive:
 - (i) Councillor Henley (Leader of the Council)

Recommendations relating to Supplementary Estimates required following Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring
 - (ii) Councillors Richard Lees and Mullins

Recommendation relating to Review of Highways and Horticulture Service - Deane DLO
8. 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 Richard Lees - Leisure, Arts and Culture
 - (vi) Councillor Mullins - Environmental Services
 - (vii) Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey - Housing Services
 - (viii) Councillor Mrs Fran Smith - Resources
 - (ix) Councillor Alan Wedderkopp - Community Leadership

Tonya Meers

Legal and Democratic Services Manager

08 April 2008



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



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



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

Taunton Deane Borough Council

At a meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council held in the Principal Committee Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton on 19 February 2008 at 6.30 pm.

Present The Mayor (Councillor Hayward)
 The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Slattery)
 Councillors Mrs Allgrove, Beaven, Bishop, Bowrah, Ms Brockwell,
 Brooks, Cavill, Coles, Mrs Copley, Mrs Court-Stenning, Critchard,
 Denington, Durdan, Farbahi, Govier, Hall, Henley, Mrs Herbert, C Hill,
 Mrs M Hill, Horsley, House, Miss James, R Lees, Mrs Lees, Leighton,
 Mrs Lewin-Harris, McMahon, Meikle, Morrell, Mullins, Murphy, 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, Ms Wood and
 Woolley.

The late Councillor A R Floyd

The meeting started with the sad news that Councillor Tony Floyd had passed away earlier that day. Members paid tribute to his service, both to the Council and the Community and stood in silence as a mark of respect.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 11 December 2007, copies having been sent to each Member, were signed by the Mayor.

2. Apologies

Councillors Bone and Edwards.

3 Public Question Time

Dennis Allen, Chairman of the Tenants Forum, asked why buses were not now including journeys around the Roman Road area at night time. He also asked, if anyone knew why Asda did not do home deliveries in the same way as other supermarkets.

Councillor Coles replied that he would investigate further with the appropriate bus company the reasons why buses were not now including journeys around the Roman Road area at night time. As far as Asda was concerned, he suggested that Mr Allen might like to contact the Manager of Asda, Mr Pat Gamble, for an answer to this question.

Paul Partington stated that in answers to his questions to Council on 11 December 2007, it was stated by Councillor Richard Lees that it was absolutely inevitable that St James Street baths will be closed in the foreseeable future. No clear explanation was made about Flook House pool. He therefore asked the following questions:-

1. Has there been any discussion by Officer's or Members of Taunton Deane Borough Council about the future of Flook House pool?
2. If there had been discussions about the future of Flook House pool, what were the outcomes from these discussions?
3. Has the future of Flook House pool ever been put into the public domain?

Councillor Richard Lees replied that he would respond to these questions in full and in writing.

Paul Partington also stated that he understood that Taunton Deane Borough Council had no longer an agency agreement with Somerset County Council to carry out functions of the Highway Authority regarding Public Rights of Way work. He therefore asked the following questions:-

1. Why is Taunton Deane Borough Council still involved with Public Rights of Way Diversion Orders, under Section 119 of the Highways Act 1980?
2. What is the number of and types of Public Rights of Way (ie footpaths, bridleways and restricted byways) that Taunton Deane Borough Council are currently involved in proposals/discussions for possible diversion?
3. What policies does Taunton Deane Borough Council have regarding Public Rights of Way?
4. What is the financial cost to Taunton Deane Borough Council in its involvement with Public Rights of Way Diversions?
5. From 1 October 2007, Section 69 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, commenced. This new piece of legislation will help to improve the accessibility of the footpath and bridleway network to people with mobility problems. If Taunton Deane is involved in Public Rights of Way Diversions, are you using maximum use of these powers? He added that people with mobility problems included blind or partially sighted people, and others could include, for example, older and disabled people or those with young children and pushchairs. Family and friends who accompany people with mobility problems were also affected by the accessibility of the network.

Councillor Coles informed Mr Partington that he would supply him with a written answer to all of his questions.

4. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Brooks, Henley, Govier, Paul and Prior-Sankey all declared personal interests as Members of Somerset County Council. Councillor James declared a personal interest as an employee of Viridor. Councillor Coles declared a personal interest as a Director of Southwest One. Councillor Mrs Lewin-Harris declared a personal interest as the Taunton Deane Borough Council's representative on the Citizens Advice Bureau, and Councillor Prior-Sankey also declared a personal interest as a tenant of a Council owned garage. Councillor Cavill declared a personal and prejudicial interest in any matters relating to development at Monkton Heathfield and Councillor Leighton declared a personal interest as Chair of the Monkton Heathfield Community Engagement Panel.

5. Written Questions to Members of The Executive

(a) Councillor Mrs Lewin-Harris asked the following question:-

Please could the Leader of the Council assure residents of Cotford St Luke, that in the event of an appeal against the Planning Committee's decision to refuse permission for a mobile home, two caravans and a septic tank at Dene Road, Cotford St Luke, this Council was committed to a robust defence of the Authority's decision and would make available whatever resources were required to ensure this.

Councillor Henley confirmed that this issue was taken seriously, and that he understood the planning problems and the concerns of the Cotford St Luke residents. He pledged the Council's support in the defence of the Authority's decision and said that all necessary steps would be taken to ensure that planning regulations were enforced.

(b) Councillor Williams asked the following question:-

At the last Full Council Meeting I was personally accused of being a "spendaholic" with taxpayers' money and unfortunately I was unable to defend myself against this outrageous and unwarranted claim.

I have directed this question to the Leader, rather than Councillor Horsley, who made the accusation, in the hope that the Leader will be well aware of the very substantial funding streams we accessed during our administration so will be able to correct the record. The following is not an exhaustive list of funding gained or secured during our administration but will demonstrate quite clearly that the accusations made are groundless and bear no resemblance to the facts.

Revenues and Benefits systems	£380,000
Project Taunton Firepool	£3,530,000

Project Taunton Longrun Farm	£1,610,000
Project Taunton County Ground	£830,000
New Growth Point Funding Initial	£95,000
New Growth Point Capital	£2,700,000
New Growth Point Revenue	£200,000
New Growth Point Potential	£5,300,000
Total	£14,645,000

In addition, we released £750,000 from the sale of Bedford House for reinvestment and by securing an alternative site for the Garden Nursery site, will have released a valuable town centre site, value probably around £2 million. For the Neroche Project by pump priming we also gained around £2 million investment in Taunton Deane.

The foregoing facts are sufficient to repudiate the grossly misleading statements made at the previous Full Council on 11 December 2007 and I would ask the Leader to reaffirm that these figures are representative of the facts. Far from being a “spendaholic” this, and more besides, is a huge sum gained and invested for the benefit of the Taunton Deane community.

Councillor Henley replied that this was more of a statement than a question, but he would ask Officers to check the figures mentioned by Councillor Williams and inform him accordingly.

6. Recommendations to Council from the Executive

(a) Capital Strategy 2008-2011

Although there was no statutory requirement for the Council to prepare a Capital Strategy, in terms of setting direction for the use of the Council’s capital resources the strategy was seen as a ‘must have’ document.

The Capital Strategy was a summary of the Council’s approach to capital investment including:-

- Our Vision,
- The identification of needs and our needs gap,
- The management and monitoring of the capital programme,
- The capital programme and the level of resources available,
- Our approach to procurement and partnership working,
- Linkages to other corporate plans.

The revised draft Strategy for 2008-2011 had been updated from last year’s version by incorporating new developments being undertaken by the Council and refreshing the financial data included within the document.

The Strategy and Performance Panel had also considered the draft document.

On the motion of Councillor Henley it was **Resolved** that the draft Capital Strategy for 2008-2011 be agreed.

(b) **General Fund Revenue Estimates 2008/2009**

The Executive had considered its final 2008/2009 budget proposals. It contained details on:

- (i) the General Fund Revenue Budget proposals for 2008/2009, including the proposed Council Tax increase and the Prudential Indicators;
- (ii) draft figures on the predicted financial position of the Council for the following four years.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board have also considered draft budget proposals at its meeting on 24 January 2008.

The Council Tax calculation and formal tax setting resolution was to be considered separately. The proposed budget for Taunton Deane would result in a B and D Council Tax of £131.89, an increase of £3.84 (3.0%) on 2007/2008. This represented an increase of 7.4p pence per week. The B and D taxpayer would, therefore, receive all the services provided by the Council in 2008/2009 at a cost of £2.54 per week.

It was a requirement for the Council to prepare not only budgets for the following financial year but to also provide indicative figures for the two years after that. The Medium Term Financial Plan provided an indication of the expected budget gap going forward into 2009/2010 and a summary of this position was submitted.

These figures had been prepared on the assumption of a 4.5% increase in Council Tax each year, including 2009/2010. Government support was based on the draft figures. The figures took into account the ongoing impact of all of the Executive's budget proposals and the 2008/2009 proposed Council Tax level.

The estimated expenses chargeable to the non-parished area of Taunton in 2008/2009 amounted to £29,190, an increase of 4.75%, and this formed part of the total net expenditure of the Council. The precept in 2007/2008 was £27,870.

As part of the Prudential Code for Capital Finance there was a requirement for Council to approve the indicators as set out in the report to the Executive. These included the expected spend on the capital programme and the expected borrowing requirement for both the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account. They also set

the operational boundaries for both borrowing/investment levels and interest rate exposures for the Council.

The Council's S151 Officer had thoroughly reviewed the procedures, outputs and outcomes of the budget setting process and felt that the Council's reserves were adequate and the budget estimates used in preparing the 2008/2009 budget were sufficiently robust.

Moved by Councillor Williams, seconded by Councillor Mrs Lewin-Harris that the budget proposals be amended as follows:

Council Tax increase be reduced to 2.5%	£25,708
Increase grant to Citizens Advice Bureau 2008/2009 from £69K to £74K	<u>£5,000</u>
Total	£30,708

This will be funded by:

Removing £22,000 earmarked for Sustainable Transport Initiatives	£22,000
Taking £8,708 from the proposed £15K Revenue Contribution to Capital	<u>£8,708</u>
Total	£30,708

The amendment was put and was lost.

On the motion of Councillor Henley it was **Resolved** that the budget for General Fund services for 2008/2009 as outlined in the report to the Executive be agreed and that:-

- a) the transfer for any potential underspend in 2007/2008 back to General Fund reserves be agreed;
- b) the proposed 2008/2009 budget, being Authority expenditure of £13,614,270 and Special Expenses of £29,190 be agreed in accordance with the Local Government Act 1992;
- c) the predicted General Fund Reserve balance at 31 March 2008 of £844,203 be agreed;
- d) the Prudential Indicators for 2008/09 as set out in the report be agreed;
- e) the forecast budget position for 2009/10 onwards as outlined in the report be noted.
(Councillor Horsley declared a personal interest in the above item as a Trustee of the Citizens Advice Bureau)

(c) **Capital Programme 2008/2009 Onwards**

Consideration had been given to the proposed General Fund (GF) and Housing Account (HRA) capital programmes for the period 2008/2009 and beyond.

For the General Fund the existing unallocated resources available were £43k. It was proposed to direct these resources entirely towards the replacement desktop hardware programme.

For all Housing schemes, both GF and HRA, the estimated resources available for 2008/2009 amounted to £7,280k. The proposed capital programme for 2008/2009 amounted to £6,576k. The unallocated resources of £704k were proposed to be carried forward to support the Housing Capital Programme in future years.

For both the GF and HRA any new schemes, which emerged during the lifespan of the programmes, would be funded through existing unallocated resources or through new resources, such as new capital receipts.

On the motion of Councillor Henley it was **Resolved** that the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account capital programmes be agreed.

(d) **Council Tax Setting 2008/2009**

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

The estimated expenses chargeable to the non-parished area of Taunton in 2008/2009 amounted to £29,190 and this formed part of the total net expenditure of the Council. Details had also been received of the parish precepts levied and the appropriate Council Tax at B and D.

The Council's budget requirement was £14,014,469 including draft Parish Precepts and non-parished Special Expenses. This amount was then reduced by the amount notified in respect of the Borough's Revenue Support Grant (RSG) amounting to £1,022,665 and the Non Domestic Rates Distribution (NDR) from the pool, amounting to £7,346,300.

The net amount, having taken the collection fund position into account, of £5,695,990 was used to calculate the Council Tax at B and D, reflecting the Parish Precepts by dividing it by the total of the Council Tax base as approved by the Executive in January 2008.

The Council Tax for the Borough (excluding Parish Precepts and Special Expenses for the non-parished area) was £131.89, an increase of £3.84 (3.0%) compared to the 2007/2008 Council Tax.

On the motion of Councillor Henley it was **Resolved** that subject to final determination including the Council Tax for Somerset County Council, Police and Fire Authorities.

(i) That it be noted that at its meeting on 14 January 2008 the Executive calculated the following amounts for the year 2008/2009 in accordance with the regulations made under Section 33(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended):-

(1) 40,153.07 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as its Council Tax base for the year.

(2)

Ash Priors	78.82	Neroche	248.78
Ashbrittle	90.22	North Curry	724.80
Bathealton	81.22	Norton Fitzwarren	737.28
Bishops Hull	1,075.04	Nynehead	168.96
Bishops Lydeard/ Cothelstone	1,915.67	Oake	330.56
Bradford on Tone	277.60	Otterford	168.23
Burrowbridge	203.67	Pitminster	449.53
Cheddon Fitzpaine	636.76	Ruishton/ Thornfalcon	621.22
Chipstable	120.07	Sampford Arundel	128.69
Churchstanton	313.19	Staplegrove	719.37
Combe Florey	123.09	Stawley	123.05
Comeytrove	2,088.46	Stoke St Gregory	381.60
Corfe	137.97	Stoke St Mary	212.07
Creech St Michael	940.01	Taunton	16,083.61
Durston	58.99	Trull	1,008.61
Fitzhead	124.85	Wellington	4,646.65
Halse	146.71	Wellington (Without)	297.29
Hatch Beauchamp	265.32	West Bagborough	159.39
Kingston St Mary	460.34	West Buckland	439.50
Langford Budville	220.32	West Hatch	140.64
Lydeard St Lawrence/Tolland	199.61	West Monkton	1,104.87
Milverton	596.15	Wiveliscombe	1,104.32

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

- (ii) That the following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2008/2009 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:-
- (a) £72,268,826 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2)(a) of the Act. (Gross Expenditure including amount required for working balance.)
 - (b) £58,254,357 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(3)(a) to (c) of the Act. (Gross Income including reserves to be used to meet Gross Expenditure.)
 - (c) £14,014,469 being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year.
 - (d) £8,318,479 being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its general fund in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates, revenue support grant, additional grant or SSA reduction grant (increased by the amount of the sums which the Council estimates will be transferred in the year from its Collection Fund to its General Fund in accordance with Section 97(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (Council Tax Surplus) and increased by the amount of any sum which the Council estimates will be transferred from its Collection Fund to its General Fund pursuant to the Collection Fund (Community Charge) directions under Sec. 98(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 made on 7 February 1994 (Community Charge Surplus).
 - (e) £141.86 $\frac{(c) - (d)}{1(i)} = \frac{14,014,469 - 8,318,479}{40,153.07}$

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

(f) £400,199 being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act. (Parish Precepts and Special Expenses.)

(g) £131.89 $\frac{(e) - (f)}{1(i)}$ = $\frac{141.86 - 400,199}{40,153.07}$

being the amount at (e) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (f) above by the amount at 9.2.1(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special items relate. (Council Tax at B and D for Borough Excluding Parish Precepts and Special Expenses.)

(h)

Ash Priors	135.06	Neroche	145.56
Ashbrittle	148.52	North Curry	152.59
Bathealton	139.28	Norton Fitzwarren	155.48
Bishops Hull	150.49	Nynehead	151.42
Bishops Lydeard/ Cothelstone	147.03	Oake	143.99
Bradford on Tone	150.80	Otterford	131.89
Burrowbridge	154.06	Pitminster	147.13
Cheddon Fitzpaine	141.31	Ruishton/Thornfalcon	150.00
Chipstable	145.22	Sampford Arundel	166.39
Churchstanton	155.84	Staplegrove	145.79
Combe Florey	144.89	Stawley	148.14
Comeytrowe	141.95	Stoke St Gregory	147.61
Corfe	139.86	Stoke St Mary	149.41
Creech St Michael	147.54	Taunton	133.70
Durstun	132.57	Trull	145.77
Fitzhead	153.28	Wellington	148.39
Halse	146.20	Wellington (Without)	147.53
Hatch Beauchamp	145.27	West Bagborough	138.16
Kingston St Mary	147.10	West Buckland	150.09
Langford Budville	155.13	West Hatch	147.04
Lydeard St Lawrence/Tolland	146.42	West Monkton	143.29
Milverton	146.99	Wiveliscombe	147.83

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

(i) See overleaf:

(a) Valuation Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Ash Priors	90.04	105.05	120.06	135.06	165.07	195.09	225.10
Ashbrittle	99.02	115.51	132.02	148.52	181.53	214.53	247.54
Bathealton	92.86	108.33	123.81	139.28	170.23	201.18	232.14
Bishops Hull	100.33	117.05	133.77	150.49	183.93	217.38	250.82
Bishops Lydeard/Cothelstone	98.02	114.36	130.70	147.03	179.70	212.38	245.05
Bradford on Tone	100.54	117.29	134.05	150.80	184.31	217.82	251.34
Burrowbridge	102.71	119.82	136.95	154.06	188.30	222.53	256.77
Cheddon Fitzpaine	94.21	109.91	125.61	141.31	172.71	204.12	235.52
Chipstable	96.82	112.95	129.09	145.22	177.49	209.76	242.04
Churchstanton	103.90	121.21	138.53	155.84	190.47	225.10	259.74
Combe Florey	96.60	112.69	128.80	144.89	177.09	209.29	241.49
Comeytrowe	94.64	110.40	126.18	141.95	173.50	205.04	236.59
Corfe	94.45	110.19	125.93	141.67	173.15	204.63	236.12
Creech St Michael	98.74	115.19	131.66	148.11	181.02	213.94	246.85
Durston	88.38	103.11	117.84	132.57	162.03	191.49	220.95
Fitzhead	102.19	119.22	136.25	153.28	187.34	221.41	255.47
Halse	97.47	113.71	129.96	146.20	178.69	211.18	243.67
Hatch Beauchamp	96.85	112.99	129.13	145.27	177.55	209.84	242.12
Kingston St Mary							

	98.07	114.41	130.76	147.10	179.79	212.48	245.17
Langford Budville	103.42	120.66	137.90	155.13	189.60	224.08	258.55
Lydeard St Lawrence/Tolland	97.62	113.88	130.16	146.42	178.96	211.50	244.04
Milverton	98.00	114.32	130.66	146.99	179.66	212.32	244.99
Neroche	97.04	113.21	129.39	145.56	177.91	210.26	242.60
North Curry	101.73	118.68	135.64	152.59	186.50	220.41	254.32
Norton Fitzwarren	103.66	120.93	138.21	155.48	190.03	224.58	259.14
Nynehead	100.95	117.77	134.60	151.42	185.07	218.72	252.37
Oake	96.00	111.99	128.00	143.99	175.99	207.99	239.99
Otterford	87.93	102.58	117.24	131.89	161.20	190.51	219.82
Pitminster	98.09	114.43	130.79	147.13	179.83	212.52	245.22
Ruishton/Thornfalcon	100.00	116.67	133.34	150.00	183.33	216.67	250.00
Sampford Arundel	110.93	129.41	147.91	166.39	203.37	240.34	277.32
Staplegrove	97.20	113.39	129.60	145.79	178.19	210.59	242.99
Stawley	98.76	115.22	131.68	148.14	181.06	213.98	246.90
Stoke St Gregory	98.41	114.81	131.21	147.61	180.41	213.22	246.02
Stoke St Mary	99.61	116.21	132.81	149.41	182.61	215.82	249.02
Taunton	89.14	103.99	118.85	133.70	163.41	193.12	222.84
Trull	97.18	113.38	129.58	145.77	178.16	210.56	242.99
Wellington	98.93	115.41	131.91	148.39	181.37	214.34	247.32

Wellington Without	98.36	114.74	131.14	147.53	180.32	213.10	245.89
West Bagborough	92.11	107.46	122.81	138.16	168.86	199.57	230.27
West Buckland	100.06	116.74	133.42	150.09	183.44	216.80	250.15
West Hatch	98.03	114.36	130.71	147.04	179.72	212.39	245.07
West Monkton	95.53	111.45	127.37	143.29	175.13	206.98	238.82
Wiveliscombe	98.56	114.98	131.41	147.83	180.68	213.53	246.39

Being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at (h) above by the number which, in proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band, divided by the number which is that proportion applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands (Council Tax for Individual Parishes and the Borough)

(b)

That it be noted that for the year 2008/09 the Somerset County Council, the Avon and Somerset Police Authority and the Somerset and Devon Fire & Rescue Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each valuation band:

Somerset County Council	666.60	777.70	888.80	999.90	1,222.10	1,444.30	1,666.50
Avon & Somerset Police Authority	102.88	120.03	137.17	154.32	188.61	222.91	257.20
Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority	44.39	51.78	59.18	66.58	81.38	96.17	110.97

That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (a) and (b) above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, has calculated the following amounts of council tax for the year 2008/09 for each valuation band:

Valuation Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Ash Priors	903.91	1,054.56	1,205.21	1,355.86	1,657.16	1,958.47	2,259.78
Ashbrittle	912.89	1,065.02	1,217.17	1,369.32	1,673.62	1,977.91	2,282.22
Bathealton							

	906.73	1,057.84	1,208.96	1,360.08	1,662.32	1,964.56	2,266.56
Bishops Hull	914.20	1,066.56	1,218.92	1,371.29	1,676.02	1,980.76	2,285.56
Bishops Lydeard/Cothelstone	911.89	1,063.87	1,215.85	1,367.83	1,671.79	1,975.76	2,279.56
Bradford on Tone	914.41	1,066.80	1,219.20	1,371.60	1,676.40	1,981.20	2,286.56
Burrowbridge	916.58	1,069.33	1,222.10	1,374.86	1,680.39	1,985.91	2,291.56
Cheddon Fitzpaine	908.08	1,059.42	1,210.76	1,362.11	1,664.80	1,967.50	2,270.56
Chipstable	910.69	1,062.46	1,214.24	1,366.02	1,669.58	1,973.14	2,276.56
Churchstanton	917.77	1,070.72	1,223.68	1,376.64	1,682.56	1,988.48	2,294.56
Combe Florey	910.47	1,062.20	1,213.95	1,365.69	1,669.18	1,972.67	2,276.56
Comeytrove	908.51	1,059.91	1,211.33	1,362.75	1,665.59	1,968.42	2,271.56
Corfe	908.32	1,059.70	1,211.08	1,362.47	1,665.24	1,968.01	2,270.56
Creech St Michael	912.61	1,064.70	1,216.81	1,368.91	1,673.11	1,977.32	2,281.56
Durston	902.25	1,052.62	1,202.99	1,353.37	1,654.12	1,954.87	2,255.56
Fitzhead	916.06	1,068.73	1,221.40	1,374.08	1,679.43	1,984.79	2,290.56
Halse	911.34	1,063.22	1,215.11	1,367.00	1,670.78	1,974.56	2,278.56
Hatch Beauchamp	910.72	1,062.50	1,214.28	1,366.07	1,669.64	1,973.22	2,276.56
Kingston St Mary	911.94	1,063.92	1,215.91	1,367.90	1,671.88	1,975.86	2,279.56
Langford Budville	917.29	1,070.17	1,223.05	1,375.93	1,681.69	1,987.46	2,293.56
Lydeard St Lawrence/Tolland	911.49	1,063.39	1,215.31	1,367.22	1,671.05	1,974.88	2,278.56
Milverton	911.87	1,063.83	1,215.81	1,367.79	1,671.75	1,975.70	2,279.56

Neroche	910.91	1,062.72	1,214.54	1,366.36	1,670.00	1,973.64	2,277.50
North Curry	915.60	1,068.19	1,220.79	1,373.39	1,678.59	1,983.79	2,288.50
Norton Fitzwarren	917.53	1,070.44	1,223.36	1,376.28	1,682.12	1,987.96	2,293.50
Nynehead	914.82	1,067.28	1,219.75	1,372.22	1,677.16	1,982.10	2,287.50
Oake	909.87	1,061.50	1,213.15	1,364.79	1,668.08	1,971.37	2,274.50
Otterford	901.80	1,052.09	1,202.39	1,352.69	1,653.29	1,953.89	2,254.50
Pitminster	911.96	1,063.94	1,215.94	1,367.93	1,671.92	1,975.90	2,279.50
Ruishton/Thornfolcon	913.87	1,066.18	1,218.49	1,370.80	1,675.42	1,980.05	2,284.50
Sampford Arundel	924.80	1,078.92	1,233.06	1,387.19	1,695.46	2,003.72	2,311.50
Staplegrove	911.07	1,062.90	1,214.75	1,366.59	1,670.28	1,973.97	2,277.50
Stawley	912.63	1,064.73	1,216.83	1,368.94	1,673.15	1,977.36	2,281.50
Stoke St Gregory	912.28	1,064.32	1,216.36	1,368.41	1,672.50	1,976.60	2,280.50
Stoke St Mary	913.48	1,065.72	1,217.96	1,370.21	1,674.70	1,979.20	2,283.50
Taunton	903.01	1,053.50	1,204.00	1,354.50	1,655.50	1,956.50	2,257.50
Trull	911.05	1,062.89	1,214.73	1,366.57	1,670.25	1,973.94	2,277.50
Wellington	912.80	1,064.92	1,217.06	1,369.19	1,673.46	1,977.72	2,281.50
Wellington Without	912.23	1,064.25	1,216.29	1,368.33	1,672.41	1,976.48	2,280.50
West Bagborough	905.98	1,056.97	1,207.96	1,358.96	1,660.95	1,962.95	2,264.50
West Buckland	913.93	1,066.25	1,218.57	1,370.89	1,675.53	1,980.18	2,284.50
West Hatch	911.90	1,063.87	1,215.86	1,367.84	1,671.81	1,975.77	2,279.50

West Monkton	909.40	1,060.96	1,212.52	1,364.09	1,667.22	1,970.36	2,273.00
Wiveliscombe	912.43	1,064.49	1,216.56	1,368.63	1,672.77	1,976.91	2,281.00

(e) **Fees and Charges 2008/2009**

Consideration had been given to the proposed fees and charges for 2008/2009 for the following services:

- Cemeteries and Crematorium,
- Waste Services,
- Licensing.

The results of both the 2006 and 2007 public consultation events 'Your Council, Your Views' clearly indicated that the public preferred to see increases in fees and charges, rather than in Council Tax, as a way for the Council to raise income. Therefore, where possible, fees had been increased to take these views into account. Details of the proposed increases were submitted.

On the motion of Councillor Mullins it was **Resolved** that the fees and charges for 2008/2009 in respect of Waste Services, Cemeteries and Crematorium and Licensing, as submitted, be agreed.

(f) **Regulation of Skin Piercing Businesses**

The Council were permitted to adopt new legislation and associated new byelaws to allow for the activities of cosmetic piercing and semi-permanent skin-colouring to be included in the statutory control framework for skin piercing activities.

Consideration had therefore been given to adopting the new legislation and new byelaws to allow cosmetic piercing and semi-permanent skin colouring businesses that were already operating in the district to register and to allow for Officers to be able to regulate these activities effectively by utilising the new byelaws.

On the motion of Councillor Mullins it was **Resolved** that:-

1. That the provisions of sections 14, 15, 16 and 17 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, as amended by Section 120 of the Local Government Act 2003 (hereinafter referred to as 'these sections'), to apply to all of the Council's area and that the resolution shall apply to the following persons
 - (a) those carrying out the business of cosmetic piercing
 - (b) those carrying out the business of electrolysis
 - (c) those carrying out the business of tattooing and semi-permanent skin colouring
 - (d) those carrying out the business of acupuncture.
2. These sections to come into force in the area of the Taunton Deane Borough Council on the first day of April 2008.

3. To authorise the affixing of the Council's common seal to the following byelaws:
 - (a) Those for the purpose of securing the cleanliness of premises registered under Section 15 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 and fittings in those premises and of the registered persons and persons assisting them and cleansing and, as far as appropriate, sterilization of instruments, materials and equipment used in connection with the business of cosmetic piercing.
 - (b) Those for the purpose of securing the cleanliness of premises registered under Section 15 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 and fittings in those premises and of the registered persons and persons assisting them and the cleansing and, so far as appropriate, sterilization of instruments, materials and equipment used in connection with the business of electrolysis.
 - (c) Those for the purpose of securing the cleanliness of premises registered under section 14 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 and fittings in those premises and of the registered persons and persons assisting them and the cleansing and, so far as appropriate, sterilization of instruments, materials and equipment used in connection with the business of acupuncture.
 - (d) Those for the purpose of securing the cleanliness of premises registered under Section 15 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 and fittings in those premises and of registered persons and persons assisting them and the cleaning and, so far as appropriate, sterilization of instruments, materials and equipment used in connection with the business of tattooing and semi-permanent skin colouring.

4. To authorise the Head of Legal Services to carry out the necessary procedure and apply to the Secretary of State for confirmation of the new byelaws. In addition, the Council approves the repeal of the following byelaws made by the Council on 19 December 1984 –
 - (a) Those relating to ear piercing and electrolysis;
 - (b) Those relating to tattooing;
 - (c) Those relating to acupuncture.

(g) **Housing Revenue Account, Revenue Estimates and Rent Levels, Deane Helpline and Deane Building DLO Account 2008/2009**

Consideration had been given to the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the 2008/2009 Financial Year. It also included details relating to the new rent level, service charges and other housing related charges such as garage rents. Finally it provided information on the Deane Helpline Trading Account and Deane Building DLO Trading Account.

On the motion of Councillor Prior-Sankey it was **Resolved** that the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2008/2009 be agreed.

7. **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).

Before submitting his report, Councillor Henley drew the Council's attention to the fact that this would be the last Council meeting to be attended by Jeremy Thornberry before his retirement at the end of March. Mr Thornberry had been a long and loyal servant to the Council since 1974 and tributes to his commitment, dignity and delivery of sound advice over the years were paid by Group Leaders and other councillors. The Council as a whole wished Jeremy a long and happy retirement.

Jeremy Thornberry thanked the Council for its good wishes and stated that he would consider very carefully the generous invitation to attend future meetings of the Council as a member of the public.

Councillor Henley's report covered the following topics:-

- The Budget;
- Concessionary Fares;
- Post Office closures;
- Meetings attended by the Leader.

(ii) Communications (Councillor Brooks)

Councillor Brooks' report covered the following topics:-

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

(iii) Planning Policy and Transportation (Councillor Coles)

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

- Planning Restructure;
- Monkton Heathfield;
- Validation Check List;
- The Third Way;
- Draft Regional Spatial Strategy;
- Residents' Parking.

(Councillor Cavill declared a personal and prejudicial interest, as a land owner, in connection with the proposed development at Monkton Heathfield. Councillor Leighton declared a personal interest in the same item as Chair of the Monkton Heathfield Engagement Panel. Both councillors left the meeting during discussion on this part of the report. The Mayor (Councillor Hayward) also declared a personal and prejudicial interest and left the meeting. Councillor Slattery (Deputy Mayor) took the Chair during the Mayor's absence. Councillor Prior-Sankey declared a personal interest in relation to discussion on flooding issues as a member of the Wessex Regional Flood Defence Committee).

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

The report from Councillor Horsley covered:-

- Property;
- Project Taunton, where Members were updated following meetings of both the Steering and Advisory Groups;
- Meetings with local businesses and partnerships;
- Tourism;
- Business support;
- Rural Economic Development;
- The Brewhouse.

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

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

- The Deano;
- Capital Grant to Corfe Village Hall;
- Carols in the Band Stand;
- Band Stand Concerts;
- Play;
- Planning for Developer Contributions;
- Tone Leisure;
- Somerset Art Week.

(vi) Environmental Services (Councillor Mullins)

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

- Food Safety, including Scores on The Doors;
- Health and Safety;
- Smoke Free;
- Environmental Protection Team;
- General Issues;
- Street cleansing.

(vii) Housing Services (Councillor Prior-Sankey)

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

- Disabled Facilities Grant;
- Negative Subsidy;
- The "Tax on Tenants";
- Thermostat Replacement Programme;
- Broken Glass Policy;
- Deane Helpline;

(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;
- Revenues and Benefit Services 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:-

- Community Partnerships;
- LAA;
- Allotments;
- Facilities for Young People.

8. **Post Office Closures**

Moved by Councillor Henley, Seconded by Councillor Horsley.

This Council believes that people in Taunton Deane value the role of local Post Offices in their community and do not wish to see the closure of any more Post Offices in this area.

This Council notes with concern that:

- Since 1999 under the current Labour Government nine post offices have closed across the Taunton Constituency;
- A further 2,500 Post Office closures are planned nationwide;
- The urban and rural networks of Post Offices will each sustain 50% of the planned closures which will result in further reduction in the number of Post Offices within Taunton Deane;
- One in five of the remaining Post Offices in the network are due to be closed, equating to seven of the remaining 36 Post Offices in Taunton Constituency;
- The Post Office is mapping out the location of our areas Post Offices against criteria set by the Government, which will identify a potential closure profile, and commencing in February 2008 a six-week public consultation will be undertaken on the closure proposals;
- The Government has further reduced the services available in Post Offices in Taunton Deane against the wishes of customers;
- There are no longer Sunday collections of mail in Taunton;
- The latest time for posting mail in Taunton Deane is now 5.45 pm during the working week; it used to be 12 midnight.

This Council resolves to:-

- Oppose the Government's Post Office closure programme and respond to the consultation accordingly;
- Ask the Chief Executive to investigate ways that this Council can provide further services for Taunton Deane people via the network of local Post Offices;
- Ask a regional committee member of Postwatch to attend a meeting of the Executive of the Council to explain the dissatisfaction of this Council with both the intentions of the government and the process of consultation;

- Support our local MP in lobbying the Government to save the Post Office and to ask him to report back to this Council on his actions;
- To increase the viability of the Post Office network this Council calls on the Government to:-
 - (a) End the branch closure programme;
 - (b) Remove the Royal Mail restrictions on the Post Office to open up further business opportunities for the network;
 - (c) Stop removing Government business from Post Offices;
 - (d) Carry out a review of which additional Government functions could be carried out through Post Offices;
 - (e) Invest in the Post Office network.

Councillor Mullins, Seconded by Councillor Henley, requested that a formal roll call of votes be taken and recorded in the Minutes, in accordance with Standing Order 19(2). This request was supported by the votes of at least a quarter of the Councillors present. The motion was put and was carried, the voting being 34 in favour, 1 against and 2 abstentions, as follows:-

For Councillors Bishop, Brooks, Coles, Mrs Copley, Mrs Court-Stenning, Critchard, Durdan, Farbahi, Hayward, Henley, Horsley, House, Miss James, R Lees, Mrs Lees, Mrs Lewin-Harris, McMahon, Meikle, Mullins, Murphy, Paul, Prior-Sankey, Slattery, Mrs Smith, P Smith, Mrs Stock-Williams, Stuart-Thorn, Watson, Mrs Waymouth, D Wedderkopp, A Wedderkopp, Mrs Wilson, Miss Wood, Woolley.

Against Councillor Denington.

Abstentions Councillors Mrs Allgrove and Williams.

The motion was put and was carried.

(The following Councillors left the meeting at the times indicated. Councillors Govier, Stone and Thorne at 8.05 pm, Councillor Miss Brockwell at 8.15 pm, Councillor Hall at 8.32 pm, Councillor Mrs Herbert at 8.55 pm, Councillors Mrs Hill and Morrell at 9.17 pm, Councillors Beavan, Cavill and Leighton at 9.30 pm and Councillor Mrs Whitmarsh at 9.55 pm.)

(The meeting ended at 10.05 pm.)

TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING 15 APRIL 2008

Part I

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

1. Councillor Henley

Q3 Budget Monitoring Issues

The Q3 budget monitoring exercise has highlighted the need for Supplementary Estimates from reserves for the following overspends:

- Job evaluation appeals £140k
- O2 Mast planning compensation £40k

The Council has now completed the appeals process arising from the recent job evaluation exercise. Some of the appeals have been successful and therefore this will increase the overall salary cost of the Council.

It is estimated that the cost of successful appeals will be in the region of £140k. This will be split between the General Fund (£110k) and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) (£30k).

In 2005, O2 obtained deemed consent for the erection of a telecommunication mast at Shoreditch Road Taunton. Attempts to negotiate with O2 to re-locate the mast to an alternative site were unsuccessful and a mast was erected. It was however not the mast for which deemed consent had been granted and the Council therefore resolved to take enforcement action.

This led to a Public Inquiry in September 2007 as a consequence of which a Planning Inspector found the mast as erected unacceptable and upheld the Enforcement Notice requiring its removal. He however confirmed that there was a valid deemed permission, which could be implemented. O2 had again been invited to consider re-locating the mast with assistance from the Council, but had refused to consider this.

At its meeting on the 27 February the Planning Committee were advised of the position but further recommended not to take steps to revoke the deemed permission because of the potential financial liabilities such action would incur.

However, even the erection of the deemed mast was likely to have a detrimental impact on the immediately adjacent residential property and the Council was likely to face compensation claims. The sum of £40k is therefore sought in order to deal with any claims for compensation.

It is therefore **RECOMMENDED** that Supplementary Estimates from the General Fund and HRA reserves be agreed as outlined above.

Councillor Henley

2. Councillors Richard Lees and Mullins

Review of Highways and Horticulture Service – Deane DLO

The Executive have considered a report regarding the proposed restructure of the management of the Highways and Horticultural service within the Council's Direct Labour Organisation. Under the proposal, one management post at the DLO would be made redundant. The proposal requires one off funding of £35,079. These one off costs will be paid back within 2 years with annual revenue savings of approximately £40,000 thereafter.

It is therefore **RECOMMENDED** that a Supplementary Estimate of £35,079 from reserves, be agreed.

Councillors Richard Lees and Mullins

PART II REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE

COUNCIL MEETING 15 APRIL 2008

Report of Councillor Ross Henley – Leader of the Council

Tony Floyd

I could not start this report without saying a few words about Tony Floyd. As you will all remember, Tony passed away on the day of our last Full Council so I did not have an opportunity to pay a tribute to him in my report. Tony was a friend and colleague to us all and well respected throughout the Council and will be missed by so many people. The huge turnout at his funeral by so many from lots of different aspects of life within Taunton Deane just showed how well he was liked.

Post Offices

At the last Full Council Meeting we debated the future of post offices. We now know that several in our borough are threatened with closure or a greatly reduced service for some communities. I know from the strength of feeling in the two villages I represent with a threat of closure how valued a post office is to the local community. Myself and Penny James are preparing a formal response from this Council to the consultation exercise. This will be added to the many hundreds of formal responses to the proposed closures. I chaired a public meeting in Churchinford attended by around 200 people to discuss the closure of the service and it really brought home how people feel about such a vital service in the local community.

Pioneer Somerset

Very soon we will discuss in Overview and Scrutiny Pioneer Somerset. This initiative has come together from many meetings between the Leaders of the 5 District Councils in Somerset and the Leader of the County Council. They were joined at these meetings by the Chief Executives of all the 6 councils. This is a positive step to move on from the unitary debate. The challenge from Government has always been if we did not become a unitary council then we must also make similar savings now we are not going down the unitary route. That was what Team Somerset was all about. That is what we all signed up to and this is a progression of this process. Pioneer Somerset is potentially groundbreaking. We already are setting the pace via Southwest One and the Waste Partnership and this will give us the chance to work closer together and

work better together in Somerset and make efficiency savings. I commend this work.

Southwest One

I deeply regret that one Somerset MP has chosen to make comments about Southwest One which I find totally unfair. The fact that they were said in Parliament under parliamentary privilege says a lot. So far this MP has not chosen to repeat the comments outside of parliament and I think that says a lot. I hope that all Councillors would like to disassociate themselves from these comments about Southwest One which we all supported and voted for. I applaud closer partnership working with the county council.

Ben Bradshaw

As promised, I have now met the South West Regional Minister and raised the issue of the unfair funding of the concessionary bus fares scheme. I gave him a chart outlining the financial facts to this council and await his response. I will follow this up shortly.

Staffing

Since Full Council in February we have said goodbye to Jeremy Thornberry, Ian Taylor and Mandy Froom, Penny's PA and they will all be missed. We are though saying hello to Tonya Meers who has joined us from the Forest of Dean Council. Tonya attended Executive last week and I met her beforehand. I feel we have an excellent new senior member of staff and I would like to welcome her here tonight.

Annual Audit and Inspection

Last month the Executive met the annual audit and inspection team. It is clear that they feel that Taunton Deane is moving in the right direction.

Councillor Ross Henley

Council Meeting - 15 April 2008

Report of Councillor Steve Brooks Communications

1. Public Relations

- 1.1 It has been a busy couple of months, in February 2008 16 press releases were sent out on a variety of issues from Scores on the Doors to Council Tax. In March 2008, 23 releases were issued.
- 1.2 At the end of March 2008, time was devoted to the **Oxen Lane** inquiry which again attracted widespread media interest at regional and local level.
- 1.3 Elsewhere, we have worked in partnership with other district councils on promoting the Housing Needs Survey which involves South Somerset, Sedgemoor, West Somerset and Taunton Deane; and with West Somerset on a business event for the food hygiene star ratings.
- 1.4 We have also been working with the County Council and the Police on promoting the Restorative Justice scheme which launched officially on 10 April 2008.
- 1.5 We provide ongoing support for Project Taunton, including promoting the Open Day on 3 April 2008 and at the event itself.
- 1.6 **Deane Dispatch** was completed in-house and distribution, via Royal Mail, during March 2008. This year (2008-09) Deane Dispatch will be published in a new format due to a reduction in the budget. We have decided to pay for a monthly full-page in the Gazette – similar to the Taunton Town Centre Manager's page. This will give us the chance to feature more up-to-date news and to "set the agenda" in the area's most widely read local paper. The Gazette has a readership of about 75,000 people across Taunton Deane – probably more as single purchased copies are often passed around families and friends. The stories will also be uploaded on the website to ensure as wide a distribution as possible. Hard copies at Deane Dispatch will be distributed to all Members.

2. Consultation and Information

- 2.1 The Information and Consultation Officer has continued to develop the Customer Insight Project. This project aims to improve consistency in the way that consultation information is collected which will improve the usefulness of the feedback we get from surveys.

- 2.2 The project aims to develop processes to help us:
- Know in greater detail who our customers are;
 - Have a better understanding of their experience with our services;
 - Know what they care about;
 - Build this knowledge into decision making.
- 2.3 The project involves:
- Developing consistency in the way customer satisfaction research data is collected and stored;
 - Sharing data between service areas and between authorities (Districts and County);
 - Conducting 'segmentation analysis' to understand difference between groups.
- 2.4 The project outline was presented to the Strategy and Performance Panel on 4 March 2008. The project has now been taken on board by the Somerset Intelligence Network (a network of Consultation Offices across the Somerset districts and County Council) and we are now working closely with our Somerset colleagues with the aim of implementing the Protocol across Somerset.
- 2.5 The Information and Consultation Officer is co-ordinating the collection of service data at Taunton Deane Borough Council and Somerset County Council for the Wellington Customer Insight Project, one of the Southwest One Transformation Projects. This project aims to develop a detailed understanding of the characteristics and needs of the residents of Wellington, which will enable us to improve our services.
- 2.6 Data is being collected from a range of Taunton Deane Borough Council and Somerset County Council service areas to get a better understanding of the people who live in Wellington. This will help us to identify:
- Gaps in service delivery;
 - Differences in service take-up;
 - What communication and marketing routes to use to reach different groups
- 2.7 A new 'Place Survey' will this year replace the Best Value Users General Survey. This new survey will no longer focus on satisfaction with specific authorities. It will instead ask residents about their levels of satisfaction with issues in their local area, regardless who provides the service. We expect to have to carry out this survey this autumn. The survey will be jointly delivered by the five Somerset Districts and Somerset County Council.

3. Other Communications

- 3.1 At the end of April 2008 we will be introducing a new Service Update which will be circulated to all staff and Members electronically. This Service Update will contain brief information from a selection of Council and Southwest One

services, all services will be covered over a six-month period. It will also include updates from Established Partnerships, for example Southwest One, Somerset Waste Partnership and Tone Leisure. The Service Update will complement the information in both Core Brief and the Weekly Bulletin.

- 3.2 We are continuing to promote the Corporate Style Guide across the Council. We are currently working with Sue Catterick who provides the ICT training and we hope to integrate the style guide standards into relevant ICT training. We have also developed a Corporate Image Library which we hope will eventually contain all Council photographs.
- 3.3 The communications team are currently working with both the DLO and Parks Service and Deane Helpline to develop marketing plans to promote the services both locally and regionally. A quick win will be the introduction of an online diary on our website to promote the progress in the building of the new Nursery, this will have regular updates and photographs. Once this is on the website, we will circulate the link so you can follow the progress and send the link to any interested contacts you may have.
- 3.4 We continue to support the Southwest One Partnership communications which will become increasingly important as the work around transformation begins.

Councillor Steve Brooks

Report to Full Council April 2008

Simon Coles: Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning and Transport

Development Management

We were pleased with the response received to the vacancies for Principal and Planning Officer posts. I am delighted to report that the successful candidates, Matthew Bale and Karen Purchase are due to join us in early May. The Area Planning Manager post is currently being advertised with interviews scheduled for May 13th. I am sure you will all join with me in welcoming them to their new posts.

Interviews for the three vacancies within Planning Admin will take place by the end of April. This will enable us to restructure the Admin team to give a greater focus in terms of registration of planning applications.

The national standard planning application form and validation requirements came into effect in early April.

At the end of March the Government announced that they were raising the bar in terms of planning performance and that from 2011 the requirement will be that 80% of all applications will need to be determined within their 8 or 13 week target. This will reduce our ability to negotiate with developers during the application process, particularly in the case of major proposals and will therefore further shift emphasis towards pre-application discussions.

Monkton Heathfield

On 26th March the Planning Committee resolved to grant permission for two applications which together will deliver the major mixed use allocation in accordance with the Local Plan. A section 106 obligation will ensure that the Eastern Relief Road is delivered in a timely fashion to enable both employment areas and housing land to come forward without delay. However, the Monkton Heathfield Consortium are continuing to pursue their alternative proposal. This shows the Eastern Relief Road realigned to the south, which will result in significant harm being caused to the Green Wedge that divides Bathpool and Monkton Heathfield. Protection of the Green Wedge was identified in the Local Plan as the key consideration for this allocation. The Public Inquiry into that proposal commenced on the 1st April with three days of evidence and cross examination of expert witnesses. The Inquiry will continue and will hopefully conclude on Tuesday 8th April (after the writing of this report). The Inspector will then prepare his report, although in this case the final decision will rest with the Secretary of State (probably sometime later this summer).

Oxen Lane

You will no doubt be aware that the resumed Public Enquiry duly sat at the end of March. The Inspector has agreed to await the outcome of an important Regional Assembly Panel Report on the provision of Gypsy sites within the Deane, which is due within the next few weeks. The Inspector has agreed to await this report and to take it into account, provided, it is published before May 23rd. As both sides would be able to make written comments on the report the Inspectors Decision Letter may not be out until Mid June.

The current injunction proceedings are awaiting the outcome of the appeals, until when the Status Quo will remain.

The Third Way

The application which was submitted to the Planning Committee in March for our comments as a consultee in the process has now been forwarded to Somerset County Council. A very interesting and informative Public exhibition showing the layout and plans was recently held at the Brewhouse Theatre and was well attended by local people

TauntonTown Centre Action Plan

The Examination in Public of the Taunton Town Centre Action Plan is due to commence on April 29th and is scheduled to last for four days. It is anticipated that this will be adopted later this autumn and almost certainly by the year end.

Local Development Plan

The revised Local Development Scheme has now been submitted to Government of the South West for its consideration. This will affect our Planning Delivery Grant in the future and we are confident that this will also be approved before the year end.

Report of SIMON COLES
Portfolio Holder Strategic Planning and Transportation
April 2008

COUNCIL MEETING: 15 April 2008

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

PART 1

1. PROJECT TAUNTON

Visually the impact of Project Taunton is already there. The building of the new stand on the County Cricket Ground adjacent to the Brewhouse and the work of Midas on the former site of the Gas Works at Tangier are tangible evidence of how things are moving.

With the County Museum winning the Heritage Lottery bid of some £4.8 million attention turns to delivery over the next few months of Castle Green and the Goodland Gardens. Important decisions will have to be taken shortly on the design of the area and how it will juxtapose with the Third Way bridge design. A workshop on how these designs will come about is to be set up.

Car Parking in the future still poses the biggest challenge to Project Taunton and of course to the Council. A draft paper on the options available to the Council is being considered at present and I will update members verbally at full Council.

The Project Taunton team held a successful Open Day at the Brewhouse on 3 April. There were many exhibitors. Thrice Ian Franklin outlined the various phases of the Project so far at 12.30, 5.30 and 7.30pm on the day from the main theatre. About 800 people attended during the course of the day.

2. THE BREWHOUSE

The Theatre Development Study has now been published and is being considered. As I mentioned in February it has not come up with any major radical proposals. The Brewhouse had a successful trading period over the last 3 months making some inroads into its arrears. It is still precariously placed financially. Steve Kendall and I have redrafted the role of the Brewhouse Observers as our Representatives on the board to ensure better lines of communication in the future.

3. INTO SOMERSET

Steve Kendall reports in Part 2 on the actual state of play of the fledgling organisation. What is happening with the Sub National Review taking place is

that the Economic Leaders in the County are looking at this organisation to see if it can fulfill a larger role in the delivery of county wide economic services in keeping with the ideas of Pioneer Somerset. There is a determination that Tourism strategy should definitely come under its auspices as there is not the resource or capacity to run two organizations separately.

4. GENERAL

From 7 May this portfolio will also embrace Culture in the widest sense. I am hoping this change will consolidate all the work and will remove any confusions that may have existed.

I want to thank Steve Kendall for all his work and support he has given me in my first few months with this portfolio. He has accepted a senior post (with membership of the CMT) at the Forest of Dean District Council. I wish him every success in his new appointment.

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 members will also be aware that I advised Council in December 2007 that there was a likelihood of significant reduction in grants for the final year of the three year programme.

Government has now announced the level of award for 2008/09 Financial year. This amounts to £319,000, with a further sum (of approximately £50,000) to arrive later in the year.

I have asked my Economic Development & Regeneration Manager to identify those projects and activities to be funded from within this grant, and will bring a detailed report to the Councils' Overview and Scrutiny Board in May 2008.

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

1) Tourism

- a) Work continues to develop the Destination Management products, and the development of a single Somerset Visitors guide for the 2008/09 Year is now well underway.
- b) Discussions have been held with County-wide Economic Portfolio holders over the potential to merge the work of the DMO and Into Somerset. This is still some way off, and will be subject to detailed scrutiny by this Council.

2) Business Support

- a) The Young Enterprise Primary Programme moves into its third year as a result of my decision to continue to support the final year of the Programme. 28 Schools are expected to join the scheme this academic year.

Previous difficulties in recruiting 'school mentors' have now been overcome, and the Young Enterprise Organisers are currently recruiting schools for the new Academic Year in September 2008. I awarded the presentation certificates to year 5 pupils for Young Enterprise at Trull School on 5 March.

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.

The Council has organized a number of courses for Farmers this winter, and extended these to include members of both Wellington and Taunton Farmers markets

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.

5. General Work of the Unit

- a) The In2Somerset (Inward Investment Company) is continuing after not being able to recruit a suitably experienced candidate to act as its first Chief Executive. As an interim measure the Company has contracted with Somerset Chamber of Commerce to provide initial research and prepare

the way for the arrival of a new Chief Executive following plans to re-appraise the position later this year. Consultations are taking place with a national firm of headhunters.

- b) The Unit continues to support the work of a number of Council Task and Finish groups, and it is hoped that the initial round of Group work will be completed and reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel during this year.
- c) I must advise Members that this Council will no longer be awarding new business start-up grants. The 'landscape' for business support in Somerset is changing dramatically with the implementation of Peninsular Business Link, the evolution of Into Somerset, and the potential for closer working across District Borders offered by Pioneer Somerset.

Discussions are underway with Peninsular Business Link to replace start-up funding with business training and development provided by Business Link and targeted into our most deprived wards. This will also enable us to address the 'enterprising communities' agenda where we seek to generate a level of commitment and engagement with the enterprise agenda at community level, and with hard to reach groups.

JEFFERSON HORSLEY
7 April 2008

Council Meeting 15 April 2008

Report of Councillor Richard Lees – Leisure, Arts and Culture

Herewith I present my fifth portfolio report to Full Council as follows:-

Vivary Park Sunday bandstand concerts commence on June 1st and continue until August 31st.

The Easter edition of the Deano has been sent to all primary school aged children in Taunton Deane and the summer edition will be issued at the beginning of June. This publication gives details of activities for children in the main school holidays.

I am please to inform Council that Bishops Lydeard Village Hall, Chipstable Parish Hall, Lydeard St Lawrence Village Hall and Milverton Victoria Rooms have been successful in their application to the Somerset Joint Committee for Voluntary Village Halls and Community Centres for grant aid assistance. Bishops Lydeard and Chipstable both applied for extensions, Lydeard St Lawrence and Milverton for refurbishment works. The Committee is joint funded by both this Authority and Somerset County Council.

Letters have been sent to Parish Clerks and Playing Field Committees inviting applications and advising them the amount that may be awarded under the Parish Play Area Grant Scheme has been increased from 33% of the project cost to 50%.

GALMINGTON "MASSIVE" YOUTH GROUP

Officers met with this youth group to talk to them about the replacement play and activity equipment they would prefer to see at the Galmington Playing Field. Much of the original equipment at this site was made of timber and after 15 years it has rotted beyond repair. The young people chose some exciting modern equipment for climbing, swinging , rocking and one item based on skateboarding skills. They are also modelling their ideas for the Stoney Close play and activity area in Comeytrowe to help guide decisions on the development of this space.

PLAY RANGER SERVICE

This Big Lottery funded project is now moving forward with a preferred tenderer selected from 3 who were interviewed jointly by the 4 district councils involved in the project. The successful organisation, which will begin operations in July, will be announced as soon as contract negotiations are completed which is likely to be mid April.

HIGHER HOLWAY OPEN SPACE

The development of a design for the new play space on this site is nearing completion. The Leisure Development Manager has project-managed a team including a Landscape Architect, the Proludic play equipment company which successfully tendered for the work, Barnardos participation workers and our own Grounds Maintenance staff. Together they have involved children at Trinity School and young people at Bishop Fox's School in decisions about the design and look of the play space and the play experiences they wanted to have there. The final designs will be on the website for the project www.higherholway.co.uk very shortly. Local residents will be invited to comment and it is anticipated that work will be completed for the school holidays.

GREEN FLAG AWARDS

Applications have been submitted for reassessment for this award for Vivary, Wellington and Victoria Parks. The award is recognised by the Government as the standard for good park management covering issues such as safety, appropriate facilities, sustainability, community involvement, marketing, conservation and general management procedures. Judging takes place in May/June. Officers recently held an event with Friends of Parks groups from Wellington, Vivary and Victoria parks to involve them in the creation of an improvement plan for French Weir Park which is to be put forward for the Green Flag Award next year.

The sensory garden in Vivary park was an officer led suggestion. With the involvement of pupils from Ladymead School regarding the designing, and support from the Friends of Vivary Park, we hope to attract funds to progress this superb idea. Some preparatory work has been done thanks to improvements done by the parks staff to affect the area on that side of the park where flooding has been a constant feature. As matters progress I will endeavour to keep Council up-to-date.

WELLINGTON FOOTBALL CLUB

TDBC Officers have met with the football club and the Football Association on at least 2 occasions to discuss the requirements for improvements to the ground should, as seems likely, the club gain promotion at the end of the 2007/08 football season.

Wellington FC play on the Playing Field on land owned by TDBC. The club have submitted a planning application for a new stand and other minor improvements, the results of the application are expected later in the spring. In order to comply with the requirements of the higher league the club will have to 'surround' their ground to prevent 'unauthorised viewing or access

when the match is in progress. The club will also have to close the footpath through the area in order to regulate access.

If Wellington want to play at a higher level next year then these works need to be in place before the season starts and so time is short. Funding would come from the Football Foundation should planning be approved.

WELLINGTON RUGBY CLUB

The Club have received planning permission for a new stand and improvements to the changing rooms. TDBC has confirmed a grant of £35,000 towards the projects (total cost £215,000) and it is our understanding that the work will be carried out in 3 phases starting this year. The majority of the funding has been provided by the RFU with the Club and BIFFA also contributing significant amounts.

GALMINGTON AND HAMILTON PAVILIONS

Work is progressing well with the new Pavilions on the Hamilton and Galmington sites with all of the foundations and drainage work now completed.

The majority of the walls are also now built and Morgan Ashurst expect to complete the work on schedule in June 2008 despite working through some atrocious weather.

VIVARY TENNIS COURTS

The refurbishment programme is almost complete with the last element, the painting of the courts, due to be completed as soon as the wind and rain abates for a day or so! There will then be 2 fantastic free-to-use courts in Vivary Park.

In the first round of community arts grants applications for 2008/9, I am delighted to announce I have approved community arts grants to the following projects.

Take Art have been awarded £500 towards the Kinder Gardens Festival, a £30,000 project bringing the best European Early Years shows to Taunton Deane and other parts of the South West over the summer.

The Taunton Deane Wheelchair Line Dance group, High Spirits, have been awarded £600 towards their running costs. £450 has also been awarded to the launch of the Flux Disability Arts Festival at The Brewhouse Theatre with the 'Count Me In' drummers organised by the Somerset Arts and Disability Coordinator.

Visual arts students from Somerset College have been granted £100 towards total exhibition costs of £800 to take their end of year show to Appledore Arts Festival in North Devon.

Take Art have also been awarded £500 for the next 3 years (2007/8, 2008/9 and 2009/10 totalling £1500 in all) for Step Change, a major dance project also supported by the Primary Care Trust, Sport England and the Arts Council England. The TDBC grant will enable Take Art to work in Taunton Deane with young people, older people and people with disabilities.

Tom Lindsey will receive £375 towards an exhibition and archiving of photographs of Taunton Agricultural Market.

£500 has been awarded to community artist, Kate Lynch, for a project documenting rural Somerset working life and creating a touring exhibition focusing on sheep, with children from Trinity, North Town and St Andrews Primary Schools.

10 Parishes Festival will receive a grant of £2,500 to enable them to develop activities in September 2008.

Bath Place Traders Association have been awarded £500 towards their first arts festival in May 2008.

The Lane Art Group at Halcon has been awarded £420 to develop their painting and arts activities in 2008/9.

These community grants, totalling £6,445 levers in approximately a further £75,000 from other external sources enabling these projects to take place in Taunton Deane, giving added value to our supporting such events.

I was privileged to attend, along with over 150 people, the ArtsXchange showcase on Friday 7 February at the Tacchi Morris Arts Centre to celebrate the culmination of a two year county wide arts project with people who have learning difficulties. Professional dancers, drummers and storytellers have been working with 250 adults with learning difficulties throughout Somerset for the past 2 years. In Taunton Deane, clients at Six Acres have been working with musician and storyteller Jeremy Dick, performer, Emma Morley and drummer and performer, Ronni Spurrs. There have been skills sharing opportunities and master classes for staff and artists.

ArtsXchange has given participants a wonderful opportunity to develop their confidence, creativity, mobility and team working skills. There has been plenty of fun and laughter. The care staff have been enjoying the project immensely, and learnt new skills that they can continue to use in their work.

Organised by the Somerset Arts and Disability Arts Co-ordinator, the ArtsXchange project was funded by Arts Council England, Somerset Social Services and funds from the Somerset Arts Partnership that TDBC have with the other local authorities. TDBC have also contributed to the success of the

project through officer time in the management of the Somerset Arts and Disability co-ordinator, Catherine Beedell.

Over the past two years, Catherine has developed a strong disability network in Somerset, and is now working closely with the regional disability arts agency, Kaleido, to run a regional pilot project supporting disabled creatives in Somerset. Such wonderful exciting support and broadening of creativity for disabled people must be commended and I look to continue supporting such projects when and wherever we can.

TONE LEISURE (TAUNTON DEANE) LIMITED ACTIVITIES

Blackbrook Pavilion and Taunton Tennis Centre:

Tone Leisure Sport Relief Mile, Sunday, 16th March - On a very wet and windy Sunday Blackbrook Pavilion was the local host site for one of the many regional miles. On Friday there was a major doubt if the event would actually take place due to the very wet weather we had experienced during the week leading to the event. Over 500 entrants were received and, despite the atrocious weather conditions, there was a fantastic turn out.

Wellington Sports Centre

Successful swimming lessons programmed at Wellington Sports Centre continue to grow and develop, with more pre-school classes recently added to meet the high demand for this age group, along with some new additions - 'Rookie Lifeguard', 'Mini Water Polo', 'Synchronised Swimming' and the soon to be launched 'Flip 'n' Fun' (diving skills), which all add to the variety on offer.

Group Fitness Classes - On 30th January - Wellington Sports Centre staged a free 'GO Fitness' open evening to showcase some of the variety of fitness classes on offer. The four classes that ran attracted approximately 60 people in each class.

'Kids Zone' (Young Persons' Fitness) - The increasingly popular youth fitness programme, 'Kids Zone', has just been given a boost with the addition of five exercise machines (cycles, cross trainer and treadmills). This means that the 50 children currently enrolled on fitness courses now have a dedicated fitness gym and it is hoped that the programme can go from strength to strength.

Sports Hall - The longstanding arrangement where Court Fields Community School has used the sports hall at Wellington Sports Centre during term-time for PE lessons came to an end this Easter. The school has now built its own sports hall and the Sports Centre is actively seeking additional daytime hall bookings to fill as much of the vacated booking slots as possible. This also provides an opportunity to further expand the daytime activities programmes, particularly with the over 50s and pre

school children in mind.

VIVARY GOLF COURSE

The Golf Course made the front page of the Somerset County Gazette as several large trees were dramatically felled during high winds at the beginning of the month. The main casualties were three Willow trees that stood at the edge of the stream on the left hand side of the 11th hole. One of the trees fell across the fairway; the green keeping staff worked tirelessly to cut up and remove the tree in impressive time, having the hole re-opened in two days.

WELLSPRINGS LEISURE CENTRE

The Centre's GOgx programme has achieved numbers of over 700 users per week in the early part of this year; a growth of 40% on a year ago. Proposals on increasing capacity here are being looked into.

It is with pleasure that I am able to inform Council that Wellsprings has successfully been chosen to host the 2009 Great Britain v. Germany Youth International Trampoline Match. This is a major coup for Taunton and especially the Tone Trampoline Club coaches, who put so much into this fledgling club. The centre is now being considered for other 'major trampoline competitions.

Wellsprings hosted its first Strictly Dance event in March, with all 400 tickets selling out very quickly. The event was so popular the waiting list for the second event with Erin Boage and Anton Du Beke guarantees another sell out.

Future events booked for the next quarter include: the annual BIBIC Dinner Dance; Boxing Dinner; Jethro returns for another sell out tour date; Jimmy Carr stops off on his west country tour; and Strictly Dance 2 comes to Wellsprings.

Following major concerns on capacity of the Fitness Studio, consultation with Gym members has begun on converting the Health Suite into further fitness space. Results will be published shortly.

SPORTS AND HEALTH DEVELOPMENT

MEND - Mind, Exercise, Nutrition, Do It! - Nine children from Taunton and Wellington have recently completed the first MEND programmes. The children have all had great success from participating in MEND and are intending to maintain a more active and healthier lifestyle beyond the programme by enrolling in further activity programmes for young people. In particular, results have included reductions in waist circumference, improved levels of fitness and self-esteem and more time spent being more physically active.

A MEND Graduates group is being launched in Taunton from April for

children and families to continue to exercise together after they have completed the MEND programme. Enrolments are now taking place for the next MEND programmes, which are due to start at the end of April.

Health Walking - Another 14 volunteers from Taunton Deane have been trained as Volunteer Walk Leaders on a training day, which took place on 5th March at Wellsprings Leisure Centre. It is hoped that these additional leaders will contribute to some new Health Walking Programmes under the Active Somerset project or that they will support the existing Walk Well in Taunton scheme.

Coach Education - Three Coach Education courses have taken place at Wellsprings Leisure Centre for local sports clubs and coaches. A total of 44 people have attended the three courses: Safeguarding and Protecting Children; a Club for All; and Equity in Your Coaching.

Aquathlon and Triathlon - A record number of more than 210 competitors swam and ran in the Taunton Deane Foot Anstey Aquathlon at Wellington Sports Centre on Sunday, 24th February. The new team race attracted 44 teams, many first timers with one completing the swim and the other the run. Another category was the Foot Anstey Corporate Challenge, the 1,000 m/10 k was won by Queen's College and the 500 m/5 k by the Environment Agency.

The annual Triathlon (swim, cycle, run) will be held at Wellington Sports Centre on Sunday, 18th May and is already fully booked.

The pleasing feature through my report I feel is the mentioning of young people, be it involved in play, parks, sport through to Tone Leisures activities. With Holy Trinity Primary School children coming second in the National Schools Table Tennis Championships recently following which the Mayor invited them to his Parlour to congratulate them, I close my report by registering my congratulations to those concerned.

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Councillor Richard Lees

COUNCIL MEETING – 15th April 2008.

REPORT OF COUNCILLOR MEL MULLINS–ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

1.0 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH.

1.1 Food Safety.

FoodO

Somerset County Council has approved the electronic version of our FoodO Board game for distribution on memory stick to all 250 Primary schools in Somerset. This removes the last hurdle in the process, and the memory sticks, pre-loaded with the programme have been received, using funding provided by the Food Standards Agency. A presentation on FoodO was given to the Somerset Food and Health Alliance, which generated considerable interest and was well received.

Pizza Hut Prosecuted.

Pizza Hut pleaded guilty to two food offences and were fined a total of £7000 and ordered to pay costs of nearly £8500. The case was brought after Food Officers found a number of food hygiene offences at visits between February and May last year. Pizza Hut pleaded guilty to failing to keep the premises clean, and failing to keep equipment clean. Pizza Hut has since managed to maintain an acceptable standard and at the most recent visit was found to be following advice given by Taunton Deane but will continue to be monitored by Food Officers.

Food Trade Event 8th April Taunton School

The Food Safety Team are hosting a Star Ratings event for businesses on 8th April. Advance bookings have already reached over 120 and around 400 businesses are expected to attend the event at Taunton School to find out more about the Star Rating scheme and get tips and advice on how to ensure they achieve a good rating.

1.2 Environmental Protection

Dog Fouling ~ Fixed Penalty Notices

The Dog Warden service has been responding to local concern about dog fouling with a renewed effort to enforce the dog fouling legislation through the use of the fixed penalty notice provision. Consequently Eleven fixed penalty notices for the offence of failing to remove dog faeces were served during the Financial Year 2007/08.

Air Quality - Bid for Funding

A bid for £10,000 has been made to Defra for funding in respect of Air Quality. If we are successful, the money will be used to carry out computer modelling for oxides of nitrogen; a traffic related pollutant. The requirement for this detailed assessment has come about because our own routine monitoring of traffic 'hotspots' indicates that concentrations of this pollutant may soon exceed the permitted levels. We will not know the result of our bid for several months.

1.3 Licensing

Firestone Review

A Review application was received from the Police following a number of management issues and a public order incident. Subsequently the Police and Licence holder agreed to a number of extra conditions to be attached to the premises licence. At a later meeting of the Licensing sub-committee the agreed extra conditions were attached to the licence.

Naval and Military

A Review application was received from the Police following a multi-agency visit where management issues, the use of class A drugs and stolen goods on the premises were identified as the key issues. The premises were failing to promote the licensing objectives at all levels. The review requested that the licence be revoked. Consultation has taken place between premises owners, Police and Licensing Authority and the matter is to be considered by a Licensing Sub Committee in due course.

1.4 Environmental Health Support

Licensing Pack

A member of the EH Support Team has produced an information pack that will be of great help to those of our customers who are trying to understand the complexities of seeking a Licensing Review. The pack contains a "Jargon Buster" to help with the Licensing Act's terms and phrases, a list of the statutory consultees that the application form must be sent to once completed, an example of a completed application form, a guidance note for interested parties wishing to make a review and of course the relevant application form.

Scores on the Doors

Another Team member has been busy making the administrative arrangements for the launch of the "Scores on the Doors" food safety project at the Food Trade Event on April 8th. This work has included securing many very attractive prizes, kindly donated by local businesses, for the Mayor's Raffle to be held at this event, which will help to ensure interest and success for the day.

1.5 General

Accommodation

Last minute plans and preparations for the move of the Environmental Protection Team to Flook House have been made, to minimise disruption and to ensure that services continue to be delivered.

2.0 STREET CLEANSING and PUBLIC CONVENIENCES.

2.1 Street Cleansing

As a result of the "Aquazura" washer/scrubbing machine operating in the Taunton town centre it has been necessary to reschedule some of the other cleansing resources, as part of these changes and at the request of Wellington town council it has been possible to operate the "Applied" sweeper (Green machine) in Wellington for a day once every two weeks.

2.2 Public Conveniences

Agreed as part of the budget for this financial year the following facilities have been closed from the 1st April, members of the public are being directed to the nearest toilet block, and disconnection of all services is currently underway.

- Canal Road
- Priory Bridge Road Car Park
- Goodland Gardens
- High Street Car Park (disabled section remaining open)

Councillor Mel Mullins

Council Meeting 15 April 2008

Report of Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey – Housing Services

Success after Success for the Homeless

As members are aware, the Council has recently been successful in attracting £250,000 government investment for the construction of a Rough Sleeper Unit at Norie House, a unit owned by Taunton Association for the Homeless (TAH). It is anticipated that the construction contract will go out to tender before the end of April with a start on site in early summer, and completion will follow before the end of the year.

I am delighted to report that the Council has also succeeded in obtaining a further grant of £740,000 for developments at Lindley House, the larger hostel run by Taunton Association for the Homeless. At the moment TDBC owns two of the four original properties which make up the hostel, and two are rented by TAH from another housing association – the new funding may allow TDBC to purchase the freehold of the remaining two, thereby significantly reducing the operating costs of the hostel. In addition, there will be the development of a workshop and internet cafe which will be used to equip homeless people with the necessary skills to enter the employment market. This project will be completed in several stages over the next 3 years.

John Shipley has recently been appointed as the new Director of Taunton Association for the Homeless. John has considerable housing experience, having managed a hostel in London and worked for various housing organizations. Officers will meet John shortly and the intention is to work closely in partnership with TAH to ensure that the new developments are completed on time.

I am continuing to progressively shadow housing staff in order to fully understand the service delivered to customers, and in March I spent time with the Housing Options team. I was impressed with the caring and professional advice given by team members, and in particular with the emphasis on prevention as well as dealing with the consequences of homeless.

Getting Tenants Empowered

I intend to challenge our tenants to review the arrangements in place for them to get involved in the management of the housing stock. Though we have worked hard in the past to provide opportunities, we do struggle to attract a genuine cross-section of tenants who wish to become involved. I want to offer a challenge to tenants to join us in managing the housing stock and making decisions on its future – tenants made the positive decision to keep the management, maintenance and ownership of their homes with the Council, despite the financial incentives put in place by central government, and as a Council we need to respect that decision by allowing them every opportunity to shape the future management of their homes. I intend to establish a small working group of interested tenants, to include representation from the Tenants' Forum, which will be asked to look at ways in which tenant participation may be modernised and improved to involve a wider cross-section of empowered tenants.

New Meeting Hall at Roland Close

As reported in the local newspaper, the new meeting hall was officially opened by Jeremy Brown MP on 14th March 2008. Local residents have already set up regular weekly coffee mornings, lunch club, card/games and craft sessions. Items made at the craft sessions are sold to raise money for charities such as the Special Baby unit at Musgrove Hospital, Guide Dogs, Hearing Dogs and the Air Ambulance Service. So I can confirm that the hall is already being put to very good use. This facility was jointly funded by TDBC and Supporting People.

Investment for Gypsies and Travellers

A grant of £100,000 has recently been won by the Council for the establishment of a Gypsy and Traveller Site Acquisition Fund. The Council was required to match fund this amount with a further £50,000. The total fund of £150,000 will be used to purchase and develop a suitable site for a traveller family. The intention is to sell the site to the family on a "not for profit" basis, if possible, with the proceeds being recycled back into the fund for further site purchases.

Officers have recently met the specialist Gypsy and Traveller advisor from the Government Office for the South West (GOSW), and are being actively encouraged to work in partnership with neighbouring Councils because Gypsy and Traveller accommodation problems are clearly a County and regional issue. The Centre for Urban Studies in Birmingham is currently carrying out further research into the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and this will eventually form part of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

Affordable Housing

A total of 146 Affordable Homes were completed in the last financial year. The bulk of these properties were provided on two sites, one at Ladysmith Gate where a total of 75 affordable flats were created by the conversion of a former British Telecom building and a further 36 low cost open market houses that were constructed at Chelston.

With no large-scale sites in delivery this financial year, the projected number of completions in 2008/09 is expected to be 58 properties.

Choice Based Lettings

Home Finder Somerset is a new Choice Based Lettings system that will be used for allocating social housing in Somerset. This is a partnership project involving 5 local authorities and 48 Registered Social Landlords. It will be a web based system with applicants primarily using the Internet to find and bid for a suitable home. Contracts have been signed with Abitras, a specialist IT Company, and a common allocation policy agreed across the 5 districts

Applicants will be required to register on the new system in the summer with the scheme projected to go live in November. It is anticipated that in Taunton up to 4,000 applicants will register on the new system during the summer and this will create a large additional workload for the Council's Housing Options Team, as for several months they will be required to operate two completely different systems in parallel. The implementation of the new system will take place in turn in each district with West Somerset first, followed by Mendip, Taunton Deane, Sedgemoor and finally South Somerset. It will be necessary to approve overtime spending and some recruitment of temporary staff to ensure that the project is a success. The additional costs have been built in to the CBL budgets.

Energy Efficiency

Officers have recently been successful in securing a total of 50,000 low energy light bulbs from the energy supplier, Scottish and Southern, as part of the Government's new Carbon Energy Reduction Targets (CERT) for the residents of Taunton Deane. These light bulbs

have been allocated to the Council as part of Scottish and Southern Carbon Emissions Reduction target, an obligation placed on energy utilities by Government requiring them to spend a proportion of their turnover on energy efficiency and renewable energy initiatives for consumers. The obligation requires 70% of the bulbs to be given to low income, or vulnerable consumers.

Hazel Prior-Sankey
Housing Executive Member

Council Meeting 15 February 2008

Report of Councillor Fran Smith - Resources

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

I would like to welcome Richard Bryant as the new Manager of Democratic Services and thank Greg Dyke for all his work, but please be aware he hasn't completely left us as he has agreed to stay on to help us to develop the Member Development Steering group. As you can see we have changed the focus of this group to concentrate on member development and less on achieving Member Charter status. If Charter status is achieved as a result of the work the Group are doing, then that is good, but the Group didn't want this to be the main driver of its work. The Member Development Steering Group met recently and spent some time on improving means of communication with members, developing the Skills Framework, learning from a visit to South Somerset, hearing about the success of the Ward Walk pilot, developing the Training Plan and arranging to get some feedback on the induction process from the "Class of 2007". Already some useful comments have been received and the Group are grateful to those councillors who have responded.

The Council's Standards Committee are pleased to report that, thanks to the hard work of Parish Liaison Officer, David Greig, every Parish Council in the Borough has now been individually trained in the new Code of Conduct. This has proved a much more effective way of delivering the training and it is hoped that it will stand members in good stead when the new local arrangements are introduced.

Members will also be aware that following the sad death of Tony Floyd a vacancy has arisen in the Comeytrove Ward. The vacancy has been duly advertised and arrangements are now in hand for a by-election to take place on 1 May.

PERSONNEL

Job Evaluation

All of the results of the appeals have now been notified to staff. There is still some further work to do with Unison to achieve a national agreement with them, but hopefully this will soon be concluded.

Sickness Absence

The sickness figures to date are encouraging, the short term absences show a decrease compared to last year. However, long term absence cases are still high. Human Resources are holding weekly discussions on managing the long term cases and doing everything to support the employees back into work, but the reasons people are off are due to serious illnesses.

The new sickness reporting procedures of reporting to a member of the SMT are continuing for the next financial year, this is due to the 70% reduction of short term absence in these areas. We are also extending the service areas to include all of Housing and Environmental Health.

We are also launching a well-being event at the Deane House and DLO in June 2008. The aim is to encourage staff to participate in physical activity, and provide information on the benefits we can offer to support a healthier lifestyle.

SouthWest One

The HR Manager continues to be involved in weekly meetings with IBM and SCC. Part of the transformation is looking at the organisation design of the HR services. Any changes will take place gradually over the next eighteen months. The SAP SWO project team has now commenced and the HR Admin Assistant has joined the project to represent the TDBC HR aspects of the new payroll/personnel system.

CORPORATE SUPPORT SERVICES

The past two months have been extremely busy agreeing full monthly client reporting and determination of KPI's/SPI's for each service in preparation for service credit readiness on 1st April 2008.

Customer Services:

Due to secondment opportunities, retirement, and a member of the team obtaining a post in Housing we currently have 4 vacancies within Customer Services, which we are filling temporarily with agency staff until we complete the full recruitment process.

Statistical Information:

29,206 calls were managed through the contact centre with 60% being dealt with entirely within Customer Services and 83% of calls being answered within 20 seconds. The total abandonment rate for the period was 3.6% a very impressive improvement on previous periods. A total of 6,805 people have been helped at Deane House main and planning receptions and 1,731 people visited Wellington Community Office – February is always a quiet month at the Wellington Community Office where footfall numbers are traditionally 65-70% lower than other months.

Design and Print:

Work continues with assisting services on their professional design and print requirements. Throughput of work has increased and, as expected, evened out by year end. The customer satisfaction survey was very favourable with a high return rate of 64% and a satisfaction rating of 96.5%.

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. Significant work has been undertaken to determine new reporting procedures to enable us to provide client updates.

Facilities continue to work with agency staff covering the morning opening of Deane House, evening Facilities Assistant continues at present on a fixed term contract but this is currently being reviewed. Corporate Admin/Facilities Manager is continuing to assist at County Hall and discussions are taking place on future arrangements. Backfill has been arranged with one of the Corporate Administration Assistants being seconded half-time to assist with agency staff covering her role for 18 hours a week.

Accommodation:

Work has been continuing on accommodation issues, Finance moved to Quantock House and Environmental Health are now totally located within Flook House. Discussions are still continuing with Economic Development, Forward Planning and Leisure Development on arrangements to relocate them to the first floor, to enable the majority of the second floor to be reorganised as a joint contact centre for TDBC and SCC.

ICT SERVICE

The major news has been Avon and Somerset Police joining the partnership of SouthWest One. This opens up a new set of great opportunities in the way we design our services, as well as significant complexities in terms of the governance and compliance of Police versus Council Services.

The end of financial year processing has passed off relatively smoothly, including the move of the TDBC Finance team to Quantock house as part of the wider accommodation changes.

A major reconfiguration of the TDBC network over the Easter break was carried out to enable better connectivity with the network at County Hall – this will facilitate some of the moves proposed as part of the contact centre changes and moves to the Deane House. This major piece of work was something that the old TDBC service would have struggled to complete over a weekend, but the new Southwest One organisation was able to bring in additional resources and expertise to help ensure the work was carried out with as low a risk to services as possible. Thanks to Alistair and his team, and also colleagues from Somerset CC and IBM for giving up some of their Easter weekend to help with this.

The SAP back office project has now kicked off in earnest, and Diana is taking a role on the project as a trainer, so we are in the process of back filling her post to ensure we can maintain the level of service TDBC users have come to expect.

REVENUES & BENEFITS SERVICE UNIT

The Revenues & Benefits Service Unit has made significant progress during 2007/2008, with improvement in all areas in comparison with the previous year. Performance in benefits processing has been particularly pleasing with new claims being turned round in 19.88 days at 29 February 2008 (this compares to 44 days in 2006/2007) and changes of circumstances worked out in 8.23 days (this compares to 21.2 days in 2006/2007).

In collecting Council Tax and National Non Domestic Rates (Business Rates – NNDR) we have unfortunately missed our targets this year. At 31 March 2008 we had collected 97.22% of the Council Tax debt raised during the year against a target of 98%. In NNDR we collected 98.21% against our target of 98.8%. Whilst the Revenues & Benefits Service have not done as well as they would have hoped in this area, it is noteworthy they have nevertheless achieved collection in the very late 90%'s. It also needs to be understood these collection figures are NOT the sum total of collection for 2007/08 but are instead only a snapshot of what we collected as at 31st March 2008. The uncollected balance will not be lost or overlooked but will be collected after 1st April.

Over previous years our total Council Tax and NNDR collection rates for all years is in excess of 99.3%. Outstanding Council Tax and NNDR collection is very much in focus with over 1,500 summons relating to outstanding 2007/08 accounts issued on 1 April 2008.

Our ability to collect debt quickly is governed by the taxpayer's ability to pay and there is no question that people in general are experiencing significant financial pressures through increased mortgage, utility & petrol payments. This unquestionably makes the collection team's job and that of the bailiffs more difficult.

Finally in summarising performance in tackling benefit fraud in 2007/2008, we received a total of 209 referrals requiring investigative work. We were able to successfully prosecute 7 fraudsters with penalties handed down ranging from conditional discharges to a suspended prison sentence with a curfew order. In addition to prosecutions we also issued 7 formal cautions and 3 administrative penalties (all of which were immediately paid in full by the perpetrators of the fraudulent activity)

FINANCIAL SERVICES

In the last couple of weeks the Financial Services Unit has been making preparations for the closedown of the old financial year, 2007/08. This has included holding briefing seminars for budget holders and preparing the timetable used to ensure the smooth closedown of the Councils accounts. In addition the Unit just recently moved locations – the accountancy team is now located on the 3rd floor of Quantock House in Paul Street. The payments and insurance team is to be located from 6 April on the ground floor of Deane House near ICT. All contact numbers and email addresses remain the same. The team has also recently concluded the retendering of our Treasury Management advisors – our new advisors with effect from 1 April will be Arlingclose.”

LEGAL SERVICES

Ian Taylor has now retired and we welcome Tonya Meers who has taken on part of Ian's and Jeremy Thornberry's role in the restructure as well as responsibility for Member Services and is now the Legal and Democratic Services Manager.

SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Scrutiny

The Scrutiny pilot project has now been running for a full 6 months. As promised, the Overview and Scrutiny Board will now discuss the successes and failures of the pilot, and will do so at their meeting on the 17th April. At that meeting they will agree a way forward for Scrutiny on the basis of the lessons learned over the last six months. It is encouraging to note that during the pilot project, the Audit Commission produced their “Annual Audit Inspection letter” for Taunton Deane, and stated that Scrutiny is “improving well”. This is a significant improvement on previous year's inspections where Scrutiny was described as weak.

Performance / CPA

The Quarter 3 (to December 2007) updates of 2007/08 performance against our Corporate Strategy objectives, performance indicators and budget position was taken to the Strategy and Performance Panel on the 1st April for Scrutiny.

Work is underway to collect our end of year performance against targets against for our Best Value and Local Performance Indicators. Following collection and submission of our results we will be audited on our performance improvement and the data quality for a number of these indicators. This is the last year Best Value Performance Indicators will be collected. From April 2008 we will be expected to collect a smaller number of National Indicators. Managers have been asked to integrate these into their 2008/09 Service Plans.

An update of progress against our Corporate Improvement Plan was taken to the Corporate Governance Committee on 17 March. This highlighted progress against the Audit Commission's “Use of Resources” criteria and also against weaknesses

highlighted by Audit Commission inspections. The Audit Commission will visit us in April/May to assess our progress against each of these.

The Audit Commission has now finalised our Annual Audit Inspection letter and presented their findings to the Corporate Governance Committee. The weaknesses highlighted will be addressed in our Corporate Improvement Plan.

Corporate Strategy

The Corporate Strategy (2008 -11) has now been published and will be shortly presented to Full Council. Managers have been requested to develop their 2008/09 Service Plans based on this Corporate Strategy.

Procurement

Southwest One are working closely with the two councils to develop 'Category Plans' to identify better ways to procure goods and services for various categories of spend. Most of the Category Plans have now been produced and are going through the sign off process. From the Category Plans benefits savings are currently being identified.

Councillor Fran Smith

Council Meeting 15 April 2008

Report of Councillor Alan Wedderkopp – Community Leadership

Local Strategic Partnership (LSP):

At its last meeting the LSP agreed funding for three projects:

- a project being led by the Brewhouse Theatre in conjunction with Taunton East Development Trust, the Police, Connexions and Somerset County Youth Service.

The project is aimed at young people aged 14 to 18 who live in the Halcon, Lane and Lambrook estates. One of the main aims of the project is to break down the barriers that prevent young people from all three estates working together whilst raising their skill levels, as well as targeting potential anti-social behaviour. This will be achieved by offering arts based activities

- a continuation of the Energize project which develops activities for young people in and around the town centre. The *Energize* programme came out of a discussion about the need for positive activities for young people, and developed monthly discos at Deller's Warf Nightclub, an activity day in August and a training programme for young people interested in developing their skills in the increasingly popular sport of Parkour. The group is keen to provide a wider range of activities and to support new developments in 2008.
- A project with Exmoor National Park to work with up to 20 young people, aged 12-16 years from the Halcon area of Taunton, on a range of activities, culminating in an outdoor residential experience at Pinkery Outdoor Centre.

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP)

The CDRP received an update on progress on the Wellington Community Restorative Justice project which is now recruiting volunteers and will launch in June.

One of the main agenda items was the plan to merge the three CDRPs in the West of the County i.e. West Somerset, Taunton Deane and Sedgemoor. This has been agreed by the three CDRPs at previous meetings, and discussions took place about what this means in practice. Over the coming weeks members of all three CDRPs will meet to discuss practicalities such as membership of the joint CDRP, and how to ensure that local issues are still represented.

PLAY RANGER SERVICE:

this Big Lottery funded project is now moving forward with a preferred tenderer selected from 3 who were interviewed by the 4 district councils involved in the project. Both officers and Portfolio Holders attended the interviews and a joint decision was made on the preferred tenderer. The successful organisation, which will begin operations in July, will be announced as soon as contract negotiations are completed in April

Local Area Agreement (LAA)

The Local Area Agreement is in its final stages of development. 35 indicators have been selected which public agencies County-wide will work together to deliver. The LAA will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 17 April.

Taunton Deane Council for Voluntary Service:

We are at present negotiating a new Service Level Agreement if they come to a satisfactory conclusion an announcement will be made in the Weekly Bulletin.

Councillor Alan Wedderkopp