



## COUNCIL SUMMONS

YOU ARE REQUESTED TO ATTEND A MEETING OF THE TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL TO BE HELD IN THE JOHN MEIKLE ROOM, THE DEANE HOUSE, BELVEDERE ROAD, TAUNTON ON TUESDAY 14TH APRIL 2009 AT 18:30.

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### AGENDA

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

1. To receive the Minutes of the Meetings of the Council held on 17 February 2009 (attached).
2. To report any apologies for absence.
3. The Taunton Deane Borough Council Bursary Scheme - Feedback from students of the Somerset College of Arts and Technology who were awarded bursaries.
4. To receive any communications.
5. To receive petitions from Local Government electors under Standing Order 17.
6. To receive questions from Local Government electors under Standing Order 18.
7. Declarations of Interests. To receive declarations of personal and prejudicial interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct. The usual declarations made at meetings of Full Council are set out in the attachment.
8. Borough Council By-Election - 2 April 2009. The Democratic Services Manager, on behalf of the Returning Officer, to report details of the Councillor elected to fill the vacancy in the Wiveliscombe and West Deane Ward.
9. The further redevelopment of Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton. A presentation by Jo Cubbon, Chief Executive of the Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust to outline the plans the Trust has for the hospital, its ambitions around service provision and new buildings. Mrs Cubbon will be accompanied by Dr. Cliff Mann, Consultant in Accident and Emergencies and Helen Roden, Director of Operations.
10. Changes to the Constitution. Report of the Legal and Democratic Services Manager (attached).
11. Part I - To deal with written questions to and receive recommendations from the Executive:-
  - (i) Councillor Henley - Capital Strategy 2009-2012 (attached);
  - (ii) Councillor Coles:-

(a) Growth Point Funding and Housing and Planning Delivery Grant Funding (attached);

(b) Conversion of Taunton Market Site to a Surface Car Park (attached);

(iii) Councillor Horsley - Relocation of the Horticultural Nursery - Project Overspend (attached).

12. Part II - To receive reports from the following Members of the Executive:-

- (i) Councillor Ross Henley - Leader of the Executive;
- (ii) Councillor Richard Lees - Sports, Parks and Leisure;
- (iii) Councillor Mel Mullins - Environmental Services;
- (iv) Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey - Housing Services;
- (v) Councillor Fran Smith - Resources;
- (vi) Councillor Alan Wedderkopp - Community Leadership;
- (vii) Councillor Steve Brooks - Communications;
- (viii) Councillor Simon Coles - Planning and Transportation;
- (ix) Councillor Jefferson Horsley - Economic Development and the Arts.

Tonya Meers  
Legal and Democratic Services Manager  
07 April 2009







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



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



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## Taunton Deane Borough Council

At a meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council held in the John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton on 17 February 2009 at 6.30 pm.

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

### 1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council held on 9 December 2008, copies having been sent to each Member, were signed by the Mayor.

### 2. Public Question Time

(a) Mrs D Bradley made reference to the publication titled "The Word" which covered many cultural and art events in Somerset and requested Councillors to consider subscribing to this magazine.

In response, Councillor Horsley hoped Councillors would subscribe.

(b) Ms A Reynolds referred to the Government's Free Swimming Initiative. She felt that it offered great benefits to the over 60's in helping them keep active and also aided the rehabilitation process after illness. She also stated that free swimming for the under 16's was important so that all children had the opportunity to learn how to swim. She went on to ask whether Aqua Aerobics would be free to the over 60's alongside the free swimming offer, if it was introduced, and to what extent existing swimming programmes were likely to be altered by Tone Leisure?

Councillor R Lees thanked Ms Reynolds for her comments. If the Free Swimming Initiative was agreed, Tone Leisure would obviously need to sort out the details as to the swimming activities which would be offered free and those where payment would still be required. If Ms Reynolds passed her questions to him, Councillor Lees promised to let her have a full response in due course.

(c) Mrs Cautley thanked the Council for maintaining the concessions offered to pensioners by Tone Leisure.

- (d) Mr Merritt reported that he lived in a house where the pilot card and plastic doorstep collection scheme was in operation. He fully supported this extension to the recycling service. He noted that under their alternative budget proposals, the Conservatives planned to delay the introduction of the card and plastic collection scheme. He asked what plans the Liberal Democrats had?

Councillor Mullins confirmed that the Liberal Democrats intended to roll out the cardboard and plastics scheme as soon as possible.

- (e) Mr I McCulloch representing the Taunton Deane Branch of Unison referred to the Core Council Review proposals. He pointed out that the review was not a minor re-organisation of one work area. This was a blueprint for the whole of the Core Council for the medium to long term future, changing how the Council delivered its services.

He asked Councillors to consider voting against the proposals if they had concerns about future service delivery or were not totally convinced that this was the way Taunton Deane should conduct its business in the future. He added that a decision to proceed would have far reaching implication for both the Authority and its staff.

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

Councillor Mrs Allgrove declared personal interests as a Member of the South West Regional Assembly and as Chairman of the Somerset Association of Local Councils. Councillor Brooks declared personal interests as a Member of both Somerset County Council and the Somerset Waste Board and as a Trustee of the Council for Voluntary Service. Councillor Coles declared a personal interest as a Director of Southwest One. Councillor D Durdan declared a prejudicial interest as a Tone Leisure Board Member. Councillor Mrs Floyd declared a personal interest as a Member of Unison. Councillor Govier declared personal interests both as a Member of the Somerset County Council and the South West Regional Assembly and as a Non-Executive Director of NHS Somerset. Councillor Henley declared personal interests both as a Member of the Somerset County Council and the South West Regional Assembly. Councillor Mrs Hill declared personal interests both as an employee of Somerset County Council and as a Member of Unison. Councillor House declared a personal interest as a Member of the Village Halls Committee. Councillor Miss James declared a personal interest as an employee of Viridor. Councillor Mullins declared a personal interest as a Member of the Somerset Waste Board. Councillor Paul declared a personal interest as a Member of Somerset County Council. Councillor Prior-Sankey declared personal interests as a Member of Somerset County Council, the Somerset Waste Board, the Local Strategic Partnership, the South West Regional Assembly, the Regional Transformation Board and the Supporting People Commissioning Body. Councillor Mrs Smith declared a personal interest as an employee of Somerset County Council. Councillor Mrs Whitmarsh declared personal interests both as a Member of the Home Furniture Trust and the Wiveliscombe Area Partnership.

4. **Non attendance at meetings – Councillor John Bone, Wiveliscombe and West Deane Ward**

Reported that Councillor John Bone had not attended any “qualifying” meetings of the Council nor any other meeting as a representative of the Council since the 15 July 2008.

The Local Government Act 1972 provided that if a Member failed to attend any such qualifying meeting for a period of six months the Council must declare the seat to be vacant. The six months expired on the 16 January 2009.

Although the Chief Executive had written to Councillor Bone inviting him to provide any contrary information, none had been received.

**Resolved** that:-

- (a) the seat in the Wiveliscombe and West Deane Ward be formally declared vacant; and
- (b) a letter be sent by the Mayor, on behalf of the Council, to Councillor Bone thanking him for his service to the community over the past nine years.

(At the suggestion of the Mayor, the following item was brought forward on the agenda for consideration.)

5. **Recruitment of Independent Members to Taunton Deane Borough Council’s Standards Committee**

Reported that there had been three vacancies for Independent Members on the Council's Standards Committee. Following public advertisement six candidates were interviewed for the vacancies.

From the candidates, three were provisionally invited to join the Standards Committee. The three were:-

- Alan Cottrell, a retired Head Teacher;
- Peter Malim OBE, a retired senior officer from the UK Hydrographic Office; and
- Robert Symons, a former Local Government Chief Executive and a United Nations Municipal Representative – now also retired.

In order to comply with the terms of the Council's Constitution these appointments had to be formally made by Council.

**Resolved** that Alan Cottrell, Peter Malim OBE and Robert Symons all be appointed as Independent Members of the Council's Standards Committee.

6. **Written Question to Member of the Executive**



Councillor Stuart-Thorn asked the following question:-

"Is there a sizeable portion of the annual Arts Council Grant that the Council withholds from the Brewhouse Theatre and, if so, why does it do so and how much is it?"

Councillor Horsley replied as follows:-

"I find Councillor Stuart-Thorn's question confusing. What does he mean by the Arts Council? This is an independent national body which decides on its own criteria which arts organisation to grant aid or not. Taunton Deane Borough Council has no influence in its funding pattern but works closely with it where possible.

If I delete the word "Arts Council" from his question, then my reply is as follows.

The annual grant to the Brewhouse is £152,000 and is given usually in four quarterly sums of £38,000. In 2008/2009, £38,000 was given in April, £76,000 was given in July and the final £38,000 was given in January 2009. The Council accepted the request from the Brewhouse to advance its autumn payment to the summer to tie it over the low takings expected in August in particular and to ease cash flow.

The Council is in negotiation with the Brewhouse Board about its payment profile for the forthcoming year.

Therefore the answer to Councillor Stuart-Thorn's question is that there is no sizeable portion of the grant that is withheld."

## **7. Recommendations to Council from the Executive**

### **(a) Funding of Unauthorised Planning Issue – North Curry**

As a result of the occupation of land at Oxen Lane, North Curry in October 2004 by 16 gypsy families, the Council earmarked a sum of £100,000 in the 2005/2006 budget to fund the costs of dealing with this unauthorised planning activity.

Since that time the provision of specialist legal advice, two major public inquiries and the initiation and conduct of injunction proceedings in the High Court has meant that the original budget had been fully committed.

In order to complete the action against the unauthorised incursion, the Council would incur further costs in a number of areas including a further public inquiry and the final injunction proceedings.

On the motion of Councillor Coles, it was

**Resolved** that a supplementary estimate of £50,000 be approved to complete the action against the unauthorised incursion of land at Oxen Lane, North Curry.

**(b) Somerset Waste Partnership – Plastic and Card Recycling – Purchase of new recycling bins**

If the proposed extension of the recycling service to include the kerbside collection of plastics and cardboard was introduced, extra recycling bins would be required to be purchased for every household in Taunton Deane at an estimated cost of £176,000.

Somerset County Council was in receipt of Waste Infrastructure Grant and had agreed to assist district councils in the purchase of the additional bins by offering 75% of the cost. The cost to Taunton Deane Borough Council was likely therefore to be £44,000.

On the motion of Councillor Mullins, it was

**Resolved** that an increase to the 2008/2009 capital programme of £44,000 be agreed to meet this shortfall in capital funding which was to be funded from uncommitted Waste Services reserves.

**(c) Fees and Charges 2009/2010**

Consideration had been given to the proposed fees and charges for 2009/2010 for the following services:-

- Cemeteries and Crematorium;
- Waste Services;
- Housing; and
- Licensing.

Details of the proposed increases were submitted. No increase was proposed to the Land Charges fees.

The results of both previous public consultation events “Your Council, Your Views” had 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.

On the motion of Councillor Mullins, it was

**Resolved** that the fees and charges for 2009/2010 in respect of Cemeteries and Crematorium, Waste Services, Housing and Licensing, as submitted, be agreed.

**(d) Corporate Strategy 2009-2012**

The Corporate Strategy was the Council's principal policy document and it contained the Council's Vision, Business Principles and Core Values and described the key outcomes that the Council intended to achieve in the community over the next three years.

These outcomes would be delivered by achieving Objectives that were closely aligned to the Council's ETCHED (Economy, Transport, Crime, Healthy Living, Environment and Delivery) aims. It provided an important lead for budget setting and service planning activities and was updated on an annual basis to ensure that it remained 'fit for purpose'.

The aims and objectives of the Strategy were focused entirely on achieving outcomes for the area in line with the Council's community leadership responsibilities, which would prepare the Council well for the forthcoming Comprehensive Area Assessment. Achieving the outcomes would also be dependent on close partnership working with other agencies.

On the motion of Councillor Mrs Smith, it was

**Resolved** that the Corporate Strategy 2009-2012 be adopted.

**(e) Core Council Review Proposals**

The aim of the Core Council Review was to introduce a new structure and ways of working that would enable the Core Council to:-

- Be fit for purpose, delivering the Council's vision, widened roles and ways of working; and
- Deliver substantial efficiency savings for 2009/2010 and beyond.

A thematic working model was proposed, whereby all Core Council staff would be based in one of four themes:-

- Strategy and Corporate;
- Growth and Development;
- Business (DLO); and
- Operations and Regulation.

Implementation of the proposal would occur in phases, with the Strategy and Corporate Theme as Phase 1 and detailed proposals for the other themes being developed and implemented in subsequent phases during 2009/2010.

The Human Resource implications of this proposal were significant and a number of staff within the Strategy and Corporate theme had been placed at risk of redundancy.

The actions taken by the Council to identify, address and support staff in dealing with these implications would have a significant impact on whether the new ways of working and management structure were successful.

As part of the consultation with UNISON, Members, managers and staff, a series of actions had been identified that had already, or would need to be put in place. A Corporate Support Plan had been developed as a consequence of this consultation.

Effectively three substantive teams would be formed within the Strategy and Corporate theme. They would be required to work closely together and to work with and support other staff in the organisation. Details of the proposed new staffing structure were submitted.

The recruitment to the new posts within the Strategy and Corporate theme would begin in early March 2009. Staff at risk would have an opportunity to express a preference for jobs. It was proposed not to offer salary protection to staff who applied for and were recruited to a lower grade post.

The projected revenue savings for the General Fund arising from Phase 1 of this proposal were £342,000 from 2009/2010. One-off costs of Phase 1 of the proposal were in the range £324,000 - £1,200,000. Revenue savings and one-off costs arising from subsequent phases of the review would be included as further proposals were developed.

It was also proposed that the Council's political management arrangements were reviewed separately with Members, under a project led by the Council's Monitoring Officer.

During the consultation of the Core Council Review proposals concerns had been expressed about the Council's capacity to deliver on priorities (particularly the Local Development Framework (LDF) and the Core Strategy).

Whilst the creation of a further 'lead' post in addition to the two already included in the structure was a possibility, another option was the creation of a specialist post to provide planning expertise and capacity on LDF and Core Strategy related matters. Either of these options would be affordable over a 2.5 year period, funded from external funding such as the Housing and Planning Delivery Grant.

On the motion of Councillor Henley, it was

**Resolved** that:-

- (i) The overall proposal for the new Core Council structure, including the establishment of four themes covering all Core Council staff;
- (ii) The detailed proposal for the Strategy and Corporate theme;
- (iii) The approach proposed in the report for phasing the

- implementation of the overall structure;
- (iv) The timetable for the proposed phasing;
  - (v) The proposals for recruitment to the Strategy and Corporate theme;
  - (vi) The proposal not to offer salary protection to staff who applied for and were recruited to lower grade posts throughout all phases of the Core Council Review;
  - (vii) The “ring-fencing” of £1,000,000 from the General Fund Reserves to fund the one off costs of this proposal (with any earmarked fund remaining at the end of this first phase being returned to the General Fund Reserve at the end of March 2009);
  - (viii) The review of the Council’s political management arrangements with Members by the end of March 2009, with the aim of achieving implementation in the new Municipal Year; and
  - (ix) The proposal to create a specialist post at the current Service Unit Manager grade and funded from external sources such as the Housing and Planning Delivery Grant to provide planning expertise and capacity on Local Development Framework and Core Strategy related matters,

all be approved.

**(f) General Fund Revenue Estimates 2009/2010**

The Executive had previously considered its 2009/2010 budget proposals. It contained details on:-

- (i) the General Fund Revenue Budget proposals for 2009/2010, 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 had also considered the draft budget proposals at its meeting on 22 January 2009.

The Council Tax calculation and formal tax setting resolution was to be considered separately. However, the proposed budget for Taunton Deane would result in a Band D Council Tax of £135.19, an increase of £3.30 (2.5%) on 2008/2009.

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 provides 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 2010/2011. 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 2009/2010 proposed Council Tax level.

The estimated expenses chargeable to the non-parished area of Taunton in 2009/2010 amounted to £30,620, an increase of 4.9%, and this formed part of the total net expenditure of the Council. The precept in 2008/2009 was £29,190.

As part of the Prudential Code for Capital Finance there was a requirement for Full Council to approve the indicators as set out in the report to the Executive. These include 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 Section 151 Officer had 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 2009/2010 budget were as robust as possible.

Moved by Councillor Henley, seconded by Councillor Coles that the budget proposals be amended as follows to take into account a number of the suggestions contained in the alternative budget prepared by the Conservative Group:-

- (i) **DLO Services Contribution** – It was likely the Core Council Review of Deane DLO would result in the DLO being required in future to make an annual contribution to Council funds. Pending the review it was proposed that £112,000 (7% of external turnover) should be transferred from DLO reserves to the General Fund as a one-off in 2009/2010;
- (ii) **Advertising on Car Park Tariff Boards** – Using free space on the car park tariff boards for advertising was predicted to generate new income of £15,400;
- (iii) **Car Wash Franchise** – The introduction of car washing in some of the Council's car parks was likely to generate £17,000 income;
- (iv) **Grant to Neighbourhood Care** – A grant to this organisation of £10,000 would be made funded from existing Housing budgets;
- (v) **Grant to the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)** – In recognition of the valuable work the CAB was doing during the current economic downturn, it was proposed to top-up the current grant funding arrangements by an additional £12,500 in 2009/2010;
- (vi) **Wiveliscombe Community Office and Market and Coastal Towns Initiatives** – Additional funding of £10,000 was proposed to support the local Community Office and a number of projects in the area;
- (vii) **Flower Beds** – With different planting arrangements it was anticipated that a saving of £13,000 could be made in 2009/2010; and

- (viii) **Council Tax Proposal** – To support all Council Taxpayers, it was recommended that there should be a 0% (stand-still) tax rise for 2009/2010.

The amendment was put and was carried.

Moved by Councillor Williams, seconded by Councillor Edwards that the budget proposals be amended by the alternative budget prepared by the Conservative Group (agenda item No.9 refers). The amendments took the form of:-

- (i) **Remove Enhancement to Recycling Service** – This would save the Council £105,000 in 2009/2010;
- (ii) **Remove Free Swimming Proposal** – This would save £45,000 during the forthcoming financial year;
- (iii) **DLO Services Contribution** – as above, although a transfer from DLO reserves of £100,000 was suggested;
- (iv) **Advertising on Car Park Tariff Boards** – as above;
- (v) **Car Wash Franchise** – as above;
- (vi) **Grant to Neighbourhood Care** – Grant funding of £10,000 was proposed;
- (vii) **Grant to the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)** – It was proposed to top-up the current grant funding arrangements by an additional £20,000 in 2009/2010;
- (viii) **Reinstate Savings Plan – Grants to Clubs** – The proposed saving of £14,000 would be reinstated;
- (ix) **Support to Local Business** – The introduction of a dedicated budget of £43,000 to provide support specifically to local small businesses;
- (x) **Youth Initiatives** – The introduction of a dedicated budget of £15,000 in 2009/2010 to allow many of the excellent initiatives to continue and our young people to be supported;
- (xi) **Wiveliscombe Community Office and Market and Coastal Towns Initiatives** – as above;
- (xii) **Energy Efficiency / Climate Change Co-ordinator** – Funding of £35,000 for this post during the next financial year to promote energy efficiency and sustainability. The Core Council Review would be required to consider the longer term capacity issues;
- (xiii) **Council Tax Proposal** – as above.

Moved by Councillor Critchard, seconded by Councillor Mrs Hill “that the amendment be now put”. The proposal was put to the vote and carried.

The amendment was put and was lost.

The substantive Motion which is detailed below, was put and was carried:-

**Resolved** that:-

- (1) the budget for General Fund services for 2009/2010 as shown in the original report to Full Council and as amended above, be approved;

- (2) the transfer of any potential underspend in 2008/2009 back to General Fund reserves be approved;
- (3) the alternative proposed 2009/2010 budget set out in the original report to Full Council and as amended above, being Authority expenditure of £13,782,880 and Special Expenses of £30,620 in accordance with the Local Government Act 1992 be approved;
- (4) The predicted General Fund Reserve balance at 31 March 2009 of £1,300,000 be noted;
- (5) The Prudential Indicators for 2009/2010 as set out in the report be agreed; and
- (6) The forecast budget position for 2010/2011 onwards as outlined in the report be noted.

(As trustees of the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), Councillors Mrs Lewin-Harris and Stuart-Thorn declared prejudicial interests and left the room during the part of the meeting where the proposed increase in grant to the CAB was discussed.)

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

Considered had been given to the proposed General Fund (GF) and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programmes for the period 2009/2010 and beyond.

For the General Fund the existing unallocated resources available were £15,000. It was however likely that some future capital receipts would arise from the sale of the existing Nursery site in Mount Street, Taunton and the sale of South Street Car Park in Wellington.

For all Housing schemes, both GF and HRA, the estimated resources available for 2009/2010 amounted to £7,716,000. The proposed capital programme for 2009/2010 amounted to £7,149,000. The unallocated resources of £567,000 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.

**(h) Council Tax Setting 2009/2010**



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 2009/2010 amounted to £30,620 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 Band D.

The Council's budget requirement was £14,216,203 including Parish Precepts and non-parished Special Expenses. This amount was then reduced by the amount notified in respect of Taunton Deane's Revenue Support Grant (RSG) amounting to £1,022,665 and the Non Domestic Rates Distribution (NDR) from the pool, amounting to £6,935,368.

The net amount, having taking the collection fund position into account, of £5,761,663 was used to calculate the Council Tax at Band D, reflecting the Parish Precepts, by dividing it by the total of the Council Tax base as approved by the Executive in December 2008.

As mentioned in the General Fund Budget report, the Council Tax for Taunton Deane (excluding Parish Precepts and Special Expenses for the non-parished area) was £131.89 - a nil increase compared to the 2008/2009 Council Tax.

On the motion of Councillor Henley it was

**Resolved** that subject to final determination to take account of the Council Tax for Somerset County Council,

(1) That it be noted that at its meeting on 4 December 2008 the Executive calculated the following amounts for the year 2009/2010 in accordance with the regulations made under Section 33(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended):-

(i) 40,399.85 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.

(ii)

Ash Priors	76.70	Neroche	252.56
Ashbrittle	91.34	North Curry	730.57
Bathealton	81.32	Norton Fitzwarren	807.63
Bishops Hull	1,072.93	Nynehead	156.97

Bishops Lydeard / Cothelstone	1,942.94	Oake	334.07
Bradford on Tone	288.20	Otterford	166.56
Burrowbridge	202.22	Pitminster	457.35
Cheddon Fitzpaine	639.44	Ruishton / Thornfalcon	618.09
Chipstable	126.92	Sampfard Arundel	130.44
Churchstanton	323.50	Staplegrove	725.08
Combe Florey	122.10	Stawley	130.96
Comeytrowe	2,087.85	Stoke St Gregory	382.12
Corfe	133.16	Stoke St Mary	204.74
Creech St Michael	947.91	Taunton	16,154.15
Durston	58.80	Trull	1,006.54
Fitzhead	125.72	Wellington	4,658.68
Halse	144.89	Wellington (Without)	299.17
Hatch Beauchamp	262.64	West Bagborough	162.97
Kingston St Mary	448.44	West Buckland	441.31
Langford Budville	235.70	West Hatch	141.84
Lydeard St Lawrence / Tolland	201.80	West Monkton	1,113.54
Milverton	597.33	Wiveliscombe	1,112.63

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 related.

- (2) That the following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2009/2010 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:-

(a) £77,473,698

being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimated for the items set out

in Section 32(2)(a) of the Act.  
(Gross Expenditure including amount required for working balance).

(b) £63,257,495

being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimated 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) £14,216,203

being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeded 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) £8,454,540

being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimated would 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 estimated would 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 estimated would be transferred from its Collection Fund to its General Fund pursuant to the Collection Fund (Community Charge) Directions under Section 98(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 made on 7 February 1994 (*Community Charge Surplus*).

(e) £142.62

$$\frac{(c) - (d)}{9.2.1(1)} = \frac{14,216,203 - 8,454,540}{40,399.85}$$

being the amount calculated at (c) above less the amount at (d) above, all divided by the amount at 9.2.1(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year. (*Average Council Tax at Band D for Borough including Parish Precepts and Special Expenses*).

(f) £433,323

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

$$(e) - \frac{(f)}{10.2.1(a)} = 142.62 - \frac{433,323}{40,399.85}$$

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 related.

(Council Tax at Band D for Borough Excluding Parish Precepts and Special Expenses).

(h)

Ash Priors	131.89	Neroche	145.35
Ashbrittle	145.03	North Curry	153.79
Bathealton	139.88	Norton Fitzwarren	160.85
Bishops Hull	150.53	Nynehead	153.87
Bishops Lydeard / Cothelstone	148.80	Oake	145.36
Bradford on Tone	149.24	Otterford	131.89
Burrowbridge	155.69	Pitminster	147.29
Cheddon Fitzpaine	141.27	Ruishton / Thornfalcon	150.09
Chipstable	146.47	Sampford Arundel	165.93
Churchstanton	155.44	Staplegrove	144.30
Combe Florey	144.99	Stawley	147.16
Comeytrowe	142.43	Stoke St Gregory	147.59
Corfe	143.15	Stoke St Mary	146.58
Creech St Michael	150.09	Taunton	133.79
Durston	131.89	Trull	143.81
Fitzhead	151.29	Wellington	148.39

Halse	142.24	Wellington (Without)	148.27
Hatch Beauchamp	147.81	West Bagborough	138.03
Kingston St Mary	145.27	West Buckland	150.02
Langford Budville	150.98	West Hatch	146.91
Lydeard St Lawrence / Tolland	146.26	West Monkton	158.47
Milverton	151.14	Wiveliscombe	149.29

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 9.2.1(b) 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 related.

*(Council Taxes at Band D for Borough, Parish and Special Expenses).*

- (i) See overleaf

(a)

Valuation Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Ash Priors	87.93	102.58	117.24	131.89	161.20	190.51	219.82	263.78
Ashbrittle	96.69	112.80	128.92	145.03	177.26	209.49	241.72	290.06
Bathealton	93.25	108.80	124.34	139.88	170.96	202.05	233.13	279.76
Bishops Hull	100.35	117.08	133.80	150.53	183.98	217.43	250.88	301.06
Bishops Lydeard/Cothelstone	99.20	115.73	132.27	148.80	181.87	214.93	248.00	297.60
Bradford on Tone	99.49	116.08	132.66	149.24	182.40	215.57	248.73	298.48
Burrowbridge	103.79	121.09	138.39	155.69	190.29	224.89	259.48	311.38
Cheddon Fitzpaine	94.18	109.88	125.57	141.27	172.66	204.06	235.45	282.54
Chipstable	97.65	113.92	130.20	146.47	179.02	211.57	244.12	292.94
Churchstanton	103.63	120.90	138.17	155.44	189.98	224.52	259.07	310.88
Combe Florey	96.66	112.77	128.88	144.99	177.21	209.43	241.65	289.98
Comeytrowe	94.95	110.78	126.60	142.43	174.08	205.73	237.38	284.86
Corfe	95.43	111.34	127.24	143.15	174.96	206.77	238.58	286.30
Creech St Michael	100.06	116.74	133.41	150.09	183.44	216.80	250.15	300.18
Durston	87.93	102.58	117.24	131.89	161.20	190.51	219.82	263.78

Fitzhead	100.86	117.67	134.48	151.29	184.91	218.53	252.15	302.58
Halse	94.83	110.63	126.44	142.24	173.85	205.46	237.07	284.48
Hatch Beauchamp	98.54	114.96	131.39	147.81	180.66	213.50	246.35	295.62
Kingston St Mary	96.85	112.99	129.13	145.27	177.55	209.83	242.12	290.54
Langford Budville	100.65	117.43	134.20	150.98	184.53	218.08	251.63	301.96
Lydeard St Lawrence/Tolland	97.51	113.76	130.01	146.26	178.76	211.26	243.77	292.52
Milverton	100.76	117.55	134.35	151.14	184.73	218.31	251.90	302.28
Neroche	96.90	113.05	129.20	145.35	177.65	209.95	242.25	290.70
North Curry	102.53	119.61	136.70	153.79	187.97	222.14	256.32	307.58
Norton Fitzwarren	107.23	125.11	142.98	160.85	196.59	232.34	268.08	321.70
Nynehead	102.58	119.68	136.77	153.87	188.06	222.26	256.45	307.74
Oake	96.91	113.06	129.21	145.36	177.66	209.96	242.27	290.72
Otterford	87.93	102.58	117.24	131.89	161.20	190.51	219.82	263.78
Pitminster	98.19	114.56	130.92	147.29	180.02	212.75	245.48	294.58
Ruishton/Thornfalcon	100.06	116.74	133.41	150.09	183.44	216.80	250.15	300.18
Sampford Arundel	110.62	129.06	147.49	165.93	202.80	239.68	276.55	331.86

Staplegrove	96.20	112.23	128.27	144.30	176.37	208.43	240.50	288.60
Stawley	98.11	114.46	130.81	147.16	179.86	212.56	245.27	294.32
Stoke St Gregory	98.39	114.79	131.19	147.59	180.39	213.19	245.98	295.18
Stoke St Mary	97.72	114.01	130.29	146.58	179.15	211.73	244.30	293.16
Taunton	89.19	104.06	118.92	133.79	163.52	193.25	222.98	267.58
Trull	95.87	111.85	127.83	143.81	175.77	207.73	239.68	287.62
Wellington	98.93	115.41	131.90	148.39	181.37	214.34	247.32	296.78
Wellington Without	98.85	115.32	131.80	148.27	181.22	214.17	247.12	296.54
West Bagborough	92.02	107.36	122.69	138.03	168.70	199.38	230.05	276.06
West Buckland	100.01	116.68	133.35	150.02	183.36	216.70	250.03	300.04
West Hatch	97.94	114.26	130.59	146.91	179.56	212.20	244.85	293.82
West Monkton	105.65	123.25	140.86	158.47	193.69	228.90	264.12	316.94
Wiveliscombe	99.53	116.11	132.70	149.29	182.47	215.64	248.82	298.58

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 2009/2010 the Somerset County Council, the Avon and Somerset Police Authority and the Somerset and Devon Fire and Rescue Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwelling shown below:-

Somerset County Council	684.87	799.01	913.16	1,027.30	1,255.59	1,483.88	1,712.17	2,054.60
Avon and Somerset Police Authority	107.51	125.42	143.34	161.26	197.10	232.93	268.77	322.52
Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority	46.12	53.81	61.49	69.18	84.55	99.93	115.30	138.36

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, hereby sets the following amounts of Council Tax for the year 2009/2010 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Valuation Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Ash Priors	926.43	1,080.82	1,235.23	1,389.63	1,698.44	2,007.25	2,316.06	2,779.26
Ashbrittle	935.19	1,091.04	1,246.91	1,402.77	1,714.50	2,026.23	2,337.96	2,805.54
Bathealton	931.76	1,087.03	1,242.33	1,397.62	1,708.21	2,018.79	2,329.38	2,795.24
Bishops Hull	938.86	1,095.32	1,251.80	1,408.27	1,721.22	2,034.17	2,347.13	2,816.54
Bishops Lydeard/Cothelstone	937.70	1,093.97	1,250.26	1,406.54	1,719.11	2,031.68	2,344.24	2,813.08
Bradford on Tone	938.00	1,094.31	1,250.65	1,406.98	1,719.65	2,032.31	2,344.98	2,813.96
Burrowbridge	942.30	1,099.33	1,256.39	1,413.43	1,727.53	2,041.63	2,355.73	2,826.86
Cheddon Fitzpaine	932.68	1,088.12	1,243.57	1,399.01	1,709.90	2,020.80	2,331.69	2,798.02
Chipstable	936.15	1,092.16	1,248.19	1,404.21	1,716.26	2,028.31	2,340.36	2,808.42
Churchstanton	942.13	1,099.14	1,256.16	1,413.18	1,727.22	2,041.27	2,355.31	2,826.36
Combe Florey	935.16	1,091.01	1,246.87	1,402.73	1,714.45	2,026.17	2,337.89	2,805.46
Comeytrowe	933.46	1,089.02	1,244.60	1,400.17	1,711.32	2,022.47	2,333.63	2,800.34
Corfe	933.94	1,089.58	1,245.24	1,400.89	1,712.20	2,023.51	2,334.83	2,801.78
Creech St Michael	938.56	1,094.98	1,251.41	1,407.83	1,720.68	2,033.54	2,346.39	2,815.66

Durston	926.43	1,080.82	1,235.23	1,389.63	1,698.44	2,007.25	2,316.06	2,779.26
Fitzhead	939.36	1,095.91	1,252.47	1,409.03	1,722.15	2,035.27	2,348.39	2,818.06
Halse	933.33	1,088.87	1,244.43	1,399.98	1,711.09	2,022.20	2,333.31	2,799.96
Hatch Beauchamp	937.04	1,093.20	1,249.38	1,405.55	1,717.90	2,030.25	2,342.59	2,811.10
Kingston St Mary	935.35	1,091.23	1,247.12	1,403.01	1,714.79	2,026.58	2,338.36	2,806.02
Langford Budville	939.16	1,095.67	1,252.20	1,408.72	1,721.77	2,034.82	2,347.88	2,817.44
Lydeard St Lawrence/Tolland	936.01	1,092.00	1,248.00	1,404.00	1,716.00	2,028.01	2,340.01	2,808.00
Milverton	939.26	1,095.79	1,252.34	1,408.88	1,721.97	2,035.06	2,348.14	2,817.76
Neroche	935.40	1,091.29	1,247.19	1,403.09	1,714.89	2,026.69	2,338.49	2,806.18
North Curry	941.03	1,097.85	1,254.70	1,411.53	1,725.21	2,038.88	2,352.56	2,823.06
Norton Fitzwarren	945.74	1,103.34	1,260.97	1,418.59	1,733.84	2,049.08	2,364.33	2,837.18
Nynehead	941.08	1,097.92	1,254.77	1,411.61	1,725.30	2,039.00	2,352.69	2,823.22
Oake	935.41	1,091.30	1,247.20	1,403.10	1,714.90	2,026.71	2,338.51	2,806.20
Otterford	926.43	1,080.82	1,235.23	1,389.63	1,698.44	2,007.25	2,316.06	2,779.26
Pitminster	936.70	1,092.80	1,248.92	1,405.03	1,717.26	2,029.49	2,341.73	2,810.06
Ruishton/Thornfolcon	938.56	1,094.98	1,251.41	1,407.83	1,720.68	2,033.54	2,346.39	2,815.66
Sampford Arundel	949.12	1,107.30	1,265.49	1,423.67	1,740.04	2,056.42	2,372.79	2,847.34
Staplegrove	934.70	1,090.47	1,246.26	1,402.04	1,713.61	2,025.18	2,336.74	2,804.08
Stawley	936.61	1,092.70	1,248.80	1,404.90	1,717.10	2,029.31	2,341.51	2,809.80
Stoke St Gregory	936.90	1,093.03	1,249.19	1,405.33	1,717.63	2,029.93	2,342.23	2,810.66
Stoke St Mary	936.22	1,092.25	1,248.29	1,404.32	1,716.39	2,028.47	2,340.54	2,808.64
Taunton	927.70	1,082.30	1,236.92	1,391.53	1,700.76	2,009.99	2,319.23	2,783.06
Trull	934.38	1,090.09	1,245.83	1,401.55	1,713.01	2,024.47	2,335.93	2,803.10
Wellington	937.43	1,093.65	1,249.90	1,406.13	1,718.61	2,031.08	2,343.56	2,812.26
Wellington Without	937.35	1,093.56	1,249.79	1,406.01	1,718.46	2,030.91	2,343.36	2,812.02
West Bagborough	930.52	1,085.60	1,240.69	1,395.77	1,705.94	2,016.12	2,326.29	2,791.54
West Buckland	938.52	1,094.92	1,251.35	1,407.76	1,720.60	2,033.44	2,346.28	2,815.52
West Hatch	936.44	1,092.50	1,248.58	1,404.65	1,716.80	2,028.95	2,341.09	2,809.30
West Monkton	944.15	1,101.49	1,258.86	1,416.21	1,730.93	2,045.64	2,360.36	2,832.42
Wiveliscombe	938.03	1,094.35	1,250.70	1,407.03	1,719.71	2,032.38	2,345.06	2,814.06

**(h) Housing Revenue Account, Revenue Estimates and Rent Levels, Deane Helpline and Deane Building DLO Account for the 2009/2010 Financial Year**

Consideration had been given to the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the 2009/2010 Financial Year. It also included details of the proposed new rent charges for the year and it also provided information on the Deane Helpline Trading Account and Deane Building DLO Trading Account.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board had considered the 2009/2010 draft budget at its meeting on 22 January 2009. The Board had recommended that the rent increase should be reduced to 6.2% but it was still proposed to increase rents by 6.99%.

The motion of Councillor Prior-Sankey to approve the Housing Revenue Budget for 2009/2010 was put and was lost.

Councillor Prior-Sankey therefore proposed that to permit a Housing Revenue Budget to be set, the rent level should be reduced to 6.2% with the shortfall in income being met from reserves.

The Section 151 Officer, Shirlene Adam, stated that the implications of this proposed rent reduction would need to be fully considered before the Council was asked to vote on this revised proposal.

The Mayor adjourned the meeting to allow this to happen.

When the meeting resumed, Ms Adam outlined the consequences of reducing the rent increase to 6.2%:-

- The average rent would be reduced by 48p per week from £64.44 to £63.96;
- There would be a reduction in income of approximately £150,000 or £600,000 over four years;
- Even though it was not good practice to do so, it would be safe to meet the shortfall in income from reserves;
- To meet rent convergence targets, there was the possibility that rents would have to be increased to far higher levels in the future; and
- There would be an impact on the Decent Homes programme.

In addition, Ms Adam reported that the Council Tax Determination which had previously been approved by Full Council would need to be re-visited as two of the calculations would change if a lower rent increase was approved.

On the motion of Councillor Prior-Sankey, it was

**Resolved** that:-

- (1) the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2009/2010, incorporating a rent increase of 6.2% instead of 6.99% be agreed; and
- (2) the following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2009/2010 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 :-

(a) £77,240,698 (to replace the previously approved figure of £77,473,698) being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimated for the items set out in Section 32(2)(a) of the Act. *(Gross Expenditure including amount required for working balance).*

(b) £63,024,495 (to replace the previously approved figure of £63,257,495) being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimated 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).*

## 8. **Reports of the Leader of the Council and Executive Councillors**

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

### (i) **Leader of the Council (Councillor Henley)**

Councillor Henley's report covered the following topics:-

- The Budget;
- Core Council Review;
- The Economy.

### (ii) **Environmental Services (Councillor Mullins)**

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

- Environmental Health;
- Environmental Protection;
- Taunton Deane Cemeteries and Crematorium;

### (iii) **Housing Services (Councillor Prior-Sankey)**

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

- A new Era of Council Housing;
- Housing Associations feel the pinch;
- Tenant Empowerment Report;
- Tenant Services Authority;
- Consultation on New Developments;
- Norie House – Rough Sleepers Success.

(iv) **Resources (Councillor Mrs Smith)**

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

- Democratic Services;
- Human Resources;
- Revenues and Benefits Service Unit;
- Financial Services;
- Performance Management.

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

Councillor A Wedderkopp presented the Community Leadership report which focused on the following areas within that portfolio:-

- Local Strategic Partnership;
- Pioneer Somerset;
- Scrutiny Review of Pioneer Somerset;
- Young People and Children's Champion;
- Provision of outreach family support services 2009-2011;
- Restorative Justice;
- Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership;
- CCTV;
- Anti-Social Behaviour;
- Equalities.

(vi) **Communications (Councillor Brooks)**

Councillor Brooks' report covered the following topics:-

- Public Relations;
- Website Update;
- Place Survey.

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

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

- Local Development Scheme;
- Regional funding allocation for Transport;

- Building Control;
- Monkton Heathfield;
- Residents' Parking;
- Southwest One.

(viii) **Economic Development and the Arts (Councillor Horsley)**

The report from Councillor Horsley covered:-

- Into Somerset;
- The Brewhouse;
- The Economic Downturn;
- Project Taunton;
- Employment and Skills;
- Networks and Events;
- Local Action for Rural Communities;
- Wellington;
- Somerset Tourism Partnership.

(ix) **Sports, Parks and Leisure (Councillor R Lees)**

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

- Community Leisure;
- Play;
- Tone Leisure (Taunton Deane) Limited Activities;
- Other Youth Activity Schemes.

(Councillors D Durdan, Mrs Hill and Thorne left the meeting at 8.34 pm, 8.40 pm and 8.56 pm respectively.)

(The meeting ended at 9.52 pm.)

## **Usual Declarations of Interest by Councillors**

### **Full Council**

- **Members of Somerset County Council – Councillors Brooks, Govier, Henley, Prior-Sankey and Paul**
- **Employees of Somerset County Council – Councillors Mrs Hill and Mrs Smith**
- **Director of Southwest One – Councillor Coles**
- **Employee of Viridor – Councillor Miss James**
- **Members of Somerset Waste Board – Councillors Brooks, Mullins and Prior-Sankey**

# **Council Meeting – 14 April 2009**

## **Changes to the Constitution**

### **Report of Legal and Democratic Services Manager**

(This matter is the responsibility of Councillor Ross Henley, Leader of the Council)

#### **Executive Summary**

This report details the changes to the Constitution that are required for the implementation of the revised processes and procedures for Overview and Scrutiny.

#### **1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 Full Council is required to approve the changes as set out in this report in order for the Constitution to be updated.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1 Every local authority is required to have a Constitution and that Constitution should be kept up to date with all relevant information on how the Council operates and gives details of its political and management structures.
- 2.2 The Council has been operating a revised Scrutiny process since October 2007 reducing its Scrutiny bodies from six to two with Task and Finish Groups also being set up.
- 2.3 In September 2008 the IDeA carried out a Peer Review and found that the changes that had been implemented had the potential to strengthen the role and impact of Scrutiny. However, there was some confusion around the structure and terminology which impacted on Members' ability to work with the new system.

#### **3. The current position**

- 3.1 Therefore work was undertaken with the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the two Scrutiny bodies together with the Group Leaders and a new structure for Scrutiny was agreed.
- 3.2 The structure for Scrutiny will consist of a Community Scrutiny Committee and a Corporate Scrutiny Committee. In addition there will be a Co-ordinating Scrutiny Committee that will meet on a quarterly basis to manage the Forward Plan for both Committees to ensure that there is an even distribution of work.
- 3.3 The Task and Finish Groups will remain.



- 3.4 The changes to the Constitution reflect the changes that have been agreed with those Members. In addition the changes have also been through the Constitutional Sub-Committee and the Corporate Governance Committee.
- 3.5 A copy of the originally drafted version of Article 9 “Overview and Scrutiny Committees” is attached at Appendix A. A further version showing the changes made through the consultation process is attached at Appendix B.
- 3.6 Also attached to this report are some minor changes to standing orders regarding motions and the rescinding of decisions within 6 months (Appendix C). These changes are minor amendments but are required for clarification.

#### **4. Recommendation**

- 4.1 Council is **recommended** to approve the changes to the Constitution as set out in the Appendices attached to this report.

Contact: Tonya Meers - 01823 356391 or [t.meers@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:t.meers@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

# Appendix A

## Article 9 Overview and Scrutiny Committees

### 9.1 Terms of Reference

- (a) The Council has a legal duty to appoint “overview and scrutiny committees” to discharge functions as set out in the Local Government Act 2000. The functions of each of the overview and scrutiny committees are set out in this article but the Council seeks to ensure a robust scrutiny process which will be the ‘critical friend’ of the Executive but not subservient to the Executive.
- (b) The Council will operate two Overview and Scrutiny committees one will be called a Corporate Scrutiny Committee and the other will be a Community Scrutiny Committee. In addition there will also be a Co-ordinating scrutiny committee that will oversee the work of both committees. Both committees will also be able to set up sub-committees known as Task and Finish Groups for specific tasks.
- (c) Guidance on the procedures and process of the overview and scrutiny committee meetings are set out in Part 4 of the Constitution.

### 9.2 The general role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Within their terms of reference, the Overview and Scrutiny Committees will:

- (a) Review and scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection and any joint or area committee with regard to the discharge of any functions of the Council or external agencies.
- (b) Make reports and recommendations to Full Council and/or the Executive and any joint or area committee with regard to the discharge of any functions of the Council or external agencies.
- (c) Consider any issue or topic affecting the area or its inhabitants
- (d) Review any decisions called-in but not yet implemented by the Executive or any area committee, calling special meetings if required.
- (e) Assist the Executive and Full Council in developing policies and strategies, which may become incorporated in the policy framework.

### **9.3 Specific functions of the Overview and Scrutiny committees**

#### **9.3.1. Policy development and review**

- (a) Assist the Council and the Executive and any area committee in the development of its budget and policy framework by in-depth analysis of policy issues.
- (b) Conduct research, community and other consultation in the analysis of policy issues and possible options.
- (c) Consider and implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options.
- (d) Question the Leader of the Council, members of the Executive and chief officers about their views on issues and proposals affecting the Borough. Under normal circumstances, the appropriate member/officer shall attend.
- (e) Liaise with other external organisations operating whether national or local, to ensure that the interests of the inhabitants of the Borough are enhanced by collaborative working.

#### **9.3.2. Scrutiny**

- (a) To monitor and review important and strategic decisions made by the Council, Executive (and any area committee) and officers to ensure consistency and compliance with the policy framework adopted by the Council. Where such decisions are not consistent with the policy framework, to review 'called-in' decisions and make recommendations to the Executive or Council;
- (b) To review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets or such other matters that will come to its attention;
- (c) To monitor and review the performance of the decision making processes and other actions taken, in connection with the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the Executive and any area committee;
- (d) To monitor service performance against the standards identified in the Corporate Strategy and service plans;

- (e) To consider ombudsman reports and to monitor the operation of the complaints policy;
- (f) To be aware of reports from the Audit Commission and Internal Audit and recommend any appropriate action to the Council Committees as deemed appropriate;
- (g) To question the Leader of the Council and members of the Executive, member champions, senior officers and senior managers about their views on issues and proposals affecting the area generally and specifically about their decisions and performance comparable with relevant policies, strategies or plans;
- (h) Make recommendations to the Executive or Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process;
- (i) Review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies, partnerships, 'quasi-autonomous government agencies or organisations' and voluntary organisations operating within the Borough and invite reports from them by requesting them to address the scrutiny committees and local people about their activities and performance;
- (j) Question and gather evidence from any person or organisation with their consent.

9.4 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees will consist of thirteen members each. They will be politically balanced in accordance with the Council's adopted political group scheme. The Committees will not be chaired by a Member of the controlling administration.

9.5 In undertaking their responsibilities, the Overview and Scrutiny committees will adopt a cross-cutting approach to support a holistic perspective of the service delivery and decision making processes of the Council.

9.6 Members of the Executive will not be eligible to sit on the overview and scrutiny committees whilst on the Executive and shall not take part in any scrutiny of a decision in which they were involved in whilst a member of the Executive. The Leader of the Council and any member of the Executive may attend to provide information to the overview and scrutiny committees.

- 9.7 It is recognised that whipping by political parties would be inconsistent with the purposes of scrutiny and therefore will not take place on overview and scrutiny committees. Any member sitting on an overview and scrutiny committee should not consider him or herself restrained by any political group whip on any matter the committee will examine.
- 9.8 Overview and Scrutiny committees will conduct their proceedings in accordance with scrutiny procedure rules as set out in Part 4 of this Constitution. Any co-opted member of the overview and scrutiny committee will be required to sign a declaration of acceptance and compliance with the national code of conduct for councillors.
- 9.9 Nothing in this Article shall prevent the two Overview and Scrutiny committees forming a joint committee should a matter not fall within the remit of either committee. This decision will rest with the Co-ordinating overview and Scrutiny committee as set out at 9.10 below.

#### **9.10 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

##### **COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

To examine the issues that impact on all segments of the community in respect of all services delivered by the Council and/or other public bodies or partnerships;

To examine the performance and management of the Council's services in delivering the Corporate Strategy.

To undertake consideration of the achievement of value for money in partnership working

To develop policies and initiatives to provide the service delivery needed by community and the promotion of neighbourhood renewal;

To encourage public participation in assessing the standards and level of service desired by the community and

the performance of the Council in achieving the desired outcomes for its service delivery;

To consider such decisions of the Executive as are within the remit of the committee and have been called-in by Members.

## **CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

To examine the planning, performance and management of the Council's services in undertaking the key tasks to achieve the objectives of the Corporate Strategy priorities including monitoring compliance with budget, achievement of desired outcomes and customer satisfaction (where appropriate), best value and value for money reviews.

To monitor the Council's financial performance (including revenue borrowing and audit arrangements) and allocation of all resources in accordance with the corporate plan priorities, and the management of its assets and capital programme.

To carry out the responsibilities of an Audit committee;

To assess the attainment of performance measurements and overall performance of the Council in achieving the aspiration of the community it serves;

To consider such decisions of the Executive as are within the remit of the committee and have been called-in by members.

To consider matters that have come to the committee's attention.

## **9.11 CO-ORDINATING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

This committee shall consist of the chairman and vice chairman of each of the Overview and Scrutiny committees and shall meet on a quarterly basis or as deemed necessary. The Committee shall also invite the Proper Officer and Leader of the Council to these meetings.

The purpose of these meetings is to manage the forward plan for both committees to ensure that there is an even distribution of work. Where a matter for consideration by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee also falls within the remit of another Overview and Scrutiny committee the decision as to which Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider it will be resolved by this committee in consultation with the Proper Officer.

### **9.12 TASK AND FINISH GROUPS**

- (a) The terms of reference will be laid down by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny committee;
- (b) There will be no more than seven members on each task and finish group and they will be members of the authority;
- (c) The group will elect its own chairman;
- (d) The group will decide its start and finish dates for the review;
- (e) The group will have the power of co-option but those co-opted members may not vote;
- (f) Conclusions will be presented to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny as recommendations for action;
- (g) The Overview and Scrutiny committee may either forward the recommendations to the Executive or the Council for action, remit it back to the task and finish group for further consideration or refuse to accept it as not acceptable for further action.

## Appendix B

### Article 9 Overview and Scrutiny Committees

#### 9.1 Terms of Reference

- (a) The Council has a legal duty to appoint “overview and scrutiny committees” to discharge functions as set out in the Local Government Act 2000. The functions of each of the overview and scrutiny committees are set out in this article but the Council seeks to ensure a robust scrutiny process which will be the ‘critical friend’ of the Executive but not subservient to the Executive.
- (b) The Council will operate two Overview and Scrutiny committees one will be called a Corporate Scrutiny Committee and the other will be a Community Scrutiny Committee. In addition there will also be a Co-ordinating scrutiny committee that will oversee the work of both committees. Both committees will also be able to set up sub-committees known as Task and Finish Groups for specific tasks.
- (c) Guidance on the procedures and process of the overview and scrutiny committee meetings are set out in Part 4 of the Constitution.

#### 9.2 The general role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Within their terms of reference, the Overview and Scrutiny Committees will:

- (a) Review and scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection and any joint or area committee with regard to the discharge of any functions of the Council or external agencies.
- (b) Make reports and recommendations to Full Council and/or the Executive and any joint or area committee with regard to the discharge of any functions of the Council or external agencies.
- (c) Consider any issue or topic affecting the area or its inhabitants
- (d) Review any decisions called-in but not yet implemented by the Executive or any area committee, calling special meetings if required.
- (e) Assist the Executive and Full Council in developing policies and strategies, which may become incorporated in the policy framework.



(f) Review any decision or actions made by a ward member exercising his/her delegated functions of the Council should the Council authorise such delegation.

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(g) The committee will not be able to review any of the 'excluded matters' which are set out in Part 4 of the Rules and Procedures

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### **9.3 Specific functions of the Overview and Scrutiny committees**

#### **9.3.1. Policy development and review**

- (a) Assist the Council and the Executive and any area committee in the development of its budget and policy framework by in-depth analysis of policy issues.
- (b) Conduct research, community and other consultation in the analysis of policy issues and possible options.
- (c) Consider and implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options.
- (d) Question the Leader of the Council, members of the Executive and chief officers about their views on issues and proposals affecting the Borough. Under normal circumstances, the appropriate member/officer shall attend.
- (e) Liaise with other external organisations operating whether national or local, to ensure that the interests of the inhabitants of the Borough are enhanced by collaborative working.

#### **9.3.2. Scrutiny**

- (a) To monitor and review important and strategic decisions made by the Council, Executive (and any area committee) and officers to ensure consistency and compliance with the policy framework adopted by the Council. Where such decisions are not consistent with the policy framework, to review 'called-in' decisions and make recommendations to the Executive or Council;
- (b) To review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets or such other matters that will come to its attention;

- (c) To monitor and review the performance of the decision making processes and other actions taken, in connection with the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the Executive and any area committee;
- (d) To monitor service performance against the standards identified in the Corporate Strategy and service plans;
- (e) To consider ombudsman reports and to monitor the operation of the complaints policy;
- (f) To be aware of reports from the Audit Commission and Internal Audit and recommend any appropriate action to the Council Committees as deemed appropriate;
- (g) To question the Leader of the Council and members of the Executive, member champions, senior officers and senior managers about their views on issues and proposals affecting the area generally and specifically about their decisions and performance comparable with relevant policies, strategies or plans;
- (h) Make recommendations to the Executive or Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process;
- (i) Review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies, partnerships, 'quasi-autonomous government agencies or organisations' and voluntary organisations operating within the Borough and invite reports from them by requesting them to address the scrutiny committees and local people about their activities and performance;
- (j) Question and gather evidence from any person or organisation with their consent.

9.4 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees will consist of thirteen members each. They will be politically balanced in accordance with the Council's adopted political group scheme. The Committees will not be chaired by a Member of the controlling administration.

9.5 In undertaking their responsibilities, the Overview and Scrutiny committees will adopt a cross-cutting approach to support a holistic perspective of the service delivery and decision making processes of the Council.

- 9.6 Members of the Executive will not be eligible to sit on the overview and scrutiny committees whilst on the Executive and shall not take part in any scrutiny of a decision in which they were involved in whilst a member of the Executive. The Leader of the Council and any member of the Executive may attend to provide information to the overview and scrutiny committees.
- 9.7 It is recognised that whipping by political parties would be inconsistent with the purposes of scrutiny and therefore will not take place on overview and scrutiny committees. Any member sitting on an overview and scrutiny committee should not consider him or herself restrained by any political group whip on any matter the committee will examine.
- 9.8 Overview and Scrutiny committees will conduct their proceedings in accordance with scrutiny procedure rules as set out in Part 4 of this Constitution. Any co-opted member of the overview and scrutiny committee will be required to sign a declaration of acceptance and compliance with the national code of conduct for councillors.
- 9.9 Nothing in this Article shall prevent the two Overview and Scrutiny committees forming a joint committee should a matter not fall within the remit of either committee. This decision will rest with the Co-ordinating overview and Scrutiny committee as set out at 9.10 below.

**9.10 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

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To examine the performance and management of the Council's services in delivering the Corporate Strategy.

To undertaken consideration of the achievement of value for money in partnership working

To develop policies and initiatives to provide the service delivery needed by

community and the promotion of neighbourhood renewal;

To encourage public participation in assessing the standards and level of service desired by the community and the performance of the Council in achieving the desired outcomes for its service delivery;

To consider such decisions of the Executive as are within the remit of the committee and have been called-in by Members.

To review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of the Council's crime and disorder functions and to make such reports or recommendations as deemed appropriate.

**CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

To examine the planning, performance and management of the Council's services in undertaking the key tasks to achieve the objectives of the Corporate Strategy priorities including monitoring compliance with budget, achievement of desired outcomes and customer satisfaction (where appropriate), best value and value for money reviews.

To monitor the Council's financial performance and allocation of all resources in accordance with the corporate plan priorities, and the management of its assets and capital programme.

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To assess the attainment of performance measurements and overall performance of the Council in achieving the aspiration of the community it serves;

Deleted: To carry out the responsibilities of an Audit committee;¶

To consider such decisions of the Executive as are within the remit of the committee and have been called-in by members.

To consider matters that have come to the committee's attention.

### **9.11 CO-ORDINATING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

This committee shall consist of the chairman and vice chairman of each of the Overview and Scrutiny committees and shall meet on a quarterly basis or as deemed necessary. The Committee shall also invite the Proper Officer and Leader of the Council to these meetings.

The purpose of these meetings is to manage the forward plan for both committees to ensure that there is an even distribution of work. Where a matter for consideration by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee also falls within the remit of another Overview and Scrutiny committee the decision as to which Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider it will be resolved by this committee in consultation with the Proper Officer.

### **9.12 TASK AND FINISH GROUPS**

- (a) The terms of reference will be laid down by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny committee;
- (b) There will be no more than seven members on each task and finish group and they will be members of the authority;
- (c) The group will elect its own chairman;
- (d) The group will decide its start and finish dates for the review;
- (e) The group will have the power of co-option but those co-opted members may not vote;
- (f) Conclusions will be presented to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny as recommendations for action;
- (g) The Overview and Scrutiny committee may either forward the recommendations to the Executive or the Council for action, remit it back to the task and finish group for further consideration or refuse to accept it as not acceptable for further action.



## Appendix C

### NOTICES OF MOTION

4.

- (1) If a councillor wishes to move a motion at a meeting of the Council then notice in writing shall be given to the Legal and Democratic Services Manager of its terms and the name of a Councillor who has agreed to second it. Such notices shall be dated, numbered as received and available for the inspection of councillors.
- (2) Twelve calendar days notice is needed in order to have a Notice of Motion included in the Summons. This means that written notice must be delivered to the Democratic Services Manager's office by 4.00 pm on the Thursday week prior to the day on which the Council Meeting is to be held.
- (3) The motion shall relate to the work of the Council or the interests of people living in the Borough.
- (4) A motion shall not be taken if its proposer is not present, unless another councillor has been asked to propose it and the Council so agree.
- (5) Such motions shall be taken before the reports of the Executive Councillors have been presented,

(6) A motion or amendment to rescind a decision within 6 months of it being approved should be made in accordance with Standing Order 24 of this Constitution.

### MOTIONS DURING A DEBATE \*

5. (1) A Councillor may at the conclusion of a speech of another Councillor, move without comment one of the following motions: -

- (a) to amend the motion;
- (b) to postpone consideration of the motion;
- (c) to adjourn the meeting;
- (d) to adjourn the debate;
- (e) to proceed to the next item of business;
- (f) that the question be now put;
- (g) to request a recorded vote; see standing order 19(2)
- (h) that Councillor \_\_\_\_\_ be not further heard;
- (h) that Councillor \_\_\_\_\_ do leave the meeting;

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¶ Where more than one such motion is submitted, then only one motion which the party group (or groups jointly) identifies to the Member Services Manager shall be treated in this way.¶

¶ For the purposes of this Standing Order "minority party group" shall mean any party group not represented on the Executive.

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- (i) that the (identified) recommendation be referred back for further consideration;
- (j) that the press and public be excluded;
- (k) to suspend any one or more Standing Orders during all or part of the meeting;
- (l) to refer a petition which has been presented to a meeting of the Council to a Panel for consideration;

5(2) If the motion is seconded then (subject to the proviso set out in (c) below) the Mayor shall proceed as follows:-

- (a) the motion shall be put to the vote forthwith and without discussion;
- (b) then - subject only to the right of reply of the councillor who either presented the report or who proposed the original motion - the motion shall be immediately acted upon;
- (c) The Mayor shall have the discretion not to accept such a motion when of the opinion that the matter before the meeting has not yet been sufficiently discussed.

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Deleted: . A councillor who has not previously spoken in the debate may, at the conclusion of a speech of another councillor, move without comment one of the following closure motions:-¶  
 ¶  
 <#>"that the meeting do now adjourn¶  
 <#>"that the debate be adjourned",¶  
 <#>"that the meeting do now proceed¶  
 to the next business", or¶  
 (d) . "that the question be now put".¶  
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**RESCINDMENT & VARIATION OF RESOLUTIONS \***

24. (1) A resolution passed within the previous six months shall not be rescinded or varied unless either:-

- (a) there has been a significant change of circumstances (noted in the minutes of the meeting) since the previous resolution was passed and is agreed by 50% of the members. or
- (b) by resolution of the Full Council on a motion of which notice has been given under Standing Order 4 signed by not less than 12 members.

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(2) Where it is intended that such an item should appear on the agenda for a meeting, the agenda item shall say that this “6 month rule” applies.

(3) This Standing Order shall not apply in the case of a planning or licensing application.

(4) Every such notice of motion shall specify the resolution to be rescinded or varied.

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#### TIME LIMITS FOR ALL MEETINGS\*

29 (1) A meeting of full council or other committees including Overview and Scrutiny committees shall not exceed three hours in duration except in accordance with 30 below.

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(2) If the business of the meeting has not been completed within that time the Mayor or Chairman will interrupt the debate to announce the time and call for a vote to be taken immediately on the item under discussion.

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(3) No member will be able to address the meeting after the Mayor's or Chairman's interruption on any item appearing on the agenda.

(4) Any items remaining on the agenda, which have not been considered, will be adjourned to the next scheduled meeting or a date to be fixed before the meeting adjourns.

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(5) Any suspension of time for adjournments during the meeting shall not count towards the 3 hour time limit.

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Council Meeting – 14 April 2009

### Part I

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

#### (i) Councillor Henley

##### Capital Strategy 2009-2012

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

- The Vision;
- The identification of the Council's needs and needs gap;
- The management and monitoring of the Capital Programme;
- The Capital Programme and the level of resources available;
- The approach to procurement and partnership working; and
- Linkages to other Corporate Plans.

The Strategy for 2009-2012 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. Comments made by both the Strategy and Performance Panel and the Executive have been incorporated into the final draft. A copy of this document is attached for the information of Members.

It is **recommended** that the Capital Strategy 2009-2012 be approved.

#### (ii) Councillor Coles

##### (a) Growth Point Funding and Housing and Planning Delivery Grant Funding

Taunton Deane was in receipt of two streams of funding – Growth Points (GP) and Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG). The purpose of these two funding streams overlapped as they were both there for the furtherance of the future development of Taunton in both the long and medium term.

Both funds were a mix of capital and revenue funding. As far as the GP funding was concerned, the allocation for 2009/2010 was £3,300,000 capital and £301,000 revenue and for 2010/2011 the amounts allocated were £3,900,000 capital and £300,000 revenue. The HPDG allocation for 2008/2009 to be spent in 2009/2010 was £273,939 revenue and £119,122 capital.

The GP funding was a partnership fund with Somerset County Council, through a joint application whilst the HPDG was a Taunton Deane matter only.

At its meeting on 26 February 2009, the Executive agreed the main priorities for both the GP and the HPDG funding. These priorities included Firepool infrastructure to enable the Firepool

development to commence, completion of Castle Green and Somerset Square and Urban Extension Master Planning.

To enable these schemes to proceed it was necessary for the capital funding to be added to the Council's Capital Programme.

It is therefore **recommended** that the addition to the Capital Programme of the capital elements of the spending plan be approved.

#### **(b) Conversion of Taunton Market Site to a Surface Car Park**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning a proposal to temporarily convert the former Market Site off Canal Road/Priory Bridge Road, Taunton, which was now vacant, into a surface pay and display car park.

The costs involved to level the surface, mark out parking bays and to provide a suitable number of pay and display ticket machines would be funded from the monies generated by the sale of equipment following vacation of the site by the Taunton Market Auctioneers. This had produced a net income of £22,800 which was currently uncommitted.

It is therefore **recommended** that:-

- (1) a supplementary estimate to the Capital Programme of £22,800 for the conversion of the former Taunton Market Site to a surface car park be approved;
- (2) Executive Councillor Coles be authorised to oversee the full spending plan in conjunction with the Parking Manager and Strategic Director; and
- (3) the land concerned be formally reclassified as a car park with effect from 1 April 2009.

#### **(iii) Councillor Horsley**

##### **Relocation of the Horticultural Nursery – Project Overspend**

The relocation of the Council's horticultural nursery from Mount Street, Taunton to its new site off Stoke Road had resulted in an overspend of £73,000 over the budgeted cost. This was due to several unforeseen factors encountered on site, including the need for improved drainage and additional works to roadways and glasshouses.

The capital receipt from the disposal of the former site at Mount Street was likely to be sufficient to cover the costs of purchasing the land for the new nursery site, its development and also the overspend. It was anticipated that the Council would still have a substantial surplus of capital for use on other projects.

In the circumstances, it is **recommended** that a supplementary estimate to the Capital Programme of £73,000 - to be funded from the eventual sale proceeds of the Mount Street Nursery Site – be approved.

# TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL CAPITAL STRATEGY 2009-2012

## 1 Content

1.1 This Capital Strategy demonstrates how Taunton Deane BC sets the direction of our capital spending plans and considers how we achieve the effective utilisation of our capital assets and resources.

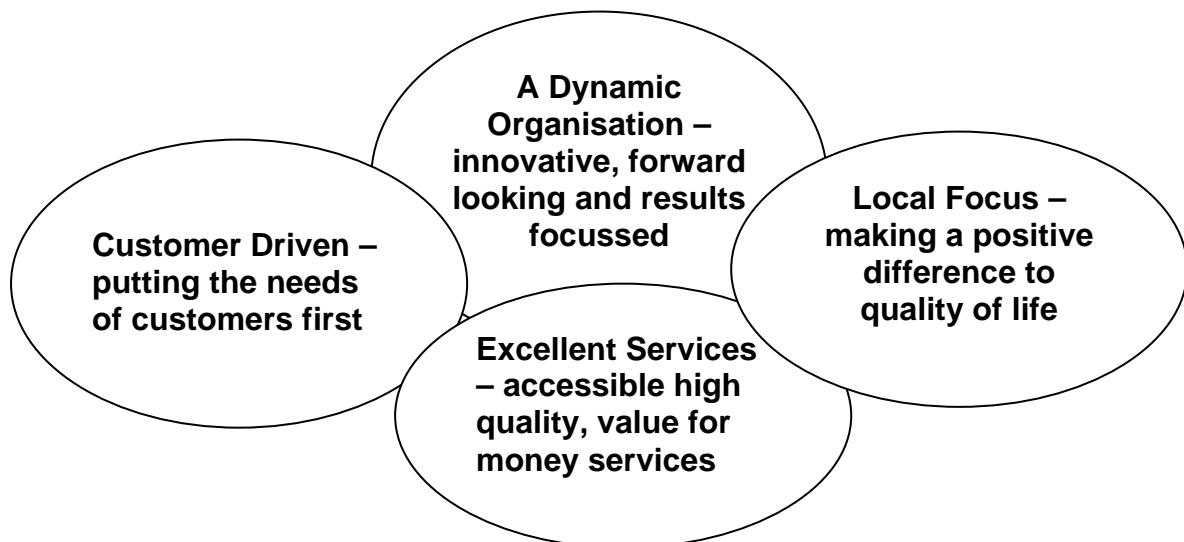
1.2 The Strategy details our approach to the following areas:

- Our Vision,
- The identification of needs and our needs gap,
- Prioritisation of capital expenditure,
- The management and monitoring of the capital programme,
- How we review scheme outputs,
- The capital programme and the level of resources available,
- Our approach to procurement and partnership working,
- Links to other corporate plans.

## 2 Our Vision

2.1 The Council has set out its overall vision and business principles in its Corporate Strategy 2009-2012. Our overall Vision is **“Making Life Better for People and Communities”**.

Our business principles are set out below:



2.2 The Council has profiled all of its services in line with its six main corporate priorities. This has enabled investment to be focussed on high priority services. Our overall priorities are:

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Strategic Aims</b>
Economy	Regenerating Taunton and strengthening the economy of the Borough
Transport	Minimising the growth in traffic congestion
Crime	Promoting safer communities and tackling anti-social behaviour
Healthy Living	Promoting healthy and sustainable communities
Environment	Safeguarding and enhancing the local environment
Delivery	Delivering accessible, value for money services

Along with the Profile of Services, these priorities have remained unaltered from 2008.

- 2.3 Below are the key actions from our Corporate Strategy 2009-2012 that show how we will use our capital resources to achieve our strategic aims. Those marked with \* indicate that they are being delivered in partnership with other organisations:

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Economy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support Project Taunton and partners to deliver the development of Firepool, starting on site in 2009. *</li> <li>2. Kick start the Cultural Quarter of Project Taunton by redeveloping Castle Green, Coal Orchard and Goodlands Gardens, to include providing a new site for the County Council library and records office*.</li> <li>3. Work with partners to bring forward the proposed retail development in High Street *.</li> <li>4. Facilitate the development of 20 hectares of employment land in Wellington and Wiveliscombe*.</li> <li>5. Secure a major business incubation centre for Taunton.*</li> </ol>
Transport	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implement the Taunton car parking strategy. *</li> <li>2. Investigate, support and enable sustainable transport initiatives in the Borough.</li> <li>3. Deliver the actions of the TDBC employees travel plan by March 2010.</li> </ol>
Crime	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The refurbishment of derelict buildings</li> <li>2. The sale of unwanted assets</li> <li>3. Crime reduction measures within the Housing capital programme ie the provision of double glazing and security lighting</li> <li>4. The provision of facilities for young people ie new play equipment. *</li> </ol>
Healthy Living	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Planning gain through S106 agreements – ie the need to provide in partnership a targeted</li> </ol>

	<p>proportion of affordable housing in the most appropriate mix and tenure*</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Utilise council owned sites to develop all forms of affordable housing. *</li> <li>3. Pursue innovative and creative approaches to delivering all forms of affordable housing.</li> <li>4. Ensure that all Council owned residential properties comply with the Decent Homes Standard by March 2011.</li> <li>5. Supporting capital projects to help reduce the number of rough sleepers in the Borough*.</li> <li>6. Improving both private and public sector housing conditions through an extensive capital programme of works and grants.</li> <li>7. Consider all options for delivering new opportunities for public swimming in Taunton Deane including the construction of a new 25m pool in Taunton.</li> <li>8. Deliver the actions identified in the Play Strategy to make provision in priority areas with a specific focus on continuing the programme of constructing new and improved play spaces.</li> <li>9. Providing support to elderly people in sheltered housing and extra care housing</li> </ol>
Environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore the options for an enhanced recycling service to include other types of waste, such as plastics and cardboard. *</li> <li>2. Development of sustainable construction practices which help tackle climate change and reduce emissions.</li> <li>3. Ensure that new Housing built through Housing Corporation funded schemes meet minimum of level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Housing.</li> <li>4. Meet the Home Energy Conservation Act target of improving energy efficiency by 30% on housing in Taunton Deane through various housing initiatives. This includes capital investment in council housing, other social housing and where possible within the private sector.</li> <li>5. To meet government targets for Crematorium mercury abatement targets through investment in new filtration equipment.</li> </ol>
Delivery	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Development of our assets through our key partnership project, SW1*</li> <li>2. Improve value for money through capital initiatives such as the relocation of the Deane DLO Nursery.</li> <li>3. Implement the Access Strategy to deliver our</li> </ol>

	<p>services where and when they are required.</p> <p>4. Develop procurement through collaboration with SW1 to achieve savings targets, better quality and cost effective services, and support our objectives around economy, sustainability and equalities.</p> <p>5. Continue the Council's transformation programme to further improve efficiency.</p>
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### **3 The identification of needs and our needs gap**

- 3.1 The Council has found that, unsurprisingly, resources to meet our overall aspirations for the Borough and our priorities in particular cannot wholly be met by the Council alone. Therefore as part of our role as an enabler and facilitator we will look to maximise external income from sources such as the Lottery, Central Government, the South West Regional Development Agency, and from private developers via section 106 agreements and commuted sums, in order to deliver our priorities. European funding will also be accessed where appropriate.
- 3.2 An example of where bidding for external capital funding has proved successful and will aid our capital objectives is through the recent Growth Point grant award; the Council has been awarded over £10m over the period 2008/09 to 2010/11. These funds will be used to deliver the Economy strand of the Corporate strategy in particular to support the delivery of partnership schemes surrounding Project Taunton, specifically the funding of the works required for Castle Green, Somerset Square and infrastructure around the Firepool site. We have also recently been successful in bidding for additional funding to increase the level of Disabled Facilities Grants in 2009/10.
- 3.3 Similarly the Council has used its Housing/Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG) allocation to support several new capital schemes – specifically for funding new ICT improvements within our Planning and Land Charges services and some minor elements of the Project Taunton schemes.
- 3.4 In addition we will look to make the most of partnerships including the private sector. This is key for ensuring that long-term projects such as the delivery of Project Taunton have sustainable sources of capital finance. Both PFI and PPP finance will be considered should any suitable schemes be identified. We will also use the resources generated under the Government's LABGI scheme in 2009/10 to meet some of our economic development goals, for example through providing support to the Taunton Business Improvement District (BID).
- 3.5 The Council will consider the use of additional borrowing to help deliver key aspirations. However this will only be done in line with the principles of our 2008 Financial Strategy and the Prudential Code, ie

providing that such borrowing is prudent, affordable and sustainable. Where possible specific contributions from revenue will be made to fund recurring capital schemes. The Financial Strategy allows for reserves to be used for “Invest to Save” initiatives, including capital schemes.

- 3.6 Despite the downturn in the housing market, capital receipts are important for the Council, particularly Right to Buy receipts. In order to maximise the usable proportion available for capital investment the Council will, where appropriate, designate land areas for social housing purposes thereby avoiding any pooling liability. In addition a critical review of asset holdings will ensure that surplus assets are disposed of in order to free up resources, for example the existing Plant Nursery site will be disposed of, when market conditions are right for such a disposal.
- 3.7 The level of projected available capital resources is continuously reviewed by Officers via the budget process and through ongoing budget monitoring. This ensures that resources can be matched to priority schemes.
- 3.8 It is not only within the capital programme where resources are scarce; within its revenue budget the Council has a backlog of low priority maintenance items, and this amounts to over £0.5m. A key improvement required by the authority is to ensure that this backlog is managed and reduced over time, although this will not be easy given the pressures on the revenue budget. More details on this area are shown in the Asset Management Plan.

#### **4 Prioritisation of capital expenditure**

- 4.1 Effective capital prioritisation will help ensure that scarce resources are targeted towards key schemes, which will deliver our priorities.
- 4.2 For several years the Authority has used an established system to enable Corporate Management Team and the Executive to prioritise bids for new capital schemes. This system is known locally as the Project Appraisal Report (PARs) system. The purpose of the PAR is to provide comprehensive information on each new scheme, thereby enabling informed choices to be made.
- 4.3 A PAR requires the following areas to be considered:
- Project Outline and Description,
  - Category of Scheme (ie legal obligation, service necessity, service maintenance or service improvement),
  - Establishment of Need – appropriate analysis of need and rationale,
  - Fit with Corporate Priorities,
  - Fit with Service planning objectives,
  - Sustainability,



- Option appraisal – ie “do nothing”, full scheme, partial scheme, scheme provided by other agencies, scheme provided through partnership working,
- Risk identification,
- Overall project evaluation,
- Resource implications, capital and revenue, monetary and non-monetary,
- Timescale for implementation,
- Recommendations.

4.4 The Council recognises that the PAR system needs to be refreshed to reflect more modern and appropriate appraisal methods such as the routine use of whole life costing of proposed new capital schemes. This work will be carried out during 2009/10.

4.5 It is important that we do not forget the impact on the revenue budget of capital decisions, therefore the Council’s Medium Term Financial Plan for both General Fund and Housing Revenue Account services includes specific details on the likely impact of the capital programme on the revenue budget.

4.6 At present, with resources limited, priority is given to recurring schemes, which can be funded from affordable contributions from the revenue budget on an ongoing basis. For Invest to Save schemes the annual revenue savings generated through capital investment are put back into unallocated capital resources. In addition schemes that lever in external funding are also given priority.

## **5 The management and monitoring of the capital programme**

5.1 Monitoring of the capital programme is integrated into the corporate performance management cycle and is reported to members four times a year. The Council has made significant progress in improving the monitoring of the General Fund capital programme and this has been recognised by our external auditors. Monitoring of the programme also includes project progress, spend against budget, VAT implications and the treasury management consequences of capital spending.

5.2 The process of strategic risk management is employed for high spend/risk/profile capital projects. Where applicable, multi discipline project teams are formed to manage these schemes and to report progress and risks to Corporate Management Team. Post project reviews are used to improve overall future project management techniques. Budget monitoring and the use of risk registers highlight both financial and operational risks associated with schemes.

## **6 How do we review scheme outputs?**

6.1 The monitoring of capital investment is achieved on several levels, namely:

- The Project Board who monitor progress on a variety of corporate projects across the Council. This group has been

established in line with the principles of PRINCE2 project management.

- The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the monitoring and management of both the capital programme and capital resources. This is done by the Financial Services Unit within Southwest One who report the outcomes to Corporate Management Team and to Members.
- Southwest One's Property function fulfils the role of the Council's Corporate Property Officer and is responsible for the monitoring and management of the Asset Management Plan,
- Individual officers are nominated as leads on each specific scheme.
- Finance staff support service department officers with budget monitoring and financial advice.

Annually the Council incorporates within its outturn reporting process how the impact of capital investment has helped with the achievement of its corporate objectives, priorities and outputs.

## **7 The capital programme and the level of resources available**

7.1 A summary of budgeted capital spending for the period 2009/10 onwards is shown below.

<b>Portfolio</b>	<b>2009/10 £000</b>	<b>2010/11 Onwards £000</b>	<b>Total £000</b>
Corporate Resources	59	142	<b>201</b>
Econ. Development and the Arts	138	0	<b>138</b>
Environmental Services	69	355	<b>424</b>
Housing (HRA & GF)	7,149	19,279	<b>26,428</b>
Sports, Parks and Leisure	85	193	<b>278</b>
Planning Policy & Transportation	10	205	<b>215</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,510</b>	<b>20,174</b>	<b>27,684</b>

7.2 At present the General Fund has unallocated capital resources of only £15k. For the Housing Revenue Account there are no unallocated resources as any resources unspent at the end of the year will be required to fund future years programmes. The Council expects to receive some significant capital receipts through the sale of surplus assets during 2009/10 but given the recent economic downturn the level and timing of these receipts is uncertain. Once confirmed the Executive will consider the use of these receipts for future investment

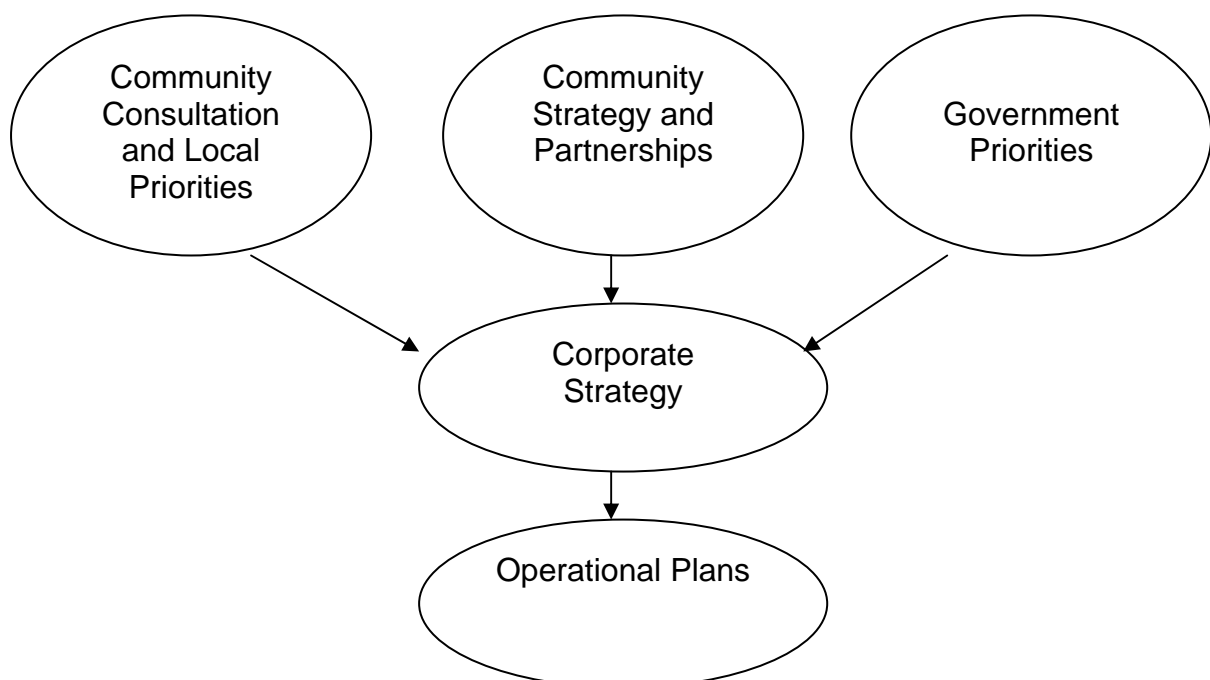
in the Borough in line with the priorities outlined in the Corporate Strategy.

## **8 Our approach to procurement and partnership working**

8.1 As part of our contract with Southwest One the Council is currently embarking on significant reviews of its procurement processes and contracts to ensure that maximum value is obtained from all capital contracts. This is particularly relevant for services such as Housing and the Direct Labour Organisation who are large volume purchasers of materials such as kitchens, bathrooms and windows. This will generate savings that will be reinvested in services and in new projects to help transform the Council. Significant elements of Wave 2 of the Procurement Category Plans are looking specifically at capital contracts to drive forward the benefits of improved procurement within our capital spend.

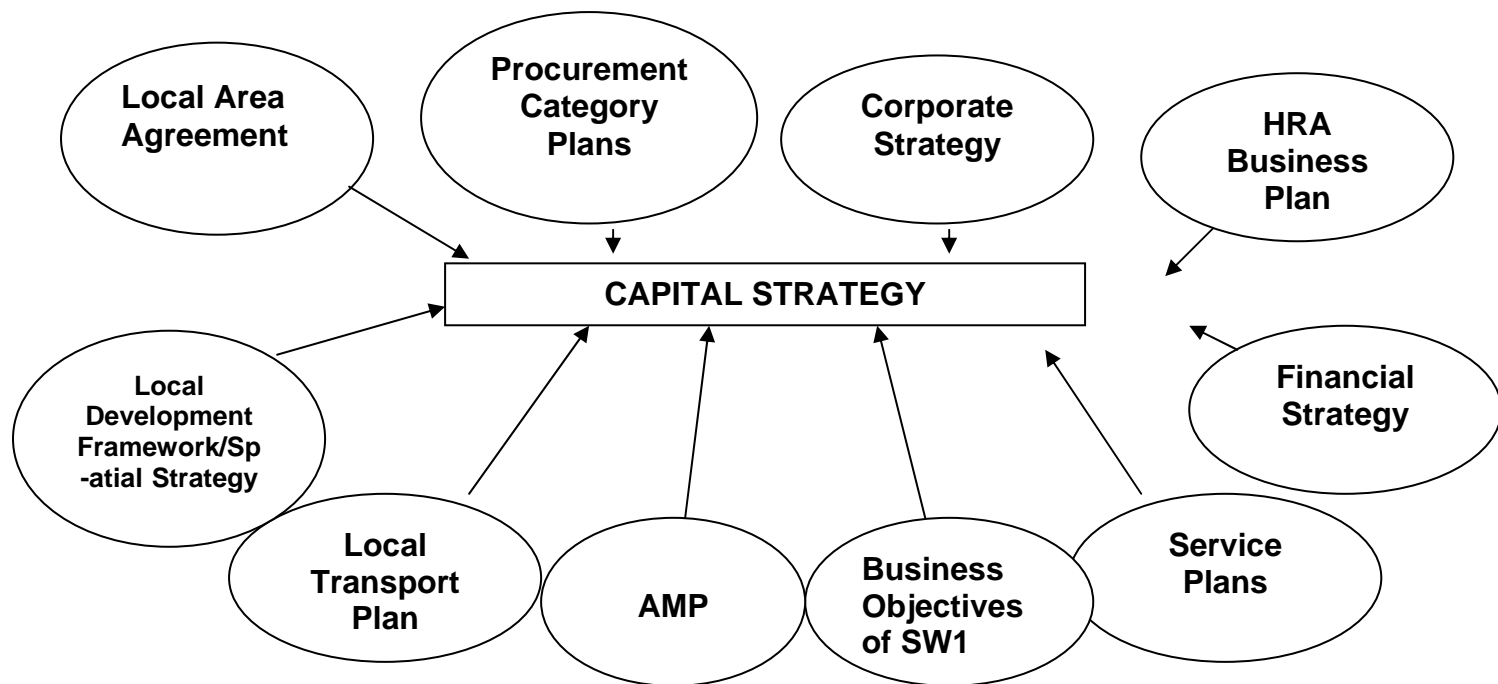
8.2 In recognition that the Borough Council is unlikely to have resources to meet all of our capital programme aspirations partnership working within capital schemes will be encouraged where added value and synergies can be achieved. We will work with partners to identify resourcing solutions and to determine priorities and innovative ways of procuring capital investment. We will, wherever possible, ensure that partnership working is achieved; this is to ensure that services are delivered to the public with more than just our own priorities in mind.

8.3 We are an active partner on the Local Strategic Partnership, which includes representatives from the voluntary sector, private sector and other public sector bodies such as the Health Authority. Our Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement targets help inform our corporate priorities, which ultimately shape the way in which our services are delivered. This is shown below:





- 8.4 The Council is also actively considering its options outlined in the Housing Green Paper; “Homes for the Future”. This work will look at the various options available under the Government’s proposals and which could help the authority raise additional funding for one of our key priorities, affordable housing. The forthcoming review of Housing finance, which is expected in spring 2009, will also be important to the Council as this will provide some clarity on the future of the Housing Revenue Account and on the capital resources available post 2011, the deadline for achievement of the “Decent Homes” standard.
- 8.5 The Government has recently announced that new housing properties, which come under the control of the Council, may be excluded from the Housing Revenue Account and therefore there would be no capital receipts pooling liability from their future disposal. This is important as it could provide additional resources. The Housing Revenue Account MTFP will be updated during the summer of 2009 to reflect the changes to Housing finance outlined above.
- 8.6 The vast majority of projects shown in paragraph 2.3 above are being delivered in partnership with a variety of other public and/or private sector organisations. Further information on our key partnerships is shown in the Council’s Corporate Strategy 2009-2012.
- 9 Links to other corporate plans**
- 9.1 The Capital Strategy is informed by other plans and strategies that the Council has. It is consistent with those plans and its development depends on capital priorities being integrated into all that the Council does.
- 9.2 A summary of the key links to the Capital Strategy are shown below:



9.3 In particular the Asset Management Plan (AMP) provides the detail relating to how our assets are performing and how they have improved from year to year. The AMP should be read in conjunction with the Capital Strategy.

## 10 Our Strategy for Capital Investment – A Summary

10.1 The Council faces many challenges in the coming years, for our assets there are numerous aspects to consider. For example:

- The financial implications of the Disability Discrimination Act,
- The need to meet the Decent Homes standard for our council housing, and
- Uncertainty over the future of Housing capital finance, pending the outcomes of the forthcoming review
- The existing maintenance backlog facing our assets,
- Our customer access ambitions,
- Recognition that prime assets such as Deane House may no longer be operationally appropriate as the Council reviews its staffing compliment, following the 2009 Core Council review,
- The impact on existing assets of our joint venture partnership, Southwest One,
- The need for our assets to generate revenue income, where appropriate,
- The delivery of our key goal – Project Taunton,
- The need to modernise our public swimming facilities,
- Relocating key services where appropriate (ie our existing plant Nursery site).

10.2 In the light of these challenges we need to ensure that our assets meet the needs of our profile of services. This will require disposing of surplus and poorly performing assets, maintaining and enhancing assets relating to high priority services and purchasing new landholdings to facilitate Project Taunton.

10.3 In order to achieve this there are some key actions required:

- We need to continually review our asset holdings, to generate resources and to focus spending on frontline areas, this will be led by the Property services function of Southwest One,
- We need to consider the benefits of Prudential Borrowing to finance some of our aspirations, but be mindful of the cost implications and the need to provide services which are value for money,

The Council recognises that this will take time to deliver but these actions will ensure that we have assets that match our aspirations.

## **11 Conclusion**

11.1 Capital Investment is necessary to ensure that the Council can meet its overall priorities. However this can only be done in partnership with others and in a way that makes the most of limited resources. This will be achieved through the principles outlined in the Capital Strategy and in the actions detailed in plans such as the Corporate Strategy.

11.2 The Capital Strategy will continue to develop over time in line with the Corporate Strategy.

# **Council Meeting – 14 April 2009**

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

### **1. Core Council Review**

- 1.1 Full Council gave approval in February 2009 for Phase One of the Core Council Review. This phase should, as we all know, save the authority £342,000 a year. Senior positions have been filled in key positions such as the Strategy Manager and Performance and Client Manager and I would like to welcome Simon Lewis and Richard Sealey to these new posts. I would also like to congratulate all of the other staff members who have been successful in the ongoing recruitment.
- 1.2 Details of the proposed timetable for all other phases of the Core Council Review will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 21 April 2009. This has been a very challenging time for many people and of course some staff have left the authority and that is never easy but this was always envisaged as part of the process. Thanks to all of those staff who have left Taunton Deane for all of their work over many years in some cases.
- 1.3 I would also like to thank our Senior Management Team who have been delivering this process in a very difficult climate. I believe that we are on course and the use of reserves will be within our target area previously outlined.

### **2. Free Swimming**

- 2.1 The 1 April 2009 was the launch date of the free swimming initiative. I am proud that this Council is participating in this scheme and I know that this will be very popular for over 60s, children and families in general.
- 2.2 I spoke to Joel Chapman at Tone Leisure who told me that they had 100 people pre-register for the scheme before it even started at Taunton Pool. Also I visited Wellington Sports Centre and they also told me of how people are enjoying this new scheme in the first few days. This scheme as I said before really helps the healthy living agenda and is the right thing to do.

### **3. Plastic and Cardboard**

- 3.1 The trials in several areas are to continue and that is also the right thing to do and we hope that the trial areas will “morph” into the first areas to roll out. I am very pleased to see that the call in of the

decision taken by Councillor Mullins has been withdrawn. The answers provided by Joy Wishlade were very detailed and answered any questions anybody would have about the process.

- 3.2 I am sorry but I just did not understand the call in. To consider withdrawing this popular service for people in several areas would have been very unpopular and also very hard to explain as well. It is time that everyone got behind this scheme.

#### **4. Town Centre Manager**

- 4.1 Graham Love has been appointed as the new Town Centre Manager. The Chief Executive, Penny James, and I will be holding a meeting with him very soon to introduce ourselves and discuss the various issues which are of interest to us all. This is a very important role particularly at this time and I will give him as much support as I can.

#### **5. Pioneer Somerset**

- 5.1 Kevin Toller is going to be the new Lead Officer for us on Pioneer Somerset. Kevin and I have been discussing a questionnaire which he will be sending to all Members to help us shape the development of Pioneer Somerset.
- 5.2 We need to move forward at a much quicker pace with Pioneer Somerset. The structure which is outlined in Councillor Wedderkopp's report will give us the means to achieve our objectives and move forward.

#### **6. Southwest One**

- 6.1 Southwest One was recently nominated for a national Local Government Award. The Local Government Chronicle nominated Southwest One as one of the five best public private partnerships in Local Government.
- 6.2 It is always rewarding to obtain national recognition and importantly by a panel of judges drawn from the local government family. A reminder to those who still detract this partnership that it is saving public money.

#### **7. Wiveliscombe and West Deane By-Election**

- 7.1 I would like to extend a warm welcome to Eddie Gaines who won the recent by-election in the above Ward. I would also like to thank all the staff who worked a very long day on the election and Craig Morse for yet again managing a smoothly run election.

Councillor Ross Henley



# **Council Meeting – 14 April 2009**

## **Report of Councillor Richard Lees – Sports, Parks and Leisure**

Before moving into the report as such, I would like to publicly thank Steve Hughes who was our Sports Manager for all the dedicated, hard work, he has done for the Council over the years. He has decided to leave the Council as of 31 March 2009, and may I wish him well in whatever he does in the future. We will miss his expertise. May I present my report as follows:-

### **1. Community Leisure**

- 1.1 Vivary Park summer Sunday bandstand concerts have been programmed beginning on 7 June, continuing until 7 September 2009.
- 1.2 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 in June. This publication gives details of activities for children in the main school holidays.
- 1.3 West Monkton Village Hall has been successful in their application to the Somerset Joint Committee for Voluntary Village Halls and Community Centres for grant aid assistance. The award has been made for an extension to the hall to provide extra facilities for the current population of West Monkton parish. The Committee is joint funded by both this Authority and Somerset County Council.
- 1.4 Letters have been sent to Parish Clerks and Playing Field Committees inviting applications to the Parish Play Area Grant fund by 30 April 2009.

### **2. Play**

- 2.1 French Weir Park, Taunton
  - 2.1.1 The new play space in French Weir Park, opened on 16 March 2009, has brought a new lease of life to this town centre park. The design was undertaken with children from North Town Primary School and parents from a local pre-school group.
  - 2.1.2 The Friends of French Weir Park are reporting that it has been an enormous success with around 200 people in the park on Sundays playing, picnicking and playing ball games as well as just enjoying the atmosphere and, on weekdays, the sand play area is constantly full of toddlers with their parents. The play space was funded from a number of local housing developers' Section 106 Agreement contributions.

## 2.2 Howard Road, Wellington

2.2.1 A smaller play space designed to reflect the needs of young people from three schools in Wellington, opened on 27 March 2009. This is a smaller scale play facility reflecting its more local nature. It was funded principally by a Playbuilder Grant from the Department for Children, Families and Schools (DCSF) administered by Somerset County Council with some Section 106 Agreement funding.

## 2.3 National Play Strategy

2.3.1 This was published earlier this year by the Government outlining the importance it is now giving to children's play as a vital ingredient of a happy and healthy childhood, supporting children's physical, emotional, social and educational development. The government has issued a new National Indicator on play against which Councils will be measured showing children's satisfaction with play provision.

2.3.2 The DCSF has written to every Councils' Chief Planning Officer highlighting the importance of play, of safe access to playspaces and of making the built environment play-friendly. It has also produced a video to promote the strategy which features the play space at Holway – Hawthorne Play Area. Both the Strategy and video can be viewed on the website at [www.dcsf.gov.uk/play](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/play)

## 2.4 Year 2 Playbuilder

2.4.1 Work has begun with the community in Oake to provide a play space on the village playing field. Oake is one of the wards identified as having the greatest need for new play provision in the Taunton Deane Play Strategy.

2.4.2 So far a Steering Group has been formed of local organisations, parents and young people. Barnardos has undertaken consultations with the local primary school children and a play day is planned in the village on 25 April 2009 to engage older children and adults and it is hoped to have a draft design completed in late May.

## 3. Tone Leisure (Taunton Deane) Limited Activities

### 3.1 Sports and Health Development

3.1.1 Active Somerset – An over 50s exercise class taking place at Milverton Victoria Rooms on a Monday afternoon, supported through Active Somerset in partnership with Age Concern Somerset, is proving a massive hit, with up to 20 participations at a time. The vast majority of attendees are new to exercise.

3.1.2 A new 'volunteer led' netball group was launched at Taunton Vale on 1 April 2009. So far 17 people have registered an interest. Active Somerset funding

is being used to provide a coach and support venue costs.

- 3.1.3 A new women's cricket group is being set up in Wiveliscombe at Kingsmead Community School. The group will predominantly be made up of wives/partners of Brompton Ralph Cricket Team, with additional participation from the local community. These sessions will commence on 14 April 2009 and, again, Active Somerset funding is being used to support venue costs.
- 3.1.4 All of the above initiatives are designed to encourage women into taking part in physical activity on a more regular basis, linking in to LAA stretch targets around this.

### 3.2 Facility News

#### Wellsprings Leisure Centre

- 3.2.1 The events programme at Wellsprings is proving to be a great success again this season, with an amazing line up of comedians. Russell Kane, 'if comedy' award winner, brought the house down with his show on St. Patrick's Day, feeding off the audience. The next event held at Wellsprings was the Strictly Dance evening starring Ian Waite and Camilla Dallerup. The dancing seen on this evening outshone anything the centre has seen before. Over 300 people took part in the group participation session. Forthcoming events will see the return of The Superstar Wrestling, Jethro with his 2009 Tour, Jimmy Carr with his Joke Technician Tour and we will welcome Dave Spikey to the centre with his The Best Medicine Tour, which is proving very popular. For all those getting married, the Tone Wedding Fair is set to be the best ever, with many stands returning and a large number of new ones. For a list of all the forthcoming events please e-mail [j.white@toneleisure.com](mailto:j.white@toneleisure.com) or visit [www.toneleisure.com](http://www.toneleisure.com). Taunton Tigers Basketball Team won their first game of the season last weekend (about time boys!).
- 3.2.2 Junior Activities - Wellsprings staff have been involved in the Wild Play Days free session, helping children over 5 years old have fun play outside building sports dens, getting messy, traditional games and lots more. The turnout and response has been good. Wellsprings has introduced Music with Mummy pre-school music sessions into the programme. Easter Camps will be held throughout Easter for children aged 5+.

#### Taunton Pool

- 3.2.3 Taunton Pool is fully prepared for the Free Swim Initiative commencing on 1 April 2009. Registration started on Saturday, 21 March 2009 and approximately 60 customers have already signed up for the initiative. A lot more have taken the registration packs away with them. The pool is launching the start of the two year scheme with a Hawaiian themed party from 4-5 pm on 1 April, with the local media coming along to take photos, and I was pleased to be there with a few other Councillors.

#### St. James Street Baths

- 3.2.4 Swimskool - Over the last 12 months St. James Street Swimming Baths' Learn to Swim Scheme has grown from strength to strength. The programme has grown in not only its diversity but also its occupancy. With the introduction of a Swimmers Referral scheme we have seen demand for all levels continue to be strong. The programme now has 1,560 swimmers, a progression of 120 swimmers from this time last year.
- 3.2.5 New Sessions - Working in partnership with Quantock Vale Surgery, we are now able to offer a session on Tuesday afternoons for adults who have struggled to get into keeping fit. The session is designed as a comfortable environment for people who have been deterred from swimming due to medical or weight concerns. We now have 15 swimmers partaking regularly and are keen to see the session continue to grow.
- 3.2.6 Scuba diving at St. James Street! Scuba Scene is now offering an exciting programme for all abilities on Wednesday nights. The pool is a buzz of activity, with Instructors taking all ages and abilities through their qualifications working with St. James Street staff to offer a safe environment to learn a variety of skills before the open water.

#### Blackbrook Pavilion

- 3.2.7 Health and Fitness - At the beginning of March Blackbrook Fitbuzz membership has risen to 1,514 members. Blackbrook now has the largest number of Fitbuzz members within all Taunton Deane sites.
- 3.2.8 The centre has been close to achieving new member sales targets for the first quarter of the year (January sales 166/target 160, February sales 120/target 125 and March currently sales 90/target 100). These results have been achieved by intense sales activity and successful lead generation initiatives. The new gym continues to be successful, with total gym visits up 17% on last year. This is due to an increase in both Fitbuzz and casual member usage. The new equipment of Powerplates and Gravity Training machines are increasing in popularity.
- 3.2.9 On Comic Relief day the Fitness Team worked with Sainsbury (Hankridge Park) to generate funds. While celebrities may have climbed Kilimanjaro in real life, the Tone Leisure Fitness Team had the more mundane task to climb Kilimanjaro on one of the gym's stepper machines. Both achieved their goal with equal success, although our fundraising was certainly of a more humble amount.

#### Tennis Centre

- 3.2.10 George's 90<sup>th</sup> - George Duncan, one of the regular players at the over 50s coaching and matchplay sessions held on Monday and Wednesday mornings celebrates his 90th birthday on 6 April 2009.

#### Mini Tennis Ratings

### 3.2.11 Congratulations to the following players for their achievements

Robbie Broomhead - first Taunton boy to achieve Red level 1.

Olivia and Sophie Hamilton - first Taunton and Somerset girls to achieve Red level 1 (Orange 2).

Bethany Lacey - first Taunton and Somerset girl to achieve Orange level 1.

Robbie Davey - first Taunton and Somerset player to achieve Orange level 1.

Edward Shattock - Orange level 1.

Tristan Coore - first Taunton and Somerset boy to achieve Green level 1.

### Wellington Sports Centre

3.2.12 Free Swim Initiative - The scheme to offer customers aged 60+ and under 16 years free swimming is currently being promoted and is due to commence on 1 April 2009.

3.2.13 New Fitness Scheme for Teenage Girls - Working in partnership with Court Fields School and the Police and Youth Services and with the support of Councillor Andrew Govier – and my personal thanks to Cllr. Govier here - a trial six week scheme is to be launched after Easter offering subsidised fitness classes to teenage girls. These classes are aimed at teenage girls who are currently unable or unwilling to participate in mainstream adult fitness classes and who would prefer to exercise independently of the teenage boys who are attending the Friday evening activity sessions at the Sports Centre.

3.2.14 Chemical Incident - An incident involving a chemical spillage occurred in early March at Wellington Sports Centre which was widely reported in the press. The spillage was of a cleaning product, fairly minor in nature and isolated to the cleaning store cupboard. One member of staff was affected by feeling unwell, with sickness, dizziness and a sore throat, was checked at Musgrove Park Hospital and released that same evening with no lasting effects. A thorough investigation has been undertaken and control measures improved as a result.

3.2.15 Improved Swimming Lessons Scheme - Wellington Sports Centre has now fully adopted the revised National Swimming Plan introduced by the Amateur Swimming Association. The key benefits are a more varied and fun scheme for children, together with increasing swimming lesson time for some of the more advanced groups, with the aim being improved retention on the programme.

3.2.16 Although this has been mentioned several times in this report, I must end my report by saying that the Government's Free Swimming initiative commenced on the 1 April 2009, and though it is very early days the staff of Tone Leisure inform me that they are pleased with the way things have gone so far.

Councillor Richard Lees.

# **Council Meeting – 14 April 2009**

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

### **1. Environmental Protection Team**

- 1.1 Notification has been received from Mama Stones live music venue in Wellington that they have vacated the premises, which has been closed for trade since 23 March 2009 due to the recent planning permission refusal. The Environmental Protection Team had served a noise abatement notice on the premises on 10 December 2008, which had been appealed by the owner of Mama Stones. The appeal was due to be heard by Taunton Magistrates on 6 May 2009 and we await clarification from the appellant as to whether they wish to continue.
- 1.2 Sainsbury's new mobile petrol station is now up and running for the next 12 weeks whilst the new petrol station is constructed. An Environmental Permitting Regulation permit has been issued and is the first of its kind for a mobile petrol station in the country.
- 1.3 The Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has officially accepted the outcome of the Air Quality Progress Report and Action Plan Progress Report 2008.

### **2. Food Safety and Health and Safety Teams**

- 2.1 Both the Food Team and the Health and Safety Team have successfully completed the high risk inspections planned for 2008/2009.
- 2.2 The report into the E.Coli outbreak in South Wales that claimed the life of one child and caused long term ill health in numerous others has finally been published. The case was centred around the supply of cooked meats to schools. In the light of the report Food Officers are reviewing the way in which they carry out inspections of cooked meat suppliers and checks are made on all inspections to ensure they are completed to a standard that will stand up to scrutiny.
- 2.3 A County wide work programme for Food and Health and Safety has been developed to improve the use of shared resources and foster closer working between the authorities. Officers will collaborate on initiatives and projects in key areas of work including improving consistency, workshops for childcare providers on infection control, health and safety in catering establishments.

### **3. Licensing Team**

- 3.1 Two applications have been received by Avon and Somerset Police to review premises licences. One resulted in the Premises Licence Holder/Designated Premises Supervisor being removed from the licence and new tenants taking the Lease/licence over.
- 3.2 The other is due to be heard by the Licensing Sub-Committee towards the end of April 2009.

- 3.3 An application has been received for the Buddhafields Event to be held near Culmhead for the second year running. This years event is due to take place from 15 to 19 July 2009. A multi-agency meeting has been held with the organisers of the Buddhafield Event to discuss the detail of the proposal for this summers festival. The Environmental Protection Team has recommended noise conditions to prevent nuisance and these have since been agreed by the event organisers.
- 3.4 The Police and Crime Bill is expected to be enacted into law in the Summer of 2009 and will result in a number of new mandatory conditions being added to all premises certificates that allow the selling of alcohol. These conditions will be mainly prohibitive and will be aimed at reducing binge drinking and underage sales.
- 3.5 Officers have been working with the Taxi trade locally to produce a new handbook to consolidate the Council's Policies and Procedures in relation to Taxi Licensing. The Council's approach in some areas required updating and this work will culminate in a report to the Licensing Committee at the end of April 2009.

#### **4. Environmental Health Support Team**

- 4.1 The hard work over many months that has been done by the Team Leader and nominated Superusers to ensure that the transfer to the SAP system goes smoothly is about to come to fruition.

Councillor Mel Mullins

# **Council Meeting – 14 April 2009**

## **Report of Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey, Housing Portfolio-holder**

### **1. Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Consultation : Changes to Finance Rules to encourage Councils to build new Council Houses**

- 1.1 The Negative Subsidy Task and Finish Group considered this consultation paper on 24 March 2009 and were instrumental in producing the Council's response, which has now gone to the DCLG.
- 1.2 The Government's stated aim is to remove all financial barriers to Councils building new Council homes for rent and this is a significant and historic change.
- 1.3 The Government's change in policy is long overdue and is to be welcomed, but it needs to be accompanied by changes to the subsidy system which effectively returns the setting of rents and the use of rental income to local authority control. The Negative Subsidy Task and Finish Group will be asked to reconvene when we have the proposals of the national Housing Subsidy Review.

### **2. Housing Strategy Team**

- 2.1 I would like to acknowledge the work of the individuals who made up the Housing Strategy Team and who have now left the organisation, for their valuable work over the period I have been Executive Councillor for Housing.
- 2.2 Although I could mention many projects, the highlights for me have been the very successful project management of the introduction of Choice-based Lettings. This was a large-scale project which has been remarkably trouble-free – its size and complexity is perhaps underestimated simply because it has been managed so well.
- 2.3 Another highlight of the last year has been the large amount of investment attracted from the DCLG, in partnership with Taunton Association for the Homeless (TAH), which has transformed services for rough sleepers and other homeless people in our community.

### **3. Council Housing Rent Increase**

- 3.1 The Government's announcement that they will enable Councils to reduce rent increases for this financial year to a national average of 3.1% must have sounded like very good news to council tenants.



- 3.2 However, what really happened is that the Government began a consultation process which could go on for some time. Tenants of Taunton Deane are unlikely to see the benefit of this for some months, and only if the Council formally reverses its previous decision-making on rent levels.
- 3.3 That the Government announced this change of mind **after** Councils had set rent levels and had written to tenants giving them formal notice of the increase (in our case 6.2%) is indefensible. What is even worse is that they are saying they will not cover the administrative costs of any change, which has been estimated nationally at an average of £10,000 for each authority. This will be money taken from rent payers' budgets, **if** the Council makes that decision, to pay for the fact that the Government did not do their U-turn a week or ten days earlier.
- 3.4 The Chief Housing Officer is currently working to identify the potential cost to Taunton Deane Borough Council of the proposed reduction. There would be costs involved in software changes to the Housing Academy IT software, the cost of changes to the SW1 IBS Housing benefit software, as well as the additional printing, postage and other administrative costs of the exercise.
- 3.5 The Government point out that this is a small cost compared to the large amount the Government will give to Councils to compensate for the loss of rental income – this argument is only persuasive if we forget that the Government is projected to take £6.1 million from Taunton Deane Borough Council this financial year in negative subsidy.
- 3.6 When the consultation period is complete and we are aware of all the possible implications of a reduction, a report will be brought forward on this issue.

#### **4. Decent Homes Standard**

- 4.1 A report by the Chief Housing Officer for the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 16 April 2009 will confirm that the Council is on track to achieve the Decent Homes' standard in its 6,000 Council properties in advance of the Government deadline of March 2011.
- 4.2 It is very pleasing to confirm that the target will be achieved ahead of time, but furthermore that the Council is expected not only to maintain the standard after March 2011, but that resources will also be released to align investment with the expressed wishes of tenants.

Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey

# **Council Meeting – 14 April 2009**

## **Report of Councillor Francesca Smith – Corporate Resources**

### **1. Democratic Services**

- 1.1 The new scrutiny Officer Erin Taylor has now been appointed and she will be starting on 5 May 2009.
- 1.2 The changes to the Scrutiny arrangements are at Full Council for approval. Tonya Meers has been working with the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the current Scrutiny Committees and the Group Leaders on this new structure, which should give more flexibility and clarity for scrutiny and was also one of the recommendations from the IDeA Peer Review that was carried out last September.
- 1.3 Regulations have come into effect with regard to the charging for personal searches in Land Charges. The new fee structure means that we will now be charging Personal Search Agents on a cost basis for the searches they require whereas before it was set down in statute and the fee was only £11 per search.
- 1.4 Progress is now being made on the implementation of the Land Charges and Building Control modules to add to the Accolaid system and this will be implemented over the coming months.
- 1.5 We are shortly to receive a visit from Dr Michael McCauley of Teeside University. Dr McCauley is a reader in Governance and Public Ethics and is carrying out research for the Standards Board for England on good practices. He is very interested in our Parish Liaison Officer and the work that is undertaken by David Greig with the parishes in connection with our ethical governance agenda. He will be attending our Standards Committee on the 15 April 2009 to talk to our parish representatives as well as David, Tonya and Anne Elder, Chairman of Standards Committee.
- 1.6 The Mayor's handbook has been updated and a copy will be available in the Member's Room for information and reference purposes. The handbook is very useful both for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor but also for Members to understand the role of the Mayor and what is to be expected.

### **2. Customer Services**

- 2.1 As you are aware the Taunton Deane Customer Advisors were relocated from Flook House to the newly refurbished Contact Centre in

The Deane House on 26 January 2009 and have been operational since that time. It is anticipated that the Somerset County Council (SCC) Customer Advisors will join their Taunton Deane colleagues in The Deane House by the end April 2009.

2.2 Over time, this will enable cross-skilling to take place which will ultimately result in a more resilient and efficient service. Service levels have been consistent throughout the First Quarter although March was extremely busy with a high volume of calls in respect of Council Tax and Garden Waste in particular. Volumes were 7% higher in March compared to the same month in 2008 and the average call duration was 40% higher. A customer advisor from SCC was temporarily transferred to The Deane House to support the team at this busy time.

2.3 The statistics for the First quarter are as follows:-

	Jan	Feb	Mar
Volume	15187	14193	17663
Abandoned calls	3.5	4.4	5.1
% answered in 20 secs	84.5	83.4	80.22
% answered at first point of contact	98.0	97.2	95.0

2.4 Towards the end of March the first stage of the new Work Force Management System (Qmax) was implemented. Once this is fully deployed it will enable the Contact Centre to more accurately match the work force to the profile of incoming calls. This will further underpin the service and will also allow future call volumes to be predicted more precisely. All advisors were trained in the SAP ESS application in readiness for the 1 April 2009 implementation.

2.5 Future Activities - move SCC Customer Advisors to The Deane House; trial automated customer satisfaction survey; participate in testing for SAP CRM; train all staff in SAP CRM; Implement SAP CRM – current target June 2009.

### **3. Revenues and Benefits Service Unit**

3.1 We successfully concluded annual billing for Council Tax and Business Rates for 2009/2010 during March 2009. As well as sending out over 50,000 bills, we also wrote to all Housing and Council Tax Benefit recipients telling them of their revised entitlement.

3.2 At the end of February 2009 we had collected 97.46% of Council Tax due for 2008/2009 - ahead of our target for in year collection and more than achieved throughout the whole of 2007/2008. We are still slightly behind target for Business Rates (NNDR) having collected 97.63%. However, this is again ahead of performance achieved at this point last year and it is notable that from information obtained through CIPFA, of

the 50 authorities reporting on NNDR collection, we were the only Council that improved recovery on 2007/2008 levels.

- 3.3 You may have noticed the work being carried out in the Reception Area at The Deane House. This is in direct response to feedback given by Revenues and Benefit Service customers on the lack of privacy and interviewing facilities. The adaptations will transform existing back office space into two interview booths with open access for customers from Reception.
- 3.4 Improvements are also being made to our two existing interview rooms. The secure interview room will remain with the protective glass replaced by a more modern and 'friendly' version. The PACE (Police and Criminal Evidence) interview room will remain but we will also use it for customers who have asked for more privacy. There will be easier access for people using wheelchairs and all new interviewing facilities will have a fresh coat of paint and some new matching furniture. The work, fully financed by Southwest One, should be completed by mid April 2009.

#### **4. Financial Services**

- 4.1 Over recent weeks Financial Services have been finalising the new coding structure that the Council will be implementing for SAP. In addition preparations for the closedown of the 2008/2009 accounts are being made, and this will dominate much of Financial Services work until the end of June. The training of staff regarding year end procedures and also some of the fundamental changes that SAP will bring are also being implemented.
- 4.2 The first phase of the Core Council Review is now complete and Financial Services have also been providing Corporate Management Team with the detailed costing information.
- 4.3 Preparations are being made for the completion of the numerous statistical returns that have to be returned to Government following the finalisation of the Council 2009/2010 Budget, including Revenue Accounts and Capital Estimates Return.
- 4.4 Finally congratulations to Paul Carter who has now formally moved over to his new role in SouthWest One running the shared accounting service and Emily Collacott is acting up in Paul's old role.

#### **5. Performance Management**

- 5.1 Annual Audit and Inspection Letter – the External Auditors published their Annual Audit and Inspection Letter (AAIL) which was presented at a meeting to Members on 26 March 2009.
- 5.2 Data Quality – the Council is currently meeting minimum requirements.

The External Audit recommendations are being implemented which includes adoption of a Data Quality Strategy which has been drafted for approval. Staff awareness training is being provided.

- 5.3 Use of Resources Assessment – for 2007/2008 the Council was assessed as 2 out of 4. In respect of 2008/2009, the Council has submitted its self-assessment and the External Auditors are now undertaking their review. A more rigorous assessment criterion applies for 2008/2009 and improvements are being implemented wherever possible.
- 5.4 Direction of Travel 2008 – the Council completed a self-assessment that was reviewed by the External Auditors in February 2009. The results, detailed in the AAIL, state the Council has continued to make progress with the delivery of most of its priorities and has improved the performance of a number of its services.
- 5.5 Performance Monitoring - The Quarter 3 Performance Monitoring Report was scrutinised by the Strategy and Performance Panel on 10 March 2009. This showed that 52% of the Councils Corporate Strategy Objectives were on course and 38% had actions pending to meet the objectives, 10% were off course.
- 5.6 The Corporate Strategy 2009-2012 was approved by Council on 17 February 2009. The revised strategy reflects the content of the Local Area Agreement, revised budget position and Councillors and community priorities for the next 3 years.
- 5.7 Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) – the Audit Commission released its final guidance on 10 February 2009 and the Council now needs to communicate the new requirements to Members and Officers.

## **6. ICT**

- 6.1 One of the largest ICT projects undertaken within Taunton Deane is now reaching the critical phase, with the first elements, Employee Self Service and Manager Self Service going live. Both the Applications and the Infrastructure Teams have been working incredibly hard with the SAP team to over recent weeks to enable us to reach this milestone, and as more modules are scheduled to go live in the coming months this will undoubtedly continue.
- 6.2 Government Connect - Taunton Deane now has had its Government Connect Code of Compliance (CoCo) approved with just three outstanding actions still to be completed. This CoCo must be approved by a Government Connect assessor before Taunton Deane will be allowed to connect to Government Connect, which enables secure, encrypted communication between local authorities and other Government Departments and Agencies.

- 6.3 The first service that will use this facility will be Housing Benefits, who will use it to securely communicate with Department of Work and Pensions. In order to reach this stage of compliance, we have had to make changes to various aspects of the security configurations the ICT infrastructure, and over the coming weeks and months these changes will impact on all users, not just the Housing Benefits Service users as at present. Communications and training is being planned as part of these changes.
- 6.4 Technology Services Organisation - The structure of the Southwest One Technology Services is currently going through some major changes as we build an organisation to deliver a true shared-services approach to the Councils, the Police and also Southwest One. The top tiers of this organisation are being appointed at the moment and over the next couple of months this process should be completed. Details will be published of the new structures and who is responsible for the various elements of the service.

## **7. Human Resources**

- 7.1 Staff changes - Kirsty Lowe, HR Administrator has started her maternity leave. Linda Kirchin, HR Officer and Julie Bryant, HR Administrator will be leaving with effect from 31 March 2009.
- 7.2 The Southwest One HR team will be restructured with effect from 1 April 2009. The HR Advisory Team (consisting of Laura Holland - HR Manager, Amy Sutton - HR Officer and Suzie Rea - HR Administrator) will remain based at The Deane House providing HR advisory support to managers and staff. All payroll queries will be dealt with directly by the HR and Payroll Services Team at County Hall. Training and Development will be picked up by Ron Westcott, Training Development Manager based at County Hall.
- 7.3 Core Council Review - The HR team have been continuing to support the Retained HR Manager and CMT with the Core Council Review. Throughout March we have been carrying our interviews for the new posts within the new Strategy and Corporate Theme. We have also been meeting with individuals to confirm redundancies.
- 7.4 SAP implementation - The HR Manager has been involved in providing information and testing for the implementation of SAP.

Councillor Fran Smith

## **Council Meeting – 14 April 2009**

### **Report of Councillor Alan Wedderkopp – Community Leadership**

**Before moving into the report as such, I would like to thank Jane Chipp who was our Change manager - Pioneer Somerset and Steve Hughes who was our Sports Manager, for all the dedicated hard work they have done for the Council over the years. They have decided to leave the Council as of 31 March 2009 and may I wish them well in whatever they do in the future. We will miss their expertise.**

#### **1. The Pioneer Somerset Board**

- 1.1 This Board will be the principal decision-making forum of Pioneer Somerset. Its Membership is the Leaders of each Member Council (or their substitutes).
- 1.2 Its role is to act jointly:-
  - Ensuring Delivery of the Pioneer Somerset Programme;
  - Recommending Programme Initiation Documents/PID Variations to Member Councils;
  - Approving Programme Action Plans (PAPs);
  - Monitoring Delivery of PAPs;
  - Recommending actions to Member Councils including making appropriate entries in their Medium Term Financial Plans;
  - Monitoring achievement of outcomes; and
  - Receiving reports from Scrutiny Committees.
- 1.3 Its Decision-making will be by unanimous assent at events at which all Councils are represented.
- 1.4 The representative of each authority attending the event will have unconditional delegated powers to agree recommendations of the Chief Executives' Group in accordance with their own Council's individual decision-making arrangements. This will ensure joint decisions will bind all authorities to PAPs.
- 1.5 Its meetings will be chaired by the Leader of each Council in turn for terms of six months.
- 1.6 The Board will be open and transparent by each decision of each Council representative being subject to:-

- (a) it being recorded in accordance with their own Council's access to information arrangements for individual decision-making;
- (b) collective scrutiny by a Joint Scrutiny Panel; and
- (c) each Council's scrutiny arrangements for individual and other decision-making.

## 2. Local Area Agreement

2.1 This is to provide Members with an update on the delivery plan for National Indicator 39, reducing the number of alcohol related hospital admissions.

2.2 The baseline year for this indicator is 2006/2007 and is measured annually

<b>2006/07 baseline year</b>	<b>2008/09 target</b>	<b>2009/10 target</b>	<b>2010/11 target</b>	<b>Performance based on 2007/08 year</b>
1,389	1,570	1,643	1,697	1, 443

2.3 This is a challenging target that seeks to slow the increase down. In line with the NHS vital signs performance measure, Somerset has agreed a 1.3 percentage point reduction on the increase year on year.

2.4 The alcohol plan focuses on 3 core work areas:-

- Alcohol education and awareness;
- Tackling alcohol related crime; and
- Delivering a range of interventions

2.5 The primary aim of the campaign is:-

- "To raise awareness about units contained in alcoholic drinks."
- "To bring about behaviour change among the target audiences when considering and consuming alcohol."
- All the key messages centre on the slogan "Look out for your mates".

2.6 Implementation of the campaign commenced in January 2009 and will run through to Autumn 2009. At this point the quantitative and qualitative survey will be repeated to assess the impact the campaign has had.

2.7 Delivering a range of interventions - This area in the plan covers a number of initiatives for example:-

- Extending the use of theatre in education to inform and educate young people about alcohol. 'Time in a Bottle' is being performed in 27 schools across the County this year;



- Commissioning a targeted service for young people that will ensure early intervention in young people's drinking behaviour. This started in February 2009 and will function within the Children's Local Service Teams;
- To reduce the number of alcohol-related admissions to Accident and Emergency (particularly repeat admissions);
- To identify attendees with harmful or hazardous drinking habits and provide brief advice to help them reduce their alcohol consumption; and
- Evidence from elsewhere in the United Kingdom suggests that this approach can contribute to a reduction in violence related attendances at Accident and Emergency.

### **3. Comprehensive Area Assessment : A new way of scrutinising public services**

3.1 The introduction of Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) is a radical step forward from the Comprehensive Performance Assessment. For Councillors in particular, CAA offers the opportunity to better understand how local public services are working together to provide real improvement to the quality of life of local people, especially those whose circumstances make them most vulnerable.

3.2 CAA has five key characteristics:-

- (1) It assesses what makes a real difference to people - with CAA the focus will be on outcomes for local people, not organisational process;
- (2) It looks at how public services work together, as much as individual organisational performance;
- (3) It focuses on local, as well as national, priorities;
- (4) It provides robust, but proportionate, assessment of local services; and
- (5) We will report our assessments directly to the public in straightforward.

3.2 CAA will be carried out by six inspectorates working together - the Audit Commission, the new Care Quality Commission, HM Inspectorates of Constabulary, Prisons and Probation and Ofsted.

3.3 CAA will move beyond a narrow scrutiny of a council or Primary Care Trust, to look at quality of life at large, bringing into the picture local issues such as carbon emissions and sustainability, life expectancy, teenage pregnancy and other indicators of well-being. CAA will enable us to examine how effectively local agencies are working together to tackle their local problems.

3.4 The information will be a tool for Councillors giving them an authoritative

view of what local agencies are doing, and how well, and allowing Councillors themselves to measure their Council's performance against other similar authorities.

- 3.5 CAA has been designed to reduce the administrative burden on local bodies and will rely more on information and data that should be readily available. Requiring less on-site activity by inspectors, staff time and resources can be focused on delivering services.
- 3.6 CAA will also be readily accessible to local people, as well as those working in or with public services. A dedicated website will provide citizens, tax payers and service users with plain English assessments of how local priorities are being met, with green and red flags indicating exceptional performance or significant concerns.
- 3.7 We believe CAA will be of real value to Councillors whatever their role - cabinet member, scrutiny chair or front-line councillor, as they look to improve the quality of life for local people.

#### **4. Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and Taunton Deane Council for Voluntary Services**

- 4.1 Unfortunately, we are not in a position right now to give an update on the Service Level Agreements, as the new officer has only been in post for 3 days, however he will be holding meetings over the coming couple of weeks to progress this.
- 4.2 The first phase of the Core Council restructure is currently being put in place to form the Strategy and Corporate Theme. So far half of the positions have been filled, however there are still a number of key vacancies, with four Lead posts and five Officer posts still to be filled.
- 4.3 The priority now for the new Strategy Manager and Client and Performance Manager is to recruit into these posts as early as possible to bring the teams up to capacity.
- 4.4 The Strategy Manager, and Client and Performance Manager have been lucky to have an effective handover of work from outgoing staff. The next step is for these managers to work closely with CMT and portfolio holders to agree what the priorities are moving forward and how new thematic ways of working will deliver better outcomes.

Councillor Alan Wedderkopp



# **Council Meeting –14 April 2009**

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

### **1. Public Relations**

- 1.1 Partnership working continues to be a focus for public relations. We worked closely with the Police and the Army on arrangements for the military funeral of Corporal Tom Gaden, together with officers from Democratic Services and Parking Services.
- 1.2 We co-ordinated media coverage for the very moving occasion, writing press releases and working with media representatives on the day.
- 1.3 We are also working closely with other districts on Pioneer Somerset and are making arrangements for district council services, including those provided by Taunton Deane, to feature in Somerset County Council's display at the Royal Bath and West Show in late May.
- 1.4 Internally, we are producing a newsletter for all staff and members on the Carbon Reduction Strategy, outlining what steps are being taken to reduce the Council's carbon footprint and how everyone can help to make a difference.
- 1.5 The start of Spring has seen the opening of two new play areas - at French Weir, Taunton and at Howard Road in Wellington - and the launch of the new sensory garden planned for Vivary Park. All attracted media coverage.
- 1.6 The March edition of Deane Dispatch featured the pledge by two Councillors to quit smoking while the April edition will look at community safety and green initiatives.

### **2. Website Update**

- 2.1 The majority of the content is now written and we are in the testing phase for the new website, working closely with Southwest One. The testing will continue to several weeks. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Web authors within Taunton Deane services for all their hard work in enabling us to meet all deadlines.
- 2.2 Following the testing phase, we will be moving into the quality assurance phase, going through each page of the new website to check the content and making sure the correct documents are attached.
- 2.3 We have now completed the designs for the new website and if any Members would like to have a look at the proposed design, please contact John-Mark Strange, Web Content Officer.

### **3. Ruth James**

- 3.1 Last but not least, I wish to thank Ruth James our Communications Manager for all the hard work and dedication, put in to the Communications portfolio. I will personally miss her help and support given to me over the last two years, and wish her well in her new role.

Councillor Steve Brooks

# **Council Meeting – 14 April 2009**

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

### **1. Strategic Housing Land Area Assessment (SHLAA)**

- 1.1 Baker Associates were commissioned last September to prepare a SHLAA for Taunton Deane and Sedgemoor. This study is part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy and the methodology follows Government Practice Guidance.
- 1.2 The key output of the study will include details of sites found to be deliverable in the first five years (April 2009 – March 2014) and sites or broad locations that are developable by 2026. There has been a call for sites which have now been assessed. A selection of sites will be assessed by a Panel and a draft report is expected by the end of April 2009.

### **2. Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)**

- 2.1 Fordham Research have been commissioned to prepare a SHMA for Taunton and South Somerset Housing Market Areas. It follows Government SHMA guidance and PPS3: Housing (November 2006). The study identifies an acute need for additional affordable housing (either social rented or intermediate) across the study area. The LDF Steering Group meeting on 15 April 2009 will consider the conclusions of the study and its implications for the LDF Core Strategy in detail.

### **3. Development of Acolaid IT Back Office System to its full capability.**

- 3.1 The Acolaid Development Management System went live on the 13 October 2008, in conjunction with the restructure of the support teams. The initial “bedding down” period was very successful with minimum disruption to the service.
- 3.2 The focus for 2009-2010 is the development of the Acolaid system, with high priority being the introduction of technology to allow planning officers to access Acolaid remotely (by mid 2009).
- 3.3 Ongoing in-house development will include quality assurance of documentation and data, increased use of automated systems such as e-mail and changes in working practice to incorporate e-government initiatives.
- 3.4 As Acolaid is developed there will be implications for staff resources

and training requirements. This will need to be monitored and reviewed throughout the year.

#### **4. Adopt a Project Management Approach and employ Development Management Tools in response to all Major Developments**

- 4.1 It is generally accepted that the most effective way of responding to major development proposals is through front loading with particular emphasis on pre-application work. Whilst Taunton Deane already operates a pre-application service, this has in the past operated on the basis that pre-application work is fitted in around the processing of applications. As a result application based work still dominates.
- 4.2 It is critical that this balance is shifted significantly. Whilst the relevant National Indicator on major application performance is currently being met, this is achieved primarily through ensuring that the less significant major applications are processed within thirteen weeks, whilst the most complex applications often still take considerably longer to determine.
- 4.3 It is therefore proposed to suggest that there be a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) approach in relation to all applications where it is concluded that a decision could not reasonably be made within thirteen weeks.
- 4.4 PPAs were proposed in the Planning White Paper as a means of speeding up the delivery of large scale applications. A protocol will be prepared (along the lines of that recently produced by South Somerset District Council), followed by a six week consultation period with key stakeholders with the aim of introducing PPAs as a means of project managing major development proposals across the County by August 2009.
- 4.5 Proposals for the various areas of major growth are at varying stages of gestation. However, there is a need for the Development Management Team to play lead role in both the formulation and implementation of Master Plans and Development Briefs in relation to the urban extensions as well as bringing forward proposals for the various Project Taunton sites.
- 4.6 The first stage in this process is to define timescales for the various pieces of work and allocate necessary resource. The Development Manager therefore needs to discuss these key issues with the relevant Corporate Director at the earliest possible opportunity and to play a lead role in subsequent discussions.
- 4.7 The Council needs to undertake a fundamental review of the pre-application service relating to the level of service provided and the charging regime. Any such review needs to take into account the implications of the Core Council Review. The timing will therefore be governed by the review process. However, any review must take into

account the work currently being undertaken by Arup in conjunction with the South West Councils.

- 4.8 It is fundamental to both the speed and the quality of the planning process that key stakeholders are engaged as early as possible in the process. However, it is also accepted that it is not always possible for all stakeholders to attend pre-application meetings with developers. A regular Development Team meeting has recently been introduced whereby key stakeholders are invited to discuss with Planning Officers the relevant issues relating to emerging proposals. This can also be used as a means of addressing potentially conflicting Section 106 bids.
- 4.9 Officers from both Taunton Deane (eg; Leisure Development Manager, Housing Enabling Manager) and other agencies (eg Somerset County Council Transport Development Group, Environment Agency) attend this meeting. This area of work needs to be developed further. It is hoped that a Council Design Champion can be found and consideration should also be given to setting up of local Design Review Panel.

## **5. Use potential downturn in application work to assist in the preparation of Development Guidance and Development Management Core Strategy Policies**

- 5.1 The economic downturn will mean additional capacity for Planning Officers, at least in the short term. The Government has consistently advised that rather than laying off staff this should be used as an opportunity to produce relevant guidance and assist with LDF preparation to put the authority in a good position to accommodate future growth. There is already a commitment from Development Management to assist in LDF preparation. This needs to be developed further once the level of resources available in Strategy is known.
- 5.2 There are various design guidance documents that need revising and updating. These include those relating to shop fronts and advertisements as well as the District-wide Design Guide which needs to be updated to accommodate innovative and sustainable methods of construction.

## **6. Review approach to monitoring Planning Conditions**

- 6.1 A critical area of the end to end delivery aspect of Development Management that needs to be reviewed is the monitoring of development. The enforcement section does some monitoring of conditions, but needs to be more focused to maximise use of limited resources.
- 6.2 The focus needs to be on major developments and systems set up to monitor compliance with key conditions such as agricultural ties and holiday let conditions. This work stream should be a priority for the



Enforcement Team once the outcome of the Core Council Review is known.

**7. To carry out a review of the format of reports to the Planning Committee**

- 7.1 Concern has been expressed in terms of the format of reports to Members. This will be reviewed in association with the development of ACOLAID. Member's views will be sought in Spring 2009.

**8. E Government**

- 8.1 The Government directs that all Local Planning Authorities must develop technology to receive, consult and notify all stakeholders involved with the planning process. Current projects include electronic submission of planning applications, householder appeals processed on-line, national consultation hub.
- 8.2 During 2009 we will continue to promote on line planning submissions through the Planning Portal with particular emphasis on supporting our regular customers. We will develop the online householder appeals process in conjunction with The Planning Inspectorate. We will work with Plantech and with the Planning Portal and other external agencies to develop procedures, policies, software and working practices to consult electronically.

**9. Management of Historic Data**

- 9.1 Development Management holds data relating to all applications from 1974 onwards. There is now a major issue with regards to the storage and retrieval of this data. Applications since 2005 are fully electronically recorded. However, prior to that very limited information is available on the CRM.
- 9.2 During 2009-2010 we will carry out a project to make recommendations for the future management of this data.

Councillor Simon Coles

# **Council Meeting – 17 February 2009**

## **Report of Councillor Jefferson Horsley – Economic Development and the Arts**

### **Part 1**

#### **1. Into Somerset**

- 1.1 There is little to report on this. The other districts and the Somerset County Council have accepted that we will remain as partners whilst not becoming members of the limited company. A separate but similar Service Level Agreement will be entered into for the Council.
- 1.2 The arrangement with the Somerset Chamber of Commerce is to continue for a further six months until September 2009 and in the interim the company is seeking tenders from the market to undertake the management of the organisation with effect from 1 October 2009. Similarly, appointment to the Board from the private sector is being advertised to make up the complement to 13!

#### **2. The Brewhouse**

- 2.1 Negotiations are taking place to see how the Board will cope with the accumulated deficit. Somerset County Council found £50,000 to fund the last quarter losses referred to in my report of February 2009.

#### **3. Economic Downturn**

- 3.1 Phil Sharratt, Ruth James and myself attended the meeting held at Exchange House on 31 March 2009. The County will be putting out information weekly on the theme “Business as usual” to attempt to overcome the gloom and doom scenario.
- 3.2 There is evidence that the southern part of Somerset is faring better than the northern part (especially Mendip) in terms of less % loss of jobs and production as the recession deepens. There will be co-ordinated attempts to ensure that we bring forward as many of the spending plans as possible especially such Building School for the Future and the Transport schemes in the pipeline. The meeting was urged not to overdo the publicity. We will have a report on how the retail offer is faring throughout the county at the next meeting.

#### **4. Project Taunton**

- 4.1 I will report on this verbally at the meeting. It is pleasing to note that developments are moving very smoothly on the Firepool site. Members will have noticed that we have taken steps to use the site as

a temporary car park in the papers which went to the Executive on 1 April 2009.

## **5. Asset Management**

- 5.1 I have to report that there has been little work done on this important aspect of my portfolio. I am concerned that despite our pleas to maximise the use of our asset base little has so far been achieved. I will report verbally at the Council on a meeting I will have had with Southwest One.

## **6. Economic Strategy**

- 6.1 Phil Sharratt will report on this more fully in Part 2. It suffices to say that good progress is being made with both the Assessment and the Envisioning Process to enable us to meet our schedule of having a Strategy in place after full consultation in the autumn. Please keep 30 April 2009 in your diaries for the first of these sessions here in The Deane House at 2.30pm.

## **7. Taunton Town Centre Company (TTCC)**

- 7.1 At their latest meeting held on 25 March 2009 it was agreed that the temporary makeover of the High Street would not occur until January 2010. The hiatus with Paul Haynes leaving as Town Centre Manager has left relationships between the Council and the TTCC strained. There is a vacuum there which both sides seem reluctant to pick up and run with.

## **8. Other Items**

- 8.1 I also believe that we must pay far greater attention to the role of the Transition Town movement is making as to how we conduct our economic futures. I am instigating regular informal meetings with Transition Taunton at their request.
- 8.2 I repeat my firm belief that Economic Strategy should be driving the Forward Planning and Local Development Framework process and not vice versa.

## **Part 2**

## **9. Local Economic Assessment**

- 9.1 A local economic assessment for Taunton Deane has been completed and the report is available for Members to view in hard copy in the Members Room or electronically from Stephanie Payne within the Economic Development Unit (01823 356534). Delays in the changeover to the new website mean that the document is not available to download from the website but members of the public may

also obtain an electronic copy of the report on the telephone number above or by email to [s.payne@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:s.payne@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

- 9.2 The report was commissioned as a first step in creating an Economic Development Strategy to 2026 to coincide with the time period of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The Government data used for the assessment is historical and therefore does not reflect the recent economic downturn. However, interpretation of the data has allowed certain assumptions to be made.
- 9.3 The results of this assessment clearly show that Taunton Deane will have to build a more competitive knowledge economy, characterized by higher levels of skills, creativity and innovation, in order to make the area a more productive and prosperous place.
- 9.4 There is an over-dependence on public sector employment that has 'squeezed out' private sector jobs which, whilst providing a cushion for the current economic downturn, poses a threat in the near future as the public purse is squeezed to recover Government investment in macro economic policy.
- 9.5 The recession will mean setbacks for Taunton Deane's outcome performance. Earnings are already low and there is an urgent need for quality private sector jobs that can create demand pressures for improving skills within the workforce, and to create attractive career ladders that will encourage young people to remain and settle within the area.
- 9.6 The general conclusion is that Taunton Deane's economic structure was weak before the recession, and the balance of high-value/low-value business activity and the balance between private sector/public sector employment have been unfavourable for some time. The recession could lead to a worsening of the private sector/public sector balance and to a lower starting point for rebuilding the private sector knowledge economy required in the future.
- 9.7 The recession has made the need for an informed and proactive long term Economic Development Strategy for Taunton Deane even more urgent and necessary.

## **10. Work Premises and Employment Land Needs Survey Headline Results**

- 10.1 A total of 7,200 questionnaires were distributed to around 4,000 businesses during January 2009 within the boundaries of Taunton Deane and to businesses within an area 10/15 miles outside of the Borough boundaries. A total of 884 questionnaires have been returned allowing the 'headline results' to be published.

- 10.2 The paper is available for Members to view in hard copy in the Members Room or electronically from Stephanie Payne within the Economic Development Unit (01823 356534). The paper is still in draft format and has not been validated so is not available to members of the public. However, once the figures have been fully interrogated it is intended that a full report will be available by the end of April 2009 in time to coincide with consultation on the report on the Envisioning process.
- 10.3 In summary, responding businesses are upbeat about the future with more than half anticipating annual growth in excess of 5% over the next five years, including 14% anticipating year-on-year growth in excess of 15%.
- 10.4 Notwithstanding this optimism, businesses are expressing concerns about their lack of competency to deal with the current business climate and a number of development areas have been identified including Financial Management, Change Management, Marketing, and Recruitment and Training.
- 10.5 The economic situation is having an impact on businesses and this is reflected in a number of ways including an increased demand for easy-in/easy-out tenure premises.
- 10.6 Nearly half of the respondents felt that Taunton Deane Borough Council were supportive of businesses but it is recognised that there is much to be done to create a more positive response from the other half.

## **11. Economic Development Envisioning Process**

- 11.1 At the beginning of March 2009 the Economic Development Unit Commenced an 'Envisioning the Future of the Taunton Deane Economy' with partners and local business leaders.
- 11.2 The report will present an economic vision for Taunton Deane based on an intensive programme of consultation during March 2009, validated by further data analysis and interrogation by Geoeconomics, the appointed consultants, and their team of analysts within the Economics Department of Birkbeck College, London.
- 11.3 The consensus view of the stakeholders is that Taunton Deane needs a 'step change' in its economic performance over the next two decades – the alternative scenario is felt to be long-term decline. The challenge that this represents, the 'inconvenient truths' and the 'headline' strategies required to achieve a more prosperous economy will be presented in the final report.
- 11.4 The first draft report will be available on limited distribution for further consultation from 30 April 2009, with the final report available from

June 2009.

## **12. Public Art and Design Consultancy Project**

- 12.1 The Economic Development Unit are hosting the independent Cultural Consultants working on behalf of the Public Art and Design Panel to review the progress in development of the Public Art Policy, to make proposals on the content of a revised guidelines document and develop an outline programme for public art on designated sites within Taunton Deane.
- 12.2 Initial recommendations will be presented to the Public Art and Design Panel on 15 April 2009.

## **13. Recession Support for Businesses**

- 13.1 The Economic Development Unit has taken a conscious decision to use the economic downturn as a period to plan for Recovery. However, we are cognisant of the needs of businesses during this difficult trading climate and are working closely with partners to provide support in the short term.
- 13.2 Regular 'Business Advice Clinics' are held in The Deane House, offering one-to-one sessions with a business adviser. The next three clinics will be held on 7 April, 14 May, and 4 June 2009.
- 13.3 On 21 April 2009 a free event will be held for businesses at Taunton School to offer essential advice, information and support on topics ranging from cashflow management to marketing. At least 10 public sector partners will be present to provide 'recession proofing' support and offering their collective assistance.
- 13.4 The Agricultural Support Officer is organising a marketing event for Farmers Market traders which will cover subjects such as attracting the public to their stall, merchandising produce, engaging customers, and best practice selling techniques, in order for participants to maximise their sales.
- 13.5 As a further response to the economic downturn, the Employment and Skills Officer is working with partners to plan a 'Business Support Week' at the end of May 2009 with a series of 10 – 12 events, seminars, and clinics over an intensive five day period across Taunton Deane.

Councillor Jefferson Horsley