

You are requested to attend a meeting of the Council to be held in The John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton on 13 April 2010 at 18:30.

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## **Agenda**

- 1 To receive the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 16 February 2010 (attached).
- 2 To report any apologies for absence.
- 3 To receive any communications.
- 4 To receive questions from Taunton Deane Electors under Standing Order 15.
- 5 To receive petitions or deputations from Taunton Deane Electors under Standing Orders 16 and 17.
- 6 Declarations of Interests. To receive declarations of personal or prejudicial interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct. The usual declarations made at meetings of Full Council are set out in the attachment.
- 7 Part I -To deal with written questions. Usually recommendations from the Executive are also dealt with at this point in the meeting. However, there is only one such recommendation which can only be considered once the press and public have been formally excluded from the meeting. This recommendation will therefore be considered at agenda item number 9.
- 8 Part II - To receive reports from the following Members of the Executive:-
  - (i) Councillor Ross Henley - Leader of the Executive;
  - (ii) Councillor Nicola Wilson - Corporate Resources;
  - (iii) Councillor Alan Wedderkopp - Community Leadership;
  - (iv) Councillor Alan Paul - Communications;
  - (v) Councillor Simon Coles - Planning and Transportation;
  - (vi) Councillor Fran Smith - Economic Development and the Arts;
  - (vii) Councillor Richard Lees - Sports, Parks and Leisure;
  - (viii) Councillor Tim Slattery - Environmental Services;
  - (ix) Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey - Housing Services.

The following items are likely to be considered after the exclusion of the press and public because of the likelihood that exempt information would otherwise be

disclosed relating to the Clause set out below of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

9 To receive the following recommendation from the Executive:-

Councillor Mrs Fran Smith - Recommendations relating to the proposed purchase of a Capital Asset in Taunton. Report to be tabled at the meeting.  
Clause 9 - Contract Negotiations.

Tonya Meers  
Legal and Democratic Services Manager

08 April 2010

Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting and listen to the discussions.

There is time set aside at the beginning of most meetings to allow the public to ask questions.

Speaking under “Public Question Time” is limited to 4 minutes per person in an overall period of 15 minutes. The Committee Administrator will keep a close watch on the time and the Chairman will be responsible for ensuring the time permitted does not overrun. The speaker will be allowed to address the Committee once only and will not be allowed to participate further in any debate.

If a member of the public wishes to address the Committee on any matter appearing on the agenda, the Chairman will normally permit this to occur when that item is reached and before the Councillors begin to debate the item.

This is more usual at meetings of the Council’s Planning Committee and details of the “rules” which apply at these meetings can be found in the leaflet “Having Your Say on Planning Applications”. A copy can be obtained free of charge from the Planning Reception Desk at The Deane House or by contacting the telephone number or e-mail address below.

If an item on the agenda is contentious, with a large number of people attending the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group.

These arrangements do not apply to exempt (confidential) items on the agenda where any members of the press or public present will be asked to leave the Committee Room.

Full Council, Executive, Committees and Task and Finish Review agendas, reports and minutes are available on our website: [www.tauntondeane.gov.uk](http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk)



Lift access to the John Meikle Room and the other Committee Rooms on the first floor of The Deane House, is available from the main ground floor entrance. Toilet facilities, with wheelchair access, are also available off the landing directly outside the Committee Rooms.



An induction loop operates to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter.

**For further information about the meeting, please contact Democratic Services on 01823 356382 or email [d.durham@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:d.durham@tauntondeane.gov.uk)**

## **Council Members:-**

Councillor P Watson  
Councillor T Slattery  
Councillor P Stone  
Councillor D Wedderkopp  
Councillor M Whitmarsh  
Councillor J Williams  
Councillor A Beaven  
Councillor R Bowrah, BEM - Mayor  
Councillor D Durdan  
Councillor K Hayward  
Councillor N Cavill  
Councillor I Morrell  
Councillor H Prior-Sankey  
Councillor F Smith  
Councillor N Stuart-Thorn  
Councillor A Wedderkopp  
Councillor N Wilson  
Councillor J Allgrove  
Councillor S Coles  
Councillor C Hill  
Councillor P Smith  
Councillor J O'Brien  
Councillor S Brooks  
Councillor G Copley  
Councillor J Court-Stenning  
Councillor P Critchard  
Councillor H Farbahi  
Councillor C Herbert  
Councillor J Horsley - Deputy Mayor  
Councillor L James  
Councillor S Lees  
Councillor T McMahon  
Councillor V Stock-Williams  
Councillor J Thorne  
Councillor M Floyd  
Councillor K Durdan  
Councillor B Denington  
Councillor M Edwards  
Councillor E Gaines  
Councillor A Govier  
Councillor C Guerrier  
Councillor T Hall  
Councillor A Paul  
Councillor R Henley - Leader of the Council  
Councillor M Hill  
Councillor E Waymouth  
Councillor D House  
Councillor N Court  
Councillor B Swaine

Councillor R Lees  
Councillor J Lewin-Harris  
Councillor J Meikle MBE  
Councillor M Mullins  
Councillor D Webber  
Councillor T Murphy  
Councillor C Bishop

## 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 16 February 2010 at 6.30 pm.

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

Also present : Mrs Anne Elder, Chairman of the Standards Committee

### 1. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council held on 8 December 2009, copies having been sent to each Member, were signed by the Mayor.

### 2. **Apologies**

Councillors Hayward, McMahon and O'Brien.

### 3. **Communications**

Councillor R Lees reported the sad news that Adrian Yarde, a long-serving employee of the Council had unexpectedly died during a minor operation. He had worked for Deane DLO for over 46 years.

On behalf of the Council, the Mayor undertook to write a letter of condolence to Mr Yarde's family.

### 4. **Public Question Time**

All of the following questions were asked in connection with proposals in the Council's Core Strategy for development in the Killams Area of Taunton which would affect the Vivary Green Wedge:-

- (a) Bidy Garstang, Taunton Friends of the Earth - Is it acceptable for Taunton Deane to seek to construct arguments claiming that in the face of pressure from developers and the Regional Spatial Strategy the clean air the Vivary Green Wedge supplies is now somehow less important than it was?

- (b) Mike Threlfall, South Road and Area Residents Association - Is the Council 100% convinced that diligence and due care has been observed in these two documents (the Core Strategy and the Sustainability Report) and would they please consider revisiting them? Can we request a formal meeting with to discuss this further?
- (c) Gary Cox - Is Taunton Deane prepared to defend the Vivary Green Wedge from development with all the powers available to them, or are they simply going to abandon without a fight the commendable principles and precedents that they themselves have established and enforced over many decades?
- (d) Bob Kirby (Wilton and Sherford Community Association) - How is it sustainable to build in the Green Wedge when there are 6,500 empty properties in Taunton?
- (e) Sharon Cox - In view of the errors in the Sustainability Report and in order to prevent the possibility of costly legal challenges, will Taunton Deane go through the whole sustainability process again and, this time, make sure that they do it correctly?
- (f) Fran Hicks - Is the provision of new housing being approached as creatively as it might?

In response, Councillor Coles requested those who had asked questions to submit them in writing to enable him to respond in full.

Councillor Coles stated that the current Core Strategy exercise was the first part of an extensive consultation process. He made reference to the views of a previous Government Inspector who had expressed the view that an urban extension had to be planned as a community. The Core Strategy had attempted to achieve this. A mixed use development at Killams would comprise 600 dwellings, not the 750 stated by the Residents' Association. A 20m wide belt of landscaping would separate the development from the Green Wedge.

He added that further public consultation was planned in the future. As far as the Core Strategy document was concerned, Councillor Coles was confident that due diligence had been exercised in its preparation.

## 5. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Brooks declared personal interests as a Member of Somerset County Council and as a Council tenant. Councillor Coles declared a personal interest as a Director of Southwest One. Councillors Govier, Paul, Mrs Waymouth and D Wedderkopp declared personal interests as Members of Somerset County Council. Councillor Henley declared personal interests both as a Member of the Somerset County Council and as an employee of Job Centre Plus. Councillors Mullins and Slattery declared personal interests as Members of the Somerset Waste Board. Councillor Slattery also declared a personal interest as an employee of Sedgemoor District Council. Councillor Miss James declared a personal interest as an employee of Viridor. Councillor Prior-Sankey declared personal interests as a Member of Somerset County Council, the Supporting People Advisory Group and as someone who

rented a Council-owned garage. Councillors Mrs Court-Stenning, Mrs Hill, Mrs Smith and Stone declared personal interests as employees of Somerset County Council. Councillor Mrs Hill also declared a personal interest as a Council tenant. Councillor Mrs Wilson declared a personal interest as an employee of Job Centre Plus. Councillor Bishop declared a personal interest as a Member of Oake Village Hall and Recreation Committee. Councillor Cavill declared a prejudicial interest as he was the owner of land at Monkton Heathfield which could be affected by the Core Strategy. Councillor Gaines declared a personal interest as an employee of the Link Centre at Halcon, Taunton.

6. **Borough Council By-Election – 28 January 2010**

The Democratic Services Manager, on behalf of the Returning Officer, reported that Councillor Ben Swaine of Glenthorne Road, Taunton had been elected as a Councillor for the Lyngford Ward.

7. **Windfall Value Added Tax (VAT) Receipt**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning a one off windfall VAT receipt of £649,119.

HM Revenue and Customs had altered the regulations relating to claims for overpaid VAT. Following a House of Lords judgement it had been possible for claims to be made back as far as 1974 up to the date that the three year cap was brought in. The cut off for these claims was 31 March 2009

The Council had engaged Pricewaterhouse Coopers to conduct a review of VAT activity on a “no win no fee” basis, removing any risk of paying Pricewaterhouse Coopers unless benefits were identified.

The Council had now been able to reclaim overpaid VAT and associated interest in several areas including excess parking charges, cemetery supplies and leisure admissions amounting to £783,833.

The charge made by Pricewaterhouse Coopers for this work was £134,714 resulting in a net receipt of £649,119.

This receipt was a one off receipt and therefore should not be used to fund ongoing budget issues.

**Resolved** that:-

- (a) a supplementary estimate for income of £606,718 be approved;
- (b) a supplementary estimate for expenditure of £606,718 to fund the one-off cost of implementing Phases Two and Four of the Core Council Review (being £13,718 more than originally reported to the Executive due to an unforeseen change in the profile of staff redundancies) be approved; and



(c) the transfer of the balance of £42,401 to General Fund Reserves at the year end be also approved.

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

Councillor Morrell asked the following questions:-

“Apart from Longrun Farm, in the eight years since it was established what has Project Taunton tangibly achieved with respect to actual physical regeneration on the ground?

How much has Project Taunton cost to date and what is the breakdown of this expenditure?

What benchmarks have been set to ensure that the Project Taunton Delivery Team is delivering value for taxpayers’ money?

As leader of the Council, do you feel that the £798,000 spent to date on Somerset Square represents good value for tax payers’ money?

Considering the Somerset Square project overran its initial £300,000 budget by some £500,000, will you ensure a comprehensive forensic external audit is undertaken as to why this sum was not identified at the start and what this expenditure relates to?

As leader of the Council, do you feel that the £3,800,000 proposed to be spent on removing the car park at Castle Green represents good value for tax payers’ money?

Where will the annual £100,000 shortfall in revenue and £20,000 maintenance cost come from once the car park at Castle Green is no longer available? Please can you identify the new revenue generating schemes which will address this net £120,000 per annum loss.”

Councillor Henley replied as follows:-

“What I don’t think Councillor Morrell understands is that regeneration has a long / medium term delivery time – a huge amount of work needs to occur before you see the diggers start. We need to be planning for the longer term or nothing will ever happen.

(1) It is 4.5 years (not 8) since the delivery team were in place. These are the projects:-

- Flooding – negotiate away from the 6 dams suggested by the Environment Agency (which would have cost £35,000,000) and obtain the Regional Development Agency (RDA) finance to (a) buy the land and (b) do the works;

- Procurement of development partner for Firepool. Purchase of third party properties needed for the development – all with funding negotiated from the RDA (£3,000,000). Demolition work, refurbishment of auction centre for marketing suite and lettable area (4000 sq ft unit). Planning application for public realm and landscaping on Priory Bridge Road Car Park;
  - Firepool Lock – 110 affordable homes will be built here due to Growth Point (GP) funding of the road – GP funding bid for and won by Project Taunton Team;
  - Cricket Club – enabled to purchase Taunton Deane land – worked together on Pegasus development and landscaping of Somerset Square area;
  - Planning consent for Castle Green;
  - Exclusivity agreement with owners of retail centre – working up this scheme will be 3 – 4 years;
  - Tangier – in current discussion with Musgrove and Somerset College about provision of student and newly qualified doctor and nurses accommodation; and
  - Worked with Somerset County Council (SCC) on evidence base for Third Way and Northern Inner Distributor Road. Both awaiting Department for Transport funding.
- (2) It has cost Taunton Deane the original input of £660,000 (from Planning Delivery Grant not the base budget) in 2004/2005 along with similar funding from SCC and RDA. Since then Taunton Deane has put in £300,000 from the sale of land to the Cricket Club towards Somerset Square, but nothing else from its own budget. The Delivery Team and its activity has been funded either from RDA funding or from Growth Points. A total of £5,800,000 from RDA and £6,000,000 from Growth Points means £11,800,000 capital funding plus £600,000 revenue.
- (3) Not sure what you mean by this – however, the Project Taunton Plan is something that was the subject to huge amount of public consultation at its formation – the Vision for Taunton Commission. The team is tasked with delivery against this plan. In terms of local taxpayers this has been excellent value for money as the bulk of funding has not had to be found locally but has come either from regional pots (RDA) or Central Government (Growth Points). Both the RDA and Government (Department of Communities and Local Government) are content with the progress that has been made as shown by their continuing willingness to fund Project Taunton delivery.
- (4) Yes, if we want to see high quality public space in Taunton then we have to pay the price. The costs at Somerset Square were significantly increased due to the foundations that needed to be put in to allow the Brewhouse Theatre to continue to receive its lorry deliveries to the back stage door. Do not forget that £250,000 of this was from the developer.
- (5) No – there is no need to. The original estimate was £300,000 plus the £250,000 developer contribution (total £550,000) prior to any work being

done on the design or the materials that would be required. Once this was done – all costs approved by a Quantity Surveyor – a further report was made to the Executive in February 2009 requesting further funding from Growth points to be able to complete the project to a high quality specification. This was approved. In fact the project came in under the final budget.

- (6) What is better than giving the town a fantastic heart to it – a public space that local people and visitors can enjoy and be proud of and will provide a fantastic setting for the re-opened and re-furbished Museum of Somerset?
- (7) These issues are picked up in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and in the budget setting process. The revenue is picked up in this year's budget and we will pick the maintenance up in next year's budget. All of our savings plans contribute to any shortfall in the MTFP, not a particular saving against a particular gap”.

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

### (a) **Gambling Act 2005 – Revised Statement of Principles**

The Gambling Act 2005 placed a duty on all Licensing Authorities to produce a Statement of Principles (also known as the Gambling Policy).

Each Licensing Authority was required to review this policy document at least every three years and take into account the views of those representing the holders of existing licences and certificates, local residents, businesses and the Police.

Taunton Deane's 2007 Statement of Principles had recently been updated in accordance with the Statutory Guidance and widespread consultations had been undertaken.

On the motion of Councillor Slattery, it was

**Resolved** that the revised Statement of Principles be approved.

### (b) **Fees and Charges 2010/2011**

Consideration had been given to the proposed fees and charges for 2010/2011 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 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 Slattery, it was

**Resolved** that the fees and charges for 2010/2011 in respect of Cemeteries and Crematorium, Waste Services, Housing and Licensing, as submitted, be agreed.

### (c) **Corporate Strategy 2010-2013**

As well as providing direction for the Council, the Corporate Strategy 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.

Four new Corporate Aims (Priorities) had been included in the Strategy to replace the Council’s ETCHED (Economy, Transport, Crime, Healthy Living, Environment and Delivery) aims. These new aims were:-

- Tackling Deprivation and Sustainable Community Development;
- Regeneration (economic development and housing growth);
- Affordable Housing; and
- Climate Change.

These aims were all directly related to the growth agenda and, as a result, an amendment has been made to the Council’s Vision to reflect the importance of the growth agenda and the possibilities that it would provide. The Vision now read:-

“Taunton Deane would be recognised nationally as a place that was developing in a sustainable way, securing a better life and future for its people, businesses and communities”.

Supporting the Corporate Aims were nine Corporate Objectives and a number of key activities.

Themes and Service Areas would need to work closely together to deliver the Corporate Aims. It was intended to closely monitor performance against the

Strategy in order to understand how effective the Council was in delivering the aims and objectives.

On the motion of Councillor Mrs Wilson, it was

**Resolved** that the Corporate Strategy 2010-2013 be adopted.

**(d) Minimum Revenue Provision**

Before the start of each financial year, the Council was required to determine the basis on which it made provision from revenue for the repayment of borrowing undertaken for the purpose of financing capital expenditure.

This annual provision, known as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), was designed to ensure that authorities made prudent provision to cover the ongoing costs of their borrowing.

In 2008, the Government became less prescriptive offering Councils a number of options for calculating MRP. For the financial year 2009/2010, the Council determined to calculate MRP as follows:-

- for supported borrowing, 4% on outstanding debt; and
- for unsupported borrowing, the debt associated with asset divided by the estimated useful life of the asset.

On the motion of Councillor Henley, it was

**Resolved** that the basis of calculating the Minimum Revenue Provision in 2009/2010 be retained for 2010/2011.

**(e) Core Council Review – Independent Review of Deane DLO**

In April 2009 the Council approved an alternative approach to completing the Core Council Review which included the commissioning of independent external expertise for Theme 3 of the Core Council Review – to develop options for the future of services provided by Deane DLO.

Turner and Townsend PLC were appointed to carry out the review after a rigorous procurement and selection process. The company's report set out the work that has been undertaken to establish the feasibility of six main options:-

- Outsourcing – Where the Council contracted with a private sector company to provide services on the Council's behalf;
- Joint Venture – Where the Council formed a new organisation with a private sector partner to deliver services;

- Shared Service – Where the Council joined with other local authorities or public sector partners to deliver services;
- Lead Authority – Where the Council transferred activities to another Local Authority who delivered services on the Council's behalf. Alternatively, other Local Authorities could transfer services to the Council to provide services on their behalf;
- Internal Transformation – Where the Council invested in services to achieve large scale improvements and efficiency; and
- As Is – Where services continued as now and were subject to continuing financial pressure requiring annual incremental change.

Turner and Townsend had recommended that the Council should follow a detailed procurement process with full outsourcing to a private sector supplier as the preferred way forward.

In recommending outsourcing, Turner and Townsend were proposing an implementation process which provided scope to implement the potential alternatives of joint venture or internal transformation, if the business case for outsourcing did not meet the Council's requirements.

All options, except 'As Is', had one-off cost implications for implementation. For the outsourcing option, the one-off cost would be up to £200,000, with an implementation timescale of approximately 12 months.

The one-off costs for implementing alternative options of joint venture and internal transformation would be up to £300,000 and £600,000 respectively.

The potential annual savings arising from the recommended outsourcing was estimated at £278,000, which would be achieved within a time span of 24–36 months.

On the motion of Councillor Henley, it was

**Resolved** that:-

- (a) the consultants' recommended approach, starting from the position that full outsourcing was the preferred way forward for Deane DLO services be approved;
- (b) the further development of internal transformation as a benchmark comparison option, to be presented to Members alongside the results from (a) for further scrutiny and final decision, be approved; and
- (c) a sum of £225,000 (£113,000 from the Housing Revenue Account Reserve; £84,000 from the General Fund Reserve; and £28,000 from the Deane DLO Reserve) to pursue the approach outlined in (a) and (b) above and to recognise the potential requirement for further

implementation funds, the amount being dependent on the option ultimately agreed by Members, be also approved.

**(f) General Fund Revenue Estimates 2010/2011**

The Executive had previously considered its 2010/2011 budget proposals. It contained details on:-

- (i) the General Fund Revenue Budget proposals for 2010/2011, 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 Corporate Scrutiny Committee had also considered the draft budget proposals at its meeting on 21 January 2010.

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 2009/2010.

It was a requirement for the Council to prepare not only budgets for the following financial year but to also provide indicative figures into future years. The Medium Term Financial Plan provided an indication of the expected budget gap going forward into 2011/2012 and a summary of this position was submitted.

These figures had been prepared on the assumption of a 2.5% increase in Council Tax each year, including 2011/2012. However, the Medium Term Financial Plan also assumed that Government support would be hit hard in the next 3-year financial settlement, due to the overall state of the economy and pressures on Government spending and debt. The Council was therefore planning on the basis of a 10% reduction in 2011/2012 followed by a further 5% reduction in 2012/2013. A clearer idea of funding prospects was likely in the latter part of 2010.

The estimated expenses chargeable to the non-parished area of Taunton in 2010/2011 amounted to £47,047, an increase of 50% on the Band D equivalent, and this formed part of the total net expenditure of the Council. The precept in 2009/2010 was £30,620.

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 were important as they detailed the expected borrowing requirement for both the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account. They also set the operational boundaries for both the borrowing/investment levels and interest rate exposures for the Council.

The Council's Section 151 Officer had a duty to comment, as part of the budget setting process on the robustness of the budget and the adequacy of reserves. In her response, Maggie Hammond had stated that she believed the Council's reserves to be adequate and the budget estimates used in preparing the 2010/2011 budget to be as robust as possible.

Moved by Councillor Henley, seconded by Councillor Brooks that the budget proposals be amended as follows:-

- (i) **Car park income** – reduced losses as proposed extension to Silk Mills Park and Ride was not proceeding . This would save the Council £28,000;
- (ii) **Castle Green Maintenance** – impact deferred to 2011/2012. A further saving of £22,000;
- (iii) **Reduce funding for the Local Strategic Partnership.** This would save £15,000 in the forthcoming financial year;
- (iv) **Funding for the Link Partnership and North Taunton Partnership** towards Service Level Agreements (in addition to contributions from existing budget). The budget would be £10,000;
- (v) **Rural deprivation** funding of £5,000;
- (vi) **Public conveniences:** Recommendation not to close the toilets at Rockwell Green, Bishops Lydeard, Milverton Recreation Ground and Milverton Creedwell Orchard and not to seek a contribution from the West Somerset Railway for the public conveniences there. The cost would be £21,000;
- (vii) **Carbon Neutral projects.** The budget for this would be £19,000; and
- (viii) **Wiveliscombe Community Partnership** - Top up of Service Level Agreement. The funding for this would be £10,000.

The amendment was put and was carried.

Moved by Councillor Williams, seconded by Councillor Bishop that the budget proposals be amended by the alternative budget prepared by the Conservative Group. The amendments took the form of:-

- (i) **Reinstate Savings Plan – Closure/transfer of public conveniences**  
It was proposed to reinstate this £20,100 saving in the 2010/2011 budget.
- (ii) **Reinstate Savings Plan – Voluntary Services Grant**  
The budget sought to reduce the current grants on offer to voluntary services by £9,250. It was proposed to reinstate this saving.
- (iii) **Reinstate Savings Plan – Stop Food after Annual Council**  
It was proposed to reinstate this £1,000 saving.
- (iv) **Reinstate Savings Plan – Climate Change Initiatives**  
Climate Change was a Corporate Priority. It was proposed to reinstate this £1,250 saving.
- (v) **Amend Savings Plan - Move Planning Committee to 6pm and stop providing food**  
The original savings plan was a saving £2,000. It was proposed to add £1,000 back to the budget for 2010/2011 to allow some refreshments to be provided.



- (vi) **Amend Savings Plan – Reduce Hanging Basket provision by 25%**  
It was proposed to add £6,000 to the budget to reinstate hanging baskets in High Street and Shuttern, Taunton.
- (vii) **Reduction in Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Funding**  
It was proposed to reduce the Council's funding to the LSP by £15,000.
- (viii) **New Initiative – Somerset Building Trust**  
It was proposed to add £1,200 to the budget as a tangible gesture of support for the good work the Trust did.
- (ix) **New Initiative – Climate Change Initiatives**  
It was felt that the new Corporate Aim should be fully supported by adding £11,200 to the 2010/2011 budget.
- (x) **New Initiative –Town Centre Seating**  
To enable some further seating to be provided in Taunton Town Centre it was proposed to add £7,500 to the budget.
- (xi) **New Initiative – Surface Remedial Works to Council Car Parks**  
To repair surface damage to public car parks caused by the recent severe weather, it was proposed that £2,500 was added to the budget.
- (xii) **HRA Contribution to Youth Initiatives**  
It was proposed to add £15,000 from the Housing Revenue Account to the 2010/2011 budget for Youth Initiatives.

The Mayor adjourned the meeting to allow Councillors the opportunity to consider the above alternative proposals from the Conservative Group.

On the resumption of the meeting, 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 2010/2011 as shown in the original report to Full Council and as amended above, be approved;
- (2) the transfer of any potential underspend in 2009/2010 back to General Fund reserves be approved;
- (3) the proposed 2010/2011 budget set out in the original report to Full Council and as amended above, being Authority expenditure of £14,050,480 and Special Expenses of £47,050 in accordance with the Local Government Act 1992 be approved;
- (4) The predicted General Fund Reserve balance at 31 March 2010 of £1,419,000 be noted;
- (5) The forecast budget position within the Medium Term Financial Plan be Noted; and
- (6) The Prudential Indicators for 2010/2011 as set out in the report be agreed.

**(g) Capital Programme 2010/2011 Onwards and revisions to the 2009/2010 Programme**

Consideration had been given to the proposed General Fund (GF) and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programmes for the period 2010/2011 to 2014/2015.

For the General Fund the existing unallocated resources available were £65,000. It was however likely that some future capital receipts would arise from the sale of the existing Nursery site in Mount Street, Taunton.

For all Housing schemes, both GF and HRA, the estimated resources available for 2010/2011 amounted to £6,547,000. The proposed capital programme for 2010/2011 amounted to £6,154,000. The unallocated resources of £393,000 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.

A revised Capital Programme budget for 2009/2010 had also been considered by the Executive.

The original budget for the year for the General Fund Capital Programme had originally been set at £1,954,930. It was now proposed to increase this budget to £3,161,310 to take account of recent decisions made relating to the new Building Control IT System (Acolaid) and in respect of proposed investment in new play and youth facilities. The figure also included slippage on various schemes from 2008/2009.

The HRA Capital Programme's original budget for 2009/2010 totalled £5,555,000. It was proposed to increase this budget to £6,724,000 due entirely to slippage on the various schemes from the previous financial year.

On the motion of Councillor Henley it was

**Resolved** that:-

- (1) the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Capital Programmes for 2010/2011 be agreed;
- (2) The revised 2009/2010 General Fund Capital Programme budget of £3,161,550 be approved; and
- (3) The revised 2009/2010 Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme budget be also approved.

**(h) Council Tax Setting 2010/2011**

The Council was required to make an annual determination, which set its gross expenditure and gross income (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 2010/2011 amounted to £47,047 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 £14,519,470 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 £1,105,826 and the Non Domestic Rates Distribution (NDR) from the national pool, amounting to £7,615,394.

The net amount, having taking the collection fund position into account, of £5,928,660 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 January 2010.

The Council Tax for the Borough (excluding Parish Precepts and Special Expenses for the non-parished area) was £135.19, an increase of £3.30 (2.5%) compared to the 2009/2010 Council Tax. The total Council Tax, including the Somerset County Council, Police and Fire Authorities precepts was still subject to confirmation.

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, the Police and Fire Authorities, which was to be advised:-

(1) That it be noted that at its meeting on 13 January 2010 the Executive calculated the following amounts for the year 2010/2011 in accordance with the regulations made under Section 33(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended):-

- (i) 40,384.49 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	76.05	Neroche	255.85
Ashbrittle	97.07	North Curry	742.96

Bathealton	84.57	Norton Fitzwarren	777.50
Bishops Hull	1,072.38	Nynehead	156.55
Bishops Lydeard / Cothelstone	1,943.65	Oake	333.46
Bradford on Tone	283.61	Otterford	168.39
Burrowbridge	204.78	Pitminster	459.04
Cheddon Fitzpaine	648.71	Ruishton/ Thornfalcon	615.34
Chipstable	124.72	Sampford Arundel	131.90
Churchstanton	331.27	Staplegrove	714.77
Combe Florey	122.01	Stawley	131.00
Comeytrove	2,086.27	Stoke St Gregory	387.38
Corfe	134.15	Stoke St Mary	206.72
Creech St Michael	950.07	Taunton	16,112.21
Durston	59.02	Trull	1,025.27
Fitzhead	121.87	Wellington	4,649.24
Halse	144.75	Wellington (Without)	304.46
Hatch Beauchamp	261.29	West Bagborough	163.62
Kingston St Mary	446.32	West Buckland	446.17
Langford Budville	238.40	West Hatch	143.28
Lydeard St Lawrence/ Tolland	200.64	West Monkton	1,115.05
Milverton	600.46	Wiveliscombe	1,112.28

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.

- (iii) That the following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2010/2011 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:-

- (a) £79,981,814                      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) £65,462,344 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) £14,519,470 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) £8,591,010 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) £146.80 
$$\frac{(c) - (d)}{(1) \text{ above}} = \frac{14,519,470 - 8,591,010}{40,384.49}$$
 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) £468,990 being the aggregate amount of all special

items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.  
(*Parish Precepts and Special Expenses*).

(g) £135.19

$$\frac{(e) - (f)}{(1) \text{ above}} = 146.80 - \frac{468,990}{40,384.49}$$

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

(h)

Ash Priors	135.19	Neroche	149.07
Ashbrittle	145.49	North Curry	157.40
Bathealton	142.28	Norton Fitzwarren	164.15
Bishops Hull	153.84	Nynehead	157.55
Bishops Lydeard / Cothelstone	152.10	Oake	149.43
Bradford on Tone	154.58	Otterford	135.19
Burrowbridge	158.47	Pitminster	151.57
Cheddon Fitzpaine	144.44	Ruishton/ Thornfalcon	156.32
Chipstable	149.22	Sampford Arundel	168.85
Churchstanton	158.19	Staplegrove	149.18
Combe Florey	148.30	Stawley	153.51
Comeytrowe	147.17	Stoke St Gregory	150.68
Corfe	146.37	Stoke St Mary	149.74
Creech St Michael	153.35	Taunton	138.11
Durston	135.19	Trull	148.85
Fitzhead	166.86	Wellington	153.19

Halse	147.28	Wellington (Without)	151.28
Hatch Beauchamp	152.41	West Bagborough	147.41
Kingston St Mary	148.63	West Buckland	153.12
Langford Budville	151.97	West Hatch	150.06
Lydeard St Lawrence / Tolland	151.14	West Monkton	161.90
Milverton	154.34	Wiveliscombe	153.17

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 (2) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items related. *(Council Taxes at Band D for Borough, Parish and Special Expenses)*.

(i) See overleaf

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)*.

(a)

2010/11 by Parish by Band at 2.5%

Shaded figures represent indicative data only

Valuation Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Ash Priors	90.13	105.15	120.17	135.19	165.23	195.27	225.32	270.38
Ashbrittle	96.99	113.16	129.32	145.49	177.82	210.15	242.48	290.98
Bathealton	94.86	110.66	126.47	142.28	173.90	205.51	237.14	284.56
Bishops Hull	102.56	119.66	136.75	153.84	188.02	222.21	256.40	307.68
Bishops Lydeard/Cothelstone	101.40	118.30	135.20	152.10	185.90	219.70	253.50	304.20
Bradford on Tone	103.06	120.23	137.41	154.58	188.93	223.28	257.64	309.16
Burrowbridge	105.65	123.26	140.86	158.47	193.68	228.90	264.12	316.94
Cheddon Fitzpaine	96.30	112.34	128.39	144.44	176.54	208.63	240.74	288.88
Chipstable	99.48	116.06	132.64	149.22	182.38	215.54	248.70	298.44
Churchstanton	105.46	123.04	140.61	158.19	193.34	228.49	263.65	316.38
Combe Florey	98.87	115.35	131.82	148.30	181.25	214.21	247.17	296.60
Comeytrove	98.12	114.47	130.82	147.17	179.87	212.57	245.29	294.34
Corfe	97.58	113.85	130.11	146.37	178.89	211.42	243.95	292.74
Creech St Michael	102.24	119.27	136.31	153.35	187.43	221.50	255.59	306.70



Durston	90.13	105.15	120.17	135.19	165.23	195.27	225.32	270.38
Fitzhead	111.24	129.78	148.32	166.86	203.94	241.02	278.10	333.72
Halse	98.19	114.55	130.92	147.28	180.01	212.73	245.47	294.56
Hatch Beauchamp	101.61	118.54	135.48	152.41	186.28	220.14	254.02	304.82
Kingston St Mary	99.09	115.60	132.12	148.63	181.66	214.68	247.72	297.26
Langford Budville	101.32	118.20	135.09	151.97	185.74	219.51	253.29	303.94
Lydeard St Lawrence/Tolland	100.76	117.56	134.35	151.14	184.72	218.31	251.90	302.28
Milverton	102.90	120.04	137.19	154.34	188.64	222.93	257.24	308.68
Neroche	99.38	115.95	132.51	149.07	182.19	215.32	248.45	298.14
North Curry	104.94	122.42	139.91	157.40	192.38	227.35	262.34	314.80
Norton Fitzwarren	109.44	127.67	145.91	164.15	200.63	237.10	273.59	328.30
Nynehead	105.04	122.54	140.05	157.55	192.56	227.57	262.59	315.10
Oake	99.62	116.23	132.83	149.43	182.63	215.84	249.05	298.86
Otterford	90.13	105.15	120.17	135.19	165.23	195.27	225.32	270.38
Pitminster	101.05	117.89	134.73	151.57	185.25	218.93	252.62	303.14
Ruishton/Thornfalcon	104.22	121.58	138.95	156.32	191.06	225.79	260.54	312.64

Sampford Arundel	112.57	131.33	150.09	168.85	206.37	243.89	281.42	337.70
Staplegrove	99.46	116.03	132.61	149.18	182.33	215.48	248.64	298.36
Stawley	102.34	119.40	136.45	153.51	187.62	221.73	255.85	307.02
Stoke St Gregory	100.46	117.20	133.94	150.68	184.16	217.64	251.14	301.36
Stoke St Mary	99.83	116.47	133.10	149.74	191.06	216.29	249.57	299.48
Taunton	92.08	107.42	122.77	138.11	206.37	199.49	230.19	276.22
Trull	99.24	115.77	132.31	148.85	181.93	215.00	248.09	297.70
Wellington	102.13	119.15	136.17	153.19	187.23	221.27	255.32	306.38
Wellington Without	100.86	117.66	134.47	151.28	184.90	218.51	252.14	302.56
West Bagborough	98.28	114.65	131.03	147.41	180.17	212.92	245.69	294.82
West Buckland	102.08	119.10	136.11	153.12	187.14	221.17	255.20	306.24
West Hatch	100.04	116.72	133.39	150.06	183.40	216.75	250.10	300.12
West Monkton	107.94	125.92	143.91	161.90	197.88	233.85	269.84	323.80
Wiveliscombe	102.12	119.13	136.15	153.17	187.21	221.24	255.29	306.34

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 2010/11 the Somerset County Council, the Avon and Somerset Police Authority and the Somerset and Devon Fire & Rescue Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Sect

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 & Somerset Police Authority	112.02	130.69	149.36	168.03	205.37	242.71	280.05	336.06
Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority	47.85	55.82	63.80	71.77	87.72	103.67	119.62	143.54

Valuation Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Ash Priors	934.86	1,090.67	1,246.48	1,402.29	1,713.91	2,025.53	2,337.15	2,804.58
Ashbrittle	941.73	1,098.68	1,255.64	1,412.59	1,726.50	2,040.41	2,354.32	2,825.18
Bathealton	939.59	1,096.18	1,252.78	1,409.38	1,722.58	2,035.77	2,348.97	2,818.76
Bishops Hull	947.29	1,105.18	1,263.06	1,420.94	1,736.70	2,052.47	2,368.23	2,841.88
Bishops Lydeard/Cothelstone	946.13	1,103.82	1,261.51	1,419.20	1,734.57	2,049.96	2,365.33	2,838.40
Bradford on Tone	947.79	1,105.75	1,263.72	1,421.68	1,737.61	2,053.54	2,369.47	2,843.36
Burrowbridge	950.38	1,108.78	1,267.17	1,425.57	1,742.36	2,059.16	2,375.96	2,851.14
Cheddon Fitzpaine	941.03	1,097.86	1,254.70	1,411.54	1,725.21	2,038.89	2,352.57	2,823.08
Chipstable	944.21	1,101.58	1,258.95	1,416.32	1,731.06	2,045.80	2,360.54	2,832.64

Churchstanton	950.20	1,108.56	1,266.92	1,425.29	1,742.02	2,058.75	2,375.49	2,850.58
Combe Florey	943.60	1,100.87	1,258.13	1,415.40	1,729.93	2,044.47	2,359.01	2,830.80
Comeytrove	942.85	1,099.99	1,257.13	1,414.27	1,728.55	2,042.83	2,357.12	2,828.54
Corfe	942.31	1,099.37	1,256.42	1,413.47	1,727.57	2,041.68	2,355.79	2,826.94
Creech St Michael	946.97	1,104.79	1,262.62	1,420.45	1,736.11	2,051.76	2,367.42	2,840.90
Durston	934.86	1,090.67	1,246.48	1,402.29	1,713.91	2,025.53	2,337.15	2,804.58
Fitzhead	955.97	1,115.30	1,274.63	1,433.96	1,752.62	2,071.28	2,389.94	2,867.92
Halse	942.92	1,100.07	1,257.23	1,414.38	1,728.69	2,042.99	2,357.30	2,828.76
Hatch Beauchamp	946.34	1,104.06	1,261.79	1,419.51	1,734.96	2,050.40	2,365.85	2,839.02
Kingston St Mary	943.82	1,101.13	1,258.43	1,415.73	1,730.34	2,044.94	2,359.56	2,831.46
Langford Budville	946.05	1,103.72	1,261.40	1,419.07	1,734.42	2,049.77	2,365.12	2,838.14
Lydeard St Lawrence/Tolland	945.49	1,103.08	1,260.66	1,418.24	1,733.40	2,048.57	2,363.73	2,836.48
Milverton	947.63	1,105.57	1,263.50	1,421.44	1,737.32	2,053.19	2,369.07	2,842.88
Neroche	944.11	1,101.47	1,258.82	1,416.17	1,730.87	2,045.57	2,360.28	2,832.34
North Curry	949.67	1,107.94	1,266.22	1,424.50	1,741.05	2,057.61	2,374.17	2,849.00
Norton Fitzwarren	954.17	1,113.20	1,272.22	1,431.25	1,749.31	2,067.36	2,385.42	2,862.50

Nynehead	949.77	1,108.06	1,266.36	1,424.65	1,741.23	2,057.82	2,374.42	2,849.30
Oake	944.36	1,101.75	1,259.14	1,416.53	1,731.31	2,046.10	2,360.88	2,833.06
Otterford	934.86	1,090.67	1,246.48	1,402.29	1,713.91	2,025.53	2,337.15	2,804.58
Pitminster	945.78	1,103.41	1,261.04	1,418.67	1,733.93	2,049.19	2,364.45	2,837.34
Ruishton/Thornfalcon	948.95	1,107.10	1,265.26	1,423.42	1,739.74	2,056.05	2,372.37	2,846.84
Sampford Arundel	957.30	1,116.85	1,276.40	1,435.95	1,755.05	2,074.15	2,393.25	2,871.90
Staplegrove	944.19	1,101.55	1,258.92	1,416.28	1,731.01	2,045.74	2,360.47	2,832.56
Stawley	947.07	1,104.92	1,262.77	1,420.61	1,736.30	2,051.99	2,367.68	2,841.22
Stoke St Gregory	945.19	1,102.72	1,260.25	1,417.78	1,732.84	2,047.90	2,362.97	2,835.56
Stoke St Mary	944.56	1,101.99	1,259.41	1,416.84	1,739.74	2,046.55	2,361.40	2,833.68
Taunton	936.81	1,092.94	1,249.08	1,405.21	1,755.05	2,029.75	2,342.02	2,810.42
Trull	943.97	1,101.29	1,258.62	1,415.95	1,730.61	2,045.25	2,359.92	5,531.90
Wellington	946.86	1,104.67	1,262.48	1,420.29	1,735.91	2,051.53	2,367.15	2,840.58
Wellington Without	945.59	1,103.18	1,260.79	1,418.38	1,733.58	2,048.77	2,363.97	2,836.76
West Bagborough	943.01	1,100.18	1,257.34	1,414.51	1,728.85	2,043.18	2,357.52	2,829.02
West Buckland	946.81	1,104.62	1,262.42	1,420.22	1,735.82	2,051.43	2,367.03	2,840.44

West Hatch	944.77	1,102.24	1,259.70	1,417.16	1,732.08	2,047.00	2,361.93	2,834.32
West Monkton	952.67	1,111.44	1,270.22	1,429.00	1,746.56	2,064.10	2,381.67	2,858.00
Wiveliscombe	946.85	1,104.66	1,262.46	1,420.27	1,735.89	2,051.50	2,367.12	2,840.54

**(h) Housing Revenue Account, Revenue Estimates and Rent Levels and Deane Helpline for the 2010/2011 Financial Year**

Consideration had been given to the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the 2010/2011 Financial Year which showed a working balance of £2,545,800. It also included details of the proposed new rent charges for the year and provided information on the Deane Helpline Trading Account.

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee had considered the 2010/2011 draft budget at its meeting on 21 January 2010 where no formal recommendations to change the HRA budget were made. The Tenants Forum has also considered the report.

On the motion of Councillor Prior-Sankey, it was

**Resolved** that the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2010/2011 be agreed.

**(i) Digital Compliance : Deane Helpline**

Consideration had been given to a proposal to allocate sufficient capital investment for the supply of new equipment to ensure that all Lifeline equipment operated by the Deane Helpline was digitally compliant.

It was estimated that approximately 173 individual properties (hard-wire schemes or dispersed alarms) within Taunton Deane required upgrading.

The Executive had agreed that a capital allocation of £35,000 to this project from existing revenue resources should be approved.

On the motion of Councillor Prior-Sankey, it was

**Resolved** that this change to the capital programme be agreed.

**10. 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:-

- Core Council Review;
- The Budget;
- Project Taunton
- Lyngford By-Election;

- Britain in Bloom;
- Deane DLO;
- Meetings.

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

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

- Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership;
- The Paintball Project;
- CCTV Cameras;
- A Neighbourhood Pathfinder Bid;
- Wellington Restorative Justice Panel 2008 - 2010;
- Taunton Restorative Justice Panel;
- Local Strategic Partnership – Infrastructure Planning, Deprivation and Climate Change.

(iii) **Communications (Councillor Paul)**

Councillor Paul's report covered the following topics:-

- The Deane Dispatch;
- Local Government Communications Seminar;
- Somerset Public Service Communications Group;
- Press Releases.

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

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

- Pedestrianisation of Taunton Town Centre;
- Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Site Allocations;
- Southwest One;
- Houses in Multiple Occupation to be brought under Planning control;
- Planning Application Fees Frozen;
- Planning Team Changes.

(v) **Economic Development and the Arts (Councillor Mrs Smith)**

The report from Councillor Mrs Smith covered:-

- Core Council Review – Team Changes;
- Economic Development Strategy;
- Rural Retail Support;
- Local Action for Rural Communities;



- Arts;
- Tourism;
- Project Taunton.

(vi) **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;
- Parks;
- Tone Leisure (Taunton Deane) Limited Activities.

(vii) **Environmental Services (Councillor Slattery)**

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

- Environmental Protection Team;
- Food and Health and Safety Team;
- Waste Management.

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

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

- Farewell to Chief Housing Officer – John Williams FCIH;
- Appointment of new Housing Services Lead;
- Tenant Services Management Board;
- Home Improvement Agency Contract;
- Housing Subsidy Reform : “The Offer”;
- Shrinking Homes;
- Developments at Parmin Close, Ruskin Close and Victoria Gate, Taunton;
- Emerging Corporate Priority – Affordable Housing.

(ix) **Resources (Councillor Mrs Wilson)**

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

- Southwest One Customer Contact Highlights;
- Update on progress with Investors in People Action Plan;
- Performance and Client Team Update;
- Revenues and Benefits Service Unit.

(Councillors Morrell, Mullins, Govier and Swaine left the meeting at 9.22 pm, 9.31 pm, 9.32 pm and 9.40 pm respectively.)

(The meeting ended at 9.42 pm.)

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

### **Full Council**

- **Members of Somerset County Council – Councillors Brooks, Govier, Henley, McMahon, Paul, Prior-Sankey, Mrs Waymouth, D Wedderkopp**
- **Employees of Somerset County Council – Councillors Mrs Court-Stenning, Mrs Hill, Mrs Smith and Stone**
- **Director of Southwest One – Councillor Coles**
- **Employee of Viridor – Councillor Miss James**
- **Members of Somerset Waste Board – Councillors Mullins and Slattery**
- **Employee of Sedgemoor District Council – Councillor Slattery**
- **Employees of Job Centre Plus – Councillors Henley and Mrs Wilson**

# **Council Meeting – 13 April 2010**

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

### **1. Employment Land**

- 1.1 Taunton Deane Borough remains committed to keeping and growing jobs. To this end, I have set up a meeting of the Executive and the Corporate Management Team to informally look at the issues of a potential shortfall in employment land sites and what we can do positively to move this agenda forward.
- 1.2 Since my last report, much demolition work has taken place at Firepool, Taunton. The site is now cleared and, of course, we have moved ahead with the purchase of an asset on site with the support of the Homes and Communities Agency.
- 1.3 Just two weeks ago I was able to welcome Nick Clegg, the Leader of the Liberal Democrats to Taunton. Along with our MP Jeremy Browne, he was introduced to Ian Franklin and local business representatives who told and showed him what progress our cross party and public private partnership, Project Taunton, is making in our county town. He was particularly impressed with Somerset Square and the work on the development at the Somerset County Cricket Club.

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

- 2.1 It was with great pleasure that on the same day of the above visit that the news that the Brewhouse had received a great boost in Arts Council funding for the next two years.
- 2.2 This is, of course, fantastic news and must mean that the Brewhouse can move forward and has to be the best news they have had in many years. We have always said that until now, they have been underfunded by the Arts Council and this goes a long way to redress that balance. We remain committed to being an active partner of the Brewhouse.

### **3. Core Council Review**

- 3.1 Since my last report, the Core Council Review has moved onto the next stage. A number of staff left the Authority at the end of March and I would like to thank them for their commitment and work for this Council over

many years. I would also like to welcome the new staff that have started or have been appointed and are about to join this Council, some of whom are of course working notice periods before they formally start with us.

#### **4. Climate Change**

4.1 Work towards this Council becoming carbon neutral continues at a fast pace. SOLACE, the local government organisation, have recently stated that Taunton Deane is the most advanced Council in the entire country on the issue of Climate Change and our work with our transition partners.

4.2 This runs alongside our other Climate Change initiatives like our green resident parking permits, our discounts on planning application fees for solar energy and our signing of the ten motion points as to the way forward. The budget commitment towards extra investment in tree planting is another good example of our ambition in the green agenda.

#### **5. Free Swimming**

5.1 This initiative continues to be an outstanding success for this Council.

5.2 Further to this success, we have made a lottery bid for improvements at Wellington Sports Centre's Swimming Pool. These plans will be coming to Scrutiny and Executive in the near future. We are only able to make this bid for improvements due to our support and participation in the Free Swimming scheme.

5.3 Free Swimming is a scheme which I am so proud that we have given so many people the chance to enjoy in the last year.

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

6.1 Somerset County Council has started its long trumpeted review that has been promised since last summer.

6.2 Penny James and I recently met Councillor John Wilkins who heads the review and also Andy Coupe who is the Council Officer who heads up the newly created County Council Cabinet Office. We listened to them and asked various questions of them regarding the terms of reference, the timescale of the review and how it may impact upon us. We have also started our own review of SAP and what lessons can be learned in future.

#### **7. General Election**

7.1 As we all know a General Election has been called on 6 May 2010. The result of that election could mean very great changes for all of us whatever

the result or whoever wins. We therefore face a period of great uncertainty.

**8. Investors in People and Staff Survey**

- 8.1 This has just taken place and results are due soon. I would like to thank all staff who have taken part in both pieces of work and who have worked through the uncertainty of the Core Council Review.

**9. Olympic Torch Relay**

- 9.1 I was saddened to hear that the Olympic torch relay will not be coming to Taunton Deane. This was a once in a lifetime chance for residents to see and share this experience.
- 9.2 The decision of Somerset County Council not to take part in this event has resulted in terribly bad publicity in many national newspapers and will result in much disappointment by many local residents.

Councillor Ross Henley  
Leader of the Council

# Council Meeting – 13 April 2010

## Report of Councillor Nicola Wilson – Corporate Resources

### 1. Southwest One Customer Contact Highlights

- 1.1 During February and March Customer Contact have continued to incorporate the SAP CRM as part of day to day operations, with the customer advisors becoming more and more proficient with its use.
- 1.2 Customer Contact has nearly completed the roll out of OLA's (Operating Level Agreements) for Taunton Deane and the final meeting is scheduled for April. These agreements underpin the relationship between the contact centre and the various service departments throughout Taunton Deane. They ensure that regular, structured meetings take place between both parties with the aim of discussing the latest issues and trends. Actions are then agreed for the mutual benefit of the service area and the contact centre and this ultimately improves service to the end customer.
- 1.3 The figures below show that during February Customer Contact delivered against agreed standards, however, during March (particularly the first two weeks) the team came under sustained pressure from higher than anticipated volumes of Council Tax queries. In March volumes were some 50% higher than in February. The nature and profile of the calls is currently being analysed but the overall call volumes for March 2010 were up 11% compared to March 2009 (and this in itself was an increase of 7% over March 2008). Extra staff were recruited to handle the volumes which did alleviate some of the pressure on the team and supported service levels. A review has been scheduled between the Revenues Team and Customer Contact to look at lessons learnt and to feed into planning for 2011.
- 1.4 Despite the pressures experienced in March the service has continued to deliver a high quality service and feedback from customers has continued to be positive. Some customers have even taken the trouble to call back and speak to a team leader to acknowledge particularly good service delivered by a customer advisor.
- 1.5 Over recent days service has returned to more normal levels of activity with call volumes becoming less volatile.

### **Statistical Information:**

Month	Feb-10	Mar-10
<b>CALLS OFFERED</b>	13175	19821
<b>ABANDONED %</b> [Target less than 5%]	4.1	8.04

<b>G.O.S.%</b> [ Target 80% within 20 Secs]	81.8	75.08
<b>% Answered 1st POC</b> (Target 85%)	98.7	98.26

## 2. Update on progress with Investors on People Action Plan

### IIP Review Completion of PREDS reviews

- 2.1 Approx 70% of reviews have been completed as at end of March 2010. Further work to be done to ensure full completion.

### People Management Framework

- 2.2 All senior managers have been trained to use the Management competency framework (part of the PM framework) and receiving managers have also received familiarisation training. The People Management Framework introduces a new competency framework for managers and reinforces the need to hold regular one-to-one meetings and team meetings. This framework will be instrumental in achieving our Organisational development strategy for the next year and progressing thematic working. Top managers have completed PRED reviews using the Competency framework and the feedback from this is good and all have found it useful in focusing on priorities and development areas.

### Team Meetings

- 2.3 A system has been set up to enable a central diary of all team meetings to be held by the Corporate Management Team (CMT). The quality and coverage of team meetings is being gradually assessed by Directors attending team meetings. Further feedback to be sought.

### IIP Working group

- 2.4 Five meetings of this group have been held and a number of issues have been raised by members of the group – some positive and some which will require further action and discussion. The group continues to provide useful feedback from staff and a good sounding board for new ideas

### Evaluation of Training

- 2.5 Reports from most managers have been received which shows how the training delivered in their teams has benefited those teams, services and the whole Council. This has formed part of our IIP assessment evidence

### Learning and Development plans

- 2.6 Plans for 2010/2011 are complete and CMT have agreed budget allocations.

### IIP Assessment

- 2.7 This has taken place and a full report will be produced for discussion and creation of a forward action plan in the next two weeks.



## **Other Organisational Development (OD) and Training Activity**

### **Management Development**

- 2.8 The managers in the Corporate and Strategy theme have been through the assessment phase of this management development programme and are now completing personal development plans. This is being finalised within the next month. Managers' development is also being augmented by mentoring arrangements in place and the competency framework discussions.

### **Theme Working**

- 2.9 A report has been agreed by CMT, an action plan produced and now included in the OD plan to integrate with other OD activities over the next year. The first initiative is to be an all staff event scheduled for May which will give staff an update on how the Council is doing and introduce Thematic Working.

### **Organisational Development Plan 2010/11**

- 2.10 This and the Corporate Learning and Development plan have been agreed by CMT. A detailed delivery plan has been produced by Southwest One. More work is needed to detail exactly what will be delivered, when and at what cost with some measurable outcomes to monitor progress and results.

### **2010 Staff Survey**

- 2.11 This has been completed by 45% of the staff (average is 39% nationally) and is being analysed for report to CMT on 12 April 2010. Actions and links to the IIP assessment will be identified and communicated to staff for the end of April.

## **3. Performance and Client Team Update**

The Performance and Client Team covers three specific areas. An update for each is provided below:-

### **Corporate Performance Management**

- 3.1 The Use of Resources element of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) for 2009/2010 has now commenced. The team are working closely with the Audit Commission inspectors to ensure that the inspection runs as smoothly as possible.
- 3.2 The new performance management scorecard and reporting process was trialled in the Quarter 3 Corporate Performance Report. The new style reports appear to have worked very well and have allowed both CMT and Members to quickly identify and discuss a number of key performance issues. This has resulted in Corporate Scrutiny requesting specific reports in two key areas.
- 3.3 The Theme 1 managers are now in the process of trialling out the new Service Plan templates. A Corporate Aims Delivery Plan (CAD Plan) template has also been

developed. The intention is for each corporate aim to have a CAD Plan, which will explain in detail how the particular aim is going to be delivered.

### **Client Function**

- 3.4 The Client team have been focussing on agreeing new key performance indicator (KPI) targets with the various Southwest One services for the coming financial year. This exercise is now nearly complete.
- 3.5 The team are also in the process of rolling out a new performance monitoring structure in respect of the Southwest One contract. This will provide for greater involvement for members and the core council. The first of the new 6-monthly Southwest One performance reports will be going to Corporate Scrutiny in May.

### **Procurement Transformation**

- 3.6 To date we have delivered savings totalling £350,000 during 2009/2010. The target for the year is £403,000. Consequently there is a shortfall of £53,000. However, we are still awaiting the savings figures in respect of various savings initiatives implemented by the DLO, which are anticipated to be in the region of £50,000 to £60,000, which will close the gap.
- 3.7 We are currently in the process of implementing new savings initiatives to reduce the cost of travel (the Click Travel online booking service) and to reduce the cost of any temporary staffing we employ.
- 3.8 Wave 3 of the procurement transformation will commence shortly and will look at areas such as utilities bills, banking and finance.

### **SAP System Implementation**

- 3.9 The interface between the SAP system and the DLO system is now in place and working. The backlog of transactions, which had been waiting to flow through this interface, has now all been processed. Finance staff have been working with service managers in order to check the accuracy of service budgets following the posting of this backlog to individual budgets. The Finance Manager will be issuing a statement regarding the budget position in the next couple of weeks.
- 3.10 Action to recover unpaid miscellaneous income accounts has now been taken in respect of the backlog of debts. Reminder letters and final notices have been issued for debts totalling £3.4m. To date £370,000 has been received in respect of these debts. Progress against reducing the debt position is being tracked by the Members Steering Group on a monthly basis.
- 3.11 There are still a number of areas of the SAP system which we have not started using yet or that are not working correctly. We are currently working with Southwest One to agree a detailed plan to launch and, in some cases, re-launch

areas of the system to core council staff. The launch process will commence in May, but will be staggered so that we are not overloading staff with training.

#### **4. Revenues and Benefits Service**

- 4.1 Despite best efforts, Council Tax recovery fell by 0.2% in comparison with last year.
- 4.2 On a more positive note, the Revenues and Benefits Service was able to meet its target in collecting Business Rates. At the time of writing, collection is in excess of 98.84% - an improvement on 2008/2009 of 0.75%.
- 4.3 There was an increase of 30% on the previous year in the number of enquiries received on potential entitlement to Housing and Council Tax Benefit, while the number of recipients (live caseload) increased by over 1,000. However, the processing of Housing and Council Tax Benefit for new customers, the service again improved, with average processing time reducing to less than 19 days. Benefit for customers with changes in their circumstances was processed in less than nine days.
- 4.4 In meeting the significant challenges of 2009/2010, the Revenues and Benefits Service achievements demonstrate its commitment to continually improve.
- 4.5 Members will have the opportunity to scrutinise customer satisfaction and contribute to future service development through the Corporate Scrutiny Committee in April 2010. A meeting in June 2010 by the same Committee will scrutinise the Revenues and Benefits Service's performance against targets for 2009/2010.

Councillor Mrs Nicola Wilson

# Council Meeting – 13 April 2010

## Report of Councillor Alan Wedderkopp – Community Leadership

### 1. Corporate Strategy 2010 – 2013 (Key Priorities)

- Tackling Deprivation and Sustainable Development.
- Regeneration.
- Affordable Housing.
- Climate Change.

1.1 These four are inter-linked and should be looked at as being so. They cannot and must not be worked on in isolation. This will be a real test of our determination to work in a Themed way as envisaged in the Core Council Review. The bunker and silo are dead.

#### **Our Corporate Aims**

1.2 Most of the work is at an early stage. This includes the following:-

**Deprivation** - The Lead Officer is pulling together the Corporate Aims Delivery Plan for Deprivation. This will identify specific projects, resources (staff and financial) and identify areas for thematic working, as I have said, I believe Regeneration and Affordable Housing are closely linked.

We are currently working on pulling together a three year Service Level Agreement (SLA) for the North Taunton Partnership and the Link Partnership, a draft was circulated last week, and will shortly be coming to Scrutiny and the Executive.

**Local Strategic Partnership** - Officers are currently working with the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (RIEP) to identify a Local Improvement Advisor (LIA). The LIA is an expert on partnership working and will work with the LSP Board to help pull together a new action plan, as well as helping to restructure the LSP and develop improved partnership working. It is hoped that the LIA will be appointed in April 2010, and this review will take approximately six months to complete. There is no cost to the Council or the LSP, as this is being paid for by SW RIEP.

**Somerset Strategic Partnership (SSP) - Migration Impact Fund** - This is linked to the Local Strategic Partnership and the Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy. Last year the SSP was in receipt of just over £314,000 to implement a programme of work directed at implementing innovative solutions to relieving the pressures of inward migration on Somerset's towns and villages. This funding was devolved to the SSP via THE Government

Office for the South West and is sourced from a levy on the visa application fee that economic migrants and students coming to the UK from outside the EU are charged.

As a result of this first year funding, a pilot was started in the South Somerset area in conjunction with a variety of partners and South Somerset Together (LSP). Four projects are in various stages of development.

For the second year there is a pot of £551,000 and that means we can roll out other projects across the county. We at Taunton Deane are hoping to participate in an appropriate scheme.

**Voluntary Sector** - We will be working on new Service Level Agreements with all supported bodies, for example CAB, CVS etc, following on after the SLA's mentioned above. We are about to work with CVS to develop a staff volunteering scheme (this links to the 'deprivation' Corporate Priority above)

Note - Volunteers are hard to find on both estates, more so on Halcon due to a number of reasons, if we can get CVS volunteers to get the ball rolling it may be easier to find local volunteers because they will hopefully realise that they are more capable than they think they are, when the locals see how CVS does it.

## **2. Equalities**

- 2.1 The Corporate Equalities Scheme was recently scrutinised by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee. This will go to public consultation during April, to be followed by Executive consideration during June 2010.
- 2.2 Managers and Leads are currently being trained on how to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment of their service area, and specific projects regarding Equalities and Diversity will be used to inform the development of an Equalities Action Plan, which is an important component of individual Service Plans.

## **3. The Private Sector Housing Partnership**

- 3.1 Since 1 April 2010 Taunton Deane has been working with Sedgemoor and West Somerset Councils to improve private sector housing conditions. Staff in all three Council areas will be working together to:-
  - provide grants and low interest loans for vulnerable people who need help to maintain their homes;
  - bring more private sector empty properties back into use and improve their conditions when in use;
  - administer energy efficiency schemes designed to improve home insulation and heating standards;
  - improve private rented housing through a mixture of advice to and/or enforcement against landlords.

Joining this private sector housing partnership will mean that Taunton Deane will be able to operate these private sector housing services more efficiently and reduce the costs of doing so in the long term.

Councillor Alan Wedderkopp

# Council Meeting – 13 April 2010

## Report of Councillor Alan Paul - Communications

- 1.1 Both proactive and reactive work has kept communications busy since the last report to Council.
- 1.2 Press releases issued have included the successful prosecutions of a taxi driver who overcharged newlyweds and a restaurant that breached food safety regulations.
- 1.3 The forthcoming General Election has generated releases aimed at encouraging people to register to vote and alerting residents to boundary changes. It was pleasing to publicise the success of the Halcon Multi-Agency Forum in winning a top police award and to announce the winners of the 2010 Citizenship Awards.
- 1.4 Two electronic newsletters have been produced and circulated – Involve which looks at the Core Strategy and Local Development Framework and Footprint which focuses on the challenges around climate change.
- 1.5 Since the last report, the Somerset Public Services Communications Group has met and this proved extremely valuable in bringing together local authorities, the NHS and the emergency services.
- 1.6 The group will continue to meet regularly to exchange information, ideas and best practice. This is certainly working towards the Total Place concept.
- 1.7 A paper is being produced on the use of Social Media - the term commonly given to websites and online tools which allow users to interact with each other in some way – by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests. As the name implies, social media involves the building of communities or networks, encouraging participation and engagement.
- 1.8 Taunton Deane Borough Council does not have the resources available at the moment to set up a corporate presence whether on Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, MySpace or others.
- 1.9 A presence needs constant monitoring, updating and, above all, relevance. Many authorities with a Facebook page or group attract very few “friends” or followers – sometimes less than half a dozen.
- 1.10 There could be a case for occasional use – perhaps to promote a specific project or event – the Energize initiative, for example.

- 1.11 Twitter, with far fewer followers than Facebook, could be a useful tool in getting across urgent messages – but the Council would need to attract a following before this could be of any value.
- 1.12 There is a strong case to be made for monitoring social media and networks and this is already being implemented with some interesting results. Monitoring alerts the Council to issues that people in cyberspace are talking about. These are relatively simple to set up and are not as resource-hungry as updating a Council presence on social networking sites.
- 1.13 The work being undertaken resulted from an extremely useful day course attended by the Media and PR officer.

Councillor Alan Paul



# Council Meeting – 13 April 2010

## Report of Councillor Simon Coles – Planning and Transportation

### 1. Recent Legislative changes which came into effect on 6 April 2010

1.1 The Killian Pretty Review set out 17 recommendations to Government regarding ways to make the planning application system faster and more responsive and there is an ongoing implementation programme. The latest set of regulations and amendments came into force on 6 April 2010, these included the following:-

- **Streamlining Design and Access Statements** - This list of applications that are exempted from the need to submit Design and Access Statement has been extended so that simple and very minor applications are no longer included. Householder applications in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty no longer require a Design and Access Statement, however those in Conservation Areas still do.
- **Validation of Planning Applications** - Although not a legislative change, the Government has published revised policy and guidance in relation to both information requirements and the validation of planning applications. A review of the local validation requirements is already underway and this new guidance will be incorporated into the drawing up the Council's new list.
- **Time Limits for Submitting Planning Appeals** - Where an enforcement notice is in place and a retrospective planning application is refused, the time limit for appealing has been reduced from 6 months to 28 days.
- **Publicity of Planning Applications** - The time limit for the display of site notices has been extended and a requirement for Local Planning Authorities to publish planning applications on the Council's website has been brought in. As we already display all site notices for a period of 21 days and publish all applications on the website, the Council is already 'ahead of the game' in this respect.
- **Non-domestic Permitted Development** - The scope of 'permitted development' has been extended for four main groups of development: industry and warehousing; schools, colleges,

universities and hospitals; office buildings; and shops. These amendments also include changes to the regulation of hard surfacing. The Government intends to expand the range of permitted development rights which require 'prior approval' at a later date and has made no decision yet as to whether to make air conditioning units permitted development in certain circumstances, so these matters are not covered in the new Order.

- **House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)** - These have been given a new use class (C4) and a standard definition to accord with that in the Housing Act 2004. In broad terms, this use occurs where tenanted living accommodation is occupied by persons as their only or main residence, who are not related and who share one or more basic amenities. It is now permitted development to convert a HMO (C4) to a dwelling house (C3).

## **2. Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Site Allocations**

- 2.1 This important work carries on during the remainder of this year with further Public Consultation during September and October, when again, we intend that the Public's views will be incorporated into the finished document. Indeed we are still receiving responses from members of the Public from the first round of consultation.
- 2.2 It is a matter of speculation at this time, as to whether or not the format for this finished document will be as we envisioned it. It may well be, or not be, altered as a result of the impending General Election, nevertheless, we are obliged to fully prepare this document to submit to Central Government.

## **3. Car Park Closures**

- 3.1 Following the confirmation of funding for The Third Way, work will start shortly. Greenbrook Terrace Car Park will close as from next week. The legal process for this was completed last year, when the start date for work was expected to be July 2009.
- 3.2 A Traffic Regulation Order Panel will be organized to look at the objections raised to the planned closure of Castle Green Car Park. The closure is proposed as part of Project Taunton's redevelopment of the whole Castle Green area, in conjunction with enhancement of the County Museum.

## **4. Residents' Parking in Taunton**

- 4.1 Consultation is underway or about to start on possible Residents' Parking provision for Mitre Court (as additional provision within the Victoria Gate Zone), the Priory Park area (the old rugby club site), where its proximity to the town centre and other facilities results in problems and Canal Road (as an extension to the Albemarle Zone)

4.2 The scheme approved to add William Street to the existing Rowbarton Zone will see work start soon.

**5. Proposed County-wide Civil Parking Enforcement Project**

5.1 As outlined in the recent Briefing Note, we continue working with the other Somerset Districts and the County Council on this project.

5.2 There are a number of work streams in progress, and reports will come before Scrutiny and Executive during the year. It is important to note that, the project covers enforcement activity only.

Councillor Simon Coles

# **Council Meeting – 13 April 2010**

## **Report of Councillor Francesca Smith - Economic Development and the Arts**

### **1. Core Council Review Update and appointments:**

- 1.1 The future Economic Development Team proposed, as part of the Core Council Review comprises an Economic Development Specialist, two Leads and two Officers.
- 1.2 David Evans has been offered the post of Economic Development Specialist in Growth and Development and will be joining us from Swindon Borough Council where he is Head of Economic Development. Hattie Winter has been offered the post of Economic Development Lead. Hattie previously worked at Taunton Deane for a number of years and will be returning to Taunton Deane from Devon County Council. Stephanie Payne has been appointed as Economic Development Lead and is in post. Stephanie previously supported Phil Sharratt on the Economic Development Strategy. Matthew Parr has been appointed as Economic Development Officer and is in post. Matthew was previously the Regeneration Officer. The second Officer post currently remains vacant.

### **2. Overview of current activities**

- 2.1 During the interim period until all team members are in post, Stephanie and Matthew the two Economic Development staff in post, will be doing their best to maintain a normal service. Future activities for the Economic Development Team are under review and a proposal to align activities with capacity will be put forward shortly. This is the current priority and will be taking into consideration the previous service and the projects within the Economic Development Strategy. Stephanie will work with Joy Wishlade and Tim Burton to put this together and the recommendations will be made available as soon as possible.
- 2.2 Key current activities include, working closely with Project Taunton and responding to inward investment enquiries. Attendance at SLIM 'Learning Theme' Workshop, discussing ESF (European Social Fund) and ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) funding and successful past projects. SLIM - the Skills and Learning Intelligence Module of the South West Observatory, based at the University of Exeter.

- 2.3 Business Engagement, this has included recent meetings with key local businesses. We are currently working with one to explore relocation options within Taunton Deane. We have offered assistance to another with a potential move again within Taunton Deane. This increased engagement with local businesses is key in the future development of the Economic Development Strategy.
- 2.4 Continuing support of the Young Enterprise Scheme through Officer time. Support for a Resource Efficiency event that was held at Somerset College by Somerset Waste Partnership, Application to SW Councils to the RIEP (Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership) Capital Fund for a Low Carbon Project.

### **3. Project Taunton**

- 3.1 Firepool - Demolition of the buildings on the former livestock market site has now been completed. "The auctioneers building" refurbishment is also complete and the building is to be retained in the medium term as a marketing centre.
- 3.2 Unit 5 Canal Road has been purchased using money made unexpectedly available by the Homes and Communities Agency and this purchase was the subject of a more detailed report to the last meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.3 Planning permission has been granted for the first phase of riverside public realm works and the first phase of actual development (planned for Priory Bridge Road car park) is likely to be submitted as a detailed application within the next few weeks.
- 3.4 Cricket Club - The Pegasus development and new stand is now complete. The terms have been agreed with a bicycle retailer/hirer for one unit under the flats and due to be agreed very shortly for an Italian deli in the other unit both fronting on to Somerset Square. The health and safety issues at Somerset Square have been resolved and it will be fully opened shortly after Easter. The construction of the Somerset County Cricket Club Hub is complete and work to convert the pavilion to a 500 seat conference facility is well underway with completion in mid-May.
- 3.5 Museum - The main contractor is on site for the refurbishment of the Museum and reopening is planned for Spring/Summer 2011
- 3.6 Castle Green and Goodland Gardens - The original planning application was submitted in May 2009. A new planning application covering all the issues that have arisen from discussion and consultation is now being considered by English Heritage. The progression of this scheme is

dependent on whether we receive our Growth Points capital allocation for 2010/2011. If funding can be secured then we remain confident that the project will be delivered successfully and will provide a fantastic public space for Taunton and one which will play a fundamental role in the future success of Taunton.

- 3.7 Third Way - Funding has now been confirmed for The Third Way Road and bridge and work is due to start on 12 April.
- 3.8 Retail - JP Morgan (EPF) has completed the £3.5m refurbishment of The Old Market Centre. Initial meetings of the project team (EPF, Project Taunton and Taunton Deane) have proved constructive and we are optimistic that good progress will be made over the coming months.
- 3.9 Northern Inner Distributor Road (NIDR) - Agreement has been reached with all parties to undertake the first stage of the NIDR. Work is due to start on site in early April. Somerset County Council (SCC) will procure and project manage the works. The build contract for the scheme of affordable housing has been signed at the same time and work on that project will also commence very shortly.
- 3.10 Urban Extension Masterplanning - Urban Initiatives and their team are making good progress with their commission and will report to members in early May.
- 3.11 Eco Development Funding – Taunton Deane, SCC and Project Taunton have bid for and successfully obtained funding from CLG towards the cost of various studies to support the future delivery of sustainable development in and around Taunton. Some of this money will help offset the cost of aspect of the urban extension masterplanning work.
- 3.12 Longrun Meadows - Planning consent with conditions has been granted for the landscaping of the 65 acres of land which includes the flood prevention scheme. Local landscape architects, Swan Paul, are managing the landscaping which began in mid March. A response has been received from Natural England/Big Lottery regarding the Access to Nature first stage submission prepared by Karen Hughes. This work is continuing through a consultancy.
- 3.13 Our Place, Your Place, Taunton - The '*empty shop*' project funded by Living Places/ Transformation funding in the former Peter Briggs Shoe shop in the High Street, closed after 6 weeks on Saturday 20 March 2010. Volunteers and paid supervisory staff provided staffing for activities, on the theme of *Taunton: past, present and future*, both in the venue and at outreach venues. This community project proved to be a success with visitor numbers exceeding 4000.

- 3.14 Funding - The Growth Points revenue allocation for 2010/2011 has been received but the capital allocation has not yet been confirmed.
- 3.15 PR and Marketing - Recent media activity included articles/features in Planning Magazine, Investment Now, the Gazette, Heart FM, New Start, Shopping Centre, the Western Morning News and Estates Gazette. The Taunton logo will feature on the new community boat which has been christened 'Future Perfect', an electric smart car and on the cricket club boundary for the new season.

#### **4. Tourist Information**

- 4.1 Since the last report in January, the Taunton Tourist Information, Ticket and Travel Centre (TIC) within Taunton Library has remained busy welcoming both local residents and visitors. Partnerships have now been formed with the Neroche Scheme, Museum of Somerset and the National Trust. The Centre is acting as a hub for the new Herepath Digital Trail Guides, these are free to borrow and use GPS technology; they are an exciting personal audio-visual guide to the trail.
- 4.2 The Museum has relocated their promotional boards about the new building from the Your Taunton shop in the High Street to the TIC and the National Trust in Fyne Court now has a permanent display. The National Trust will have a representative in the office on regular occasions over forthcoming months promoting the Trust in the local area and selling memberships.
- 4.3 The Centre and its staff hosted an event in March to mark British Tourism Week which welcomed the Mayor, Councillor Bob Bowrah, Jeremy Browne, MP and representatives from Somerset County Cricket Club, Visit Somerset and West Somerset Railway.
- 4.4 The office has now been refreshed and is full of tourist literature for the new summer season. The Ticket Centre continues to be very busy and is selling tickets for numerous concerts taking place in Taunton over future months, the new programme at the Tacchi Morris, Royal Bath and West Show and a variety of Tone Leisure events at Wellspings. The Travel Centre is hosting a promotional day with Berry's Coaches who launch their new Summer Day Tour programme in the TIC on 15 April 2010.

Councillor Mrs Fran Smith

# **Council Meeting – 13 April 2010**

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

### **1. Community Leisure**

- 1.1 Vivary Park summer Sunday bandstand concerts have been programmed beginning on 5 June, continuing until 5 September 2010.
- 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 Nynehead Village Hall and Fitzhead Tithe Barn have both been successful with their applications to the Joint County and District Panel for Voluntary Village Halls and Community Centres for grant aid assistance. Two other village halls, Neroche and West Bagborough were unfortunately unsuccessful with their bids due to a reduction in Somerset County Council funding. Taunton Deane Borough Council is working with Neroche and West Bagborough to assist them in taking their projects forward.

### **2. Play**

- 2.1 Hamilton Gault Children's Play Area
  - 2.1.1 The contractors have nearly finished the construction of the new children's play area. This has involved the removal of all of the old play equipment and any serviceable equipment will be used to replace worn out equipment on other sites.
  - 2.1.2 The hedges around the old play area have been removed to improve natural surveillance of the new play area. The new play area has been designed to encourage natural play and it consists of equipment for children up to twelve years old.
- 2.2 Hamilton Gault Skate Park
  - 2.2.1 Work has started on the construction of the concrete bowl skate park. The local skateboarders have been involved with the design and they are very excited about this being a major attraction in the town. The skate park should be completed towards the end of April and will be open once the concrete has cured.
- 2.3 Lyngford Park Children's Play Area



- 2.3.1 The construction of the new junior play area has begun and should be completed by early April. This play area replaces the former site that consisted of timber play equipment that had become too rotten for safe use.
- 2.3.2 The kindergarten play area has been refurbished with a replacement roundabout, new seat, safety surfacing and painting of the existing equipment.

### **3. Parks**

#### **3.1 Vivary Park, Sensory Garden**

- 3.1.1. The shrub planting work has continued at the sensory garden during milder weather.
- 3.1.2. The finishing touches to the fountain and signage will be carried out in April and the garden will be open to the public in May following the official opening by the Mayor.

#### **3.2 Wilton Lands Lake**

- 3.2.1 The accumulation of silt was removed from the lake in early March before the bird nesting season began at the lake. Large areas of the lake were completely silted up and islands had formed making the lake unsightly for park visitors. The lake is used by the Tone Valley Model Boat Club that has several events planned for this year.

### **4. Tone Leisure (Taunton Deane) Limited Activities**

#### **Sports and Health Development**

##### **4.1 Taunton Deane Foot Anstey Aquathlon**

- 4.1.1 Despite the forecast for strong winds and heavy rain, over 170 athletes turned up to show their grit and determination as they battled it out in the 6th Taunton Deane Foot Anstey Aquathlon on Sunday, 28 February 2010 at Wellington Sports Centre.
- 4.1.2 Sponsored by south-west law firm Foot Anstey, organised by Somerset RC Tri Club and Tone Leisure and supported by the Somerset County Gazette, the competition caters for all levels of fitness and stamina with competitors able to enter either the short or longer distance race.
- 4.1.3 The short distance involves swimming 500 m and running 5 k and the longer race is a 1,000 m swim followed by a 10 k run. To make it completely fair, individuals compete against others in the same age

category, which range from 14-15 years (Youth) to 60+ years (Vintage Veterans).

- 4.1.4 Particularly popular is the team event, introduced two years ago to open up the event to novices and for those that enjoyed one element of the Aquathlon, but not the other. In each team one person swims and the other runs using a relay style handover after the swim. This year, a record breaking 30 teams took part, some of which had also entered the corporate challenge, which encourages participation from south-west businesses, schools, clubs and other organisations.

## **Facility News**

### **5.1 Wellsprings Leisure Centre**

#### Health and Fitness

- 5.1.1 The site is seeing increased utilisation in all areas - gym visits and GOgx classes of nearly 15%.
- 5.1.2 The GP Referral Scheme has been boosted with the successful training of existing gym staff and the addition of a new Health and Fitness Manager. This will enable a greater number of GP Referral customers to be accommodated.

#### Forthcoming Events

- 5.1.3 The Wellsprings comedy nights have always been very popular, and this year Tone Leisure are welcoming back Jethro on 15 May and then Jimmy Car on 2 July. Both of these events tend to sell out. On 22 May there is a Strictly Dance evening with Darren Bennett and Lilia Kopylova from the BBC Strictly Come Dancing programme.

### **5.2 Station Road Pool**

#### Free Swimming

- 5.2.1 I am pleased to say, the Free Swim Initiative continues to go from strength to strength with both Under 16s and Over 60s. Concessionary Free Swimming usage during Quarter 3 shows an increase of 45% - 4,689 swims.

### **5.3 St. James Street Baths**

#### Swimskool and iPod Technology

- 5.3.1 With the launch of the new online booking system for swimming lessons, 200 parents/guardians took up the opportunity to re-book their children online within the first four weeks of its launch. Teachers are now using iPod technology on poolside to mark children's attendance

and to record their progress made in each lesson. Parents/guardians can now view their children's progress immediately after each lesson through use of the home portal on Tone Leisure's website.

## Hires

5.3.2 Somerset Young Carers hired the pool during the half-term holidays in February. Organisers of the hire were extremely complimentary about the team as the young carers all had a great time. St. James Street was able to provide them exclusive use of the main pool for an hour to enjoy themselves away from their personal circumstances.

## Rookie Lifeguard Programme

5.3.3 The Rookie Lifeguard Programme is growing from strength to strength. Sessions are now operating with two Instructors and attracting 20 children per class. This is a fun way of teaching children lifelong skills.

## **6. Blackbrook Pavilion**

### Feel Good Factory - Taunton

6.1.1 The Feel Good Factory opened on 4 January, 2010. It is a ladies only, power assisted exercise centre. The circuit of 12 machines takes just 30 minutes to complete and the facility is particularly appropriate to those who are overweight/obese, suffering mobility problems or in need of rehabilitation exercise. To date, the facility has attracted in excess of 150 members and the Feel Good Factory membership is growing steadily.

### Teen Gym

6.1.2 The numbers for the 11-16 year old programme continue to increase. Six sessions are run per week with many sessions running at full capacity.

### Sport Relief

6.1.3 Sunday, 21 March 2010 saw the return of the Sport Relief Mile which had a record number of people entering - 450.

### Utilisation

6.1.4 The usage of the Centre has increased significantly. Over a 12 week period gym usage averages 1,252 visits per week, up 18% on last year. The GOgx group exercise programme regularly exceeds the target of 650 participants per week and is up 29% on last year.

## **7. Taunton Tennis Centre**

## Tournaments

7.1.1 Eight junior tournaments took place at the club in March, including the three day Under Eighteen County Cup, which saw four counties play over three days. The other events included four mini tennis tournaments and three 11-18 years junior tennis tournaments.

## Training and Coaching

7.1.2 A Performance Access Day was run by Richard Huish and Taunton Tennis Club, inviting the best players in the South West to receive coaching at Bath High Performance Centre. Thirty children attended this successful event.

7.1.3 A training day for coaches wishing to coach tennis in schools was held at the club in March, with ten coaches attending, receiving coaching from Roger Jones.

## **8. Wellington Sports Centre**

### New GOGx Classes

8.1.1. With the successful trial of Belly Dancing, the class continues to maintain its committed followers. Belly Drills has now been launched and Tone Leisure is pleased to be the first in the UK to launch this new aerobic and dance fusion. Street Funk has also been a new contender on the programme for a funky dance session that certainly ticks the fitness and fun boxes.

### Z3 Fitness

8.1.2 A month after the opening and the area continues to grow in popularity. Another 850 young people visited the exciting area throughout March. The committee members, who are made up of local young people, have been working hard to capture the feedback and comments from the users.

### Free Swimming

8.1.3 Working closely with the ASA Area Co-ordinator, Tone Leisure has managed to secure funding which supports Open Days that inform the local community about the Free Swim Initiative and also be able to offer Free Swimming lessons to anyone over the age of 11 who is a weak or non-swimmer.

8.1.4 Concessionary free swimming usage at Wellington (which includes Under 16s and Over 60s) continues to show strong growth on last year and, at the end of Quarter 3, was showing an increase of 54% - 2,268 swims.

## Junior Activities

8.1.5 The dry side courses are strengthening, with two further gymnastic courses added to help with the popular demand.

All round, I feel that Taunton Deane Borough Council are providing a wide range of sports, leisure and parks facilities to a very high standard that we can all be justly proud.

Councillor Richard Lees

# **Council Meeting – 13 April 2010**

## **Report of Councillor Tim Slattery – Environmental Services**

As from the 1 April 2010 the new structure for Environmental Health became operational. Charlotte Dale is Environmental Health Lead Officer; Martin Stoyles Principal EHO with a Licensing Manager due to be appointed on 26 April. Acting up appointments will now return to their previous posts.

### **1. Food and Health and Safety Team**

#### **Scores on the Doors, National Scheme**

- 1.1 Approximately 1000 letters have been sent to all the food businesses in Taunton Deane which fall under the National Scheme asking them to complete and return a form to update their details on our database.
- 1.2 So far there has been an excellent return rate – but this has meant a lot of work for EH Support updating our computer records.

#### **Successful Prosecution**

- 1.3 Environmental Health Officer, Emily Greenway had a first successful prosecution of the Radhuni Restaurant in Wellington. The defendant pleaded guilty to all eight offences and received a fine of just over £6,000 and costs of over £2,000.

#### **Food Standards Audit**

- 1.4 I attended the recent audit inspection undertaken by the Food Standards Authority. Overall a very positive audit with many positive comments from the auditors.
- 1.5 I have received the provisional feedback, which currently details four recommendations regarding the service plan, review of policies and procedures, officer authorisation and approved premises.
- 1.6 They were particularly impressed with our internal monitoring procedures, how we assess Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point compliance in our businesses and also the blank action plan that we send out with all our letters.

#### **Emergency Rota**

- 1.7 As from 1 April 2010 there will be no further Environmental Health out of hour's emergency rota. This will be covered by the Corporate Management Team rota.

## **2. Environmental Protection Team**

### **Pest Control**

- 2.1 You will be aware that one of the proposals from the Core Council Review was to outsource our Pest Control Service. The current position is:-
- We have been through a tendering process and have received four full tenders. However, the contract prices have come back higher than expected. The estimated saving planned for this process was £46,000. At Scrutiny there was some concern expressed that this level of savings could not be achieved, largely due to our current pricing structure and level of business.
  - The reason that the tender prices are higher than we had anticipated is largely due to the issue of the TUPE transfer of one Pest Control Officer to the new provider. This is due to recent changes to the TUPE provisions in relation to the duty of a new private sector employer to provide a pension of equal value for the TUPE'd employee.
  - This involves the company concerned applying for, and being accepted to, "Admitted Status" to the Local Government Pension Scheme. We were aware of this requirement, but the change appears to be that new entrants are required to provide a substantial bond in order to gain entry to the scheme. This has resulted in an elevation of the TUPE element of the tenders, much higher than expected and beyond our projections for the saving from this project.
  - Our officers are now going to take stock of the situation, in light of these developments, to do some work with our accountants in relation to the best course of action and Members will be advised accordingly.

### **New Private Water Supply Regulations 2009**

- 2.2 Implementation of the new Private Water Supply Regulations 2009 is progressing.
- 2.3 Officers attended a recent meeting with the Somerset Water Group which highlighted that all Somerset districts will now be making their own arrangements initially with the possibility of joined-up working once the monitoring schedules are embedded. Fees and charges will be published once approval has been agreed.

## **Buddhafield Festival 2010**

- 2.4 The organisers are proposing to hold the Buddhafield festival in Taunton Deane in the same place as last year on 14 – 18 July 2010. The event will be very similar to last year with a capacity of 3000 people, dancing, music, workshops and with a no alcohol policy. A formal Licence application will be submitted to the Licensing Authority within the next few weeks.
- 2.5 In previous years the festival has been successful and there have been very few reported problems associated with the event. We will not be requiring a pre-event multi-agency meeting as our conditions will be the same as last year.

## **Air Quality**

- 2.6 The University of the West of England have completed, on behalf of Taunton Deane, the Councils Air Quality Progress report and the Action Plan Progress Report. There are indications that air quality in Taunton has slightly improved.

## **Fun Farm**

- 2.7 The Fun Farm at Cheddon Fitzpaine, near Taunton is applying for a Zoo Licence.
- 2.8 The intended date for the inspection is 27 April 2010 to be carried out by South Somerset District Council.

## **3. Waste Management**

### **SORT IT Plus collections in Taunton Deane**

- 3.1 As Members will be aware, SORT IT Plus involves the addition of weekly collections of plastic bottles and cardboard to the standard SORT IT collections. Residents due to be added to the service will be delivered an additional recycling box which is to be used for plastic bottles, cardboard and cans.
- 3.2 They will also be delivered a leaflet and stickers for the existing recycling box. Deliveries are due to begin during the week commencing 5th April and collections start during the weeks commencing 19 and 26 April 2010.
- 3.3 A series of road shows will be held throughout Taunton Deane in April to promote the new services and answer any queries that residents might have.



## **Waste Strategy**

- 3.4 Continuing consultations in relation to the new draft Waste Strategy are progressing. Further workshops for all stakeholders will be held in May 2010 to consider work undertaken to assess favoured options and hopefully reach consensus on the headline issues to be included in a new draft strategy to be issued for public consultation in June 2010.
- 3.5 There will be morning workshop on 14 May 2010 for representatives of stakeholder organisations and a repeat of this during the evening of 19 May for representatives who prefer an evening event and for interested individuals. Please make a note of these dates in your diary now and we will send out invitations with full details nearer the time.
- 3.6 The Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) has set up a strategy review website at: [www.somersetjmwms.info](http://www.somersetjmwms.info). This allows strategy documents to be downloaded and hosts a discussion forum. Please visit and share your questions and views on the future management of Somerset's waste. Further Information can be obtained from Julie Searle - Strategy Officer at SWP, Tel: 01823 625717 or e-mail: [julie.searle@somersetwaste.gov.uk](mailto:julie.searle@somersetwaste.gov.uk).

Councillor Tim Slattery

# **Council Meeting – 13 April 2010**

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

### **1. Review of Council Housing Finance**

- 1.1 On 25 March 2010 we received details from the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) of proposals for the reform of council housing finance. The detailed plans and terms of the proposals are set out in a published consultation document titled - Council Housing: A Real Future.

The headline plan for the reform is the delivery of better homes and better housing services by:-

- Giving councils the freedom to fund and run their council houses, without annual Government decisions over subsidy;
- Creating the funding capacity to build over 10,000 new council homes a year; and
- Releasing at least 10% more money in every council for maintaining and managing their homes.

Arrangements are currently being made to enable us give the right focus to this matter and to model what has been proposed, to get insight on the implications and or opportunities for Taunton Deane Borough Council.

All responses from a wide range of local authorities and others to the proposals are to be received at the CLG by the closing date of 6 July 2010.

### **2. Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership - Working on a new 'Housing Adaptations and Housing Options Agreement'**

- 2.1 To help with reducing the time it takes to adapt the homes of disabled people, making them safer and easier to live in, we are engaged in work on a new partnership agreement involving Taunton Deane, West Somerset District Council, Sedgemoor District Council and Registered Social Landlords (RSL's). The new agreement will ensure that social housing residents are provided with a consistent, fair, timely, efficient and customer focused adaptations service.
- 2.2 A timetable of consultation and discussion has been agreed, with the planned approval of the new partnership agreement to be completed by September 2010

### **3. Increase in Disabled Facilities Grant Funding**

- 3.1 Taunton Deane Borough Council is delighted to be receiving a significant disabled facilities grant increase. The Government is raising the grant by £49,000 this year, from £210,000 to £259,000.
- 3.2 The money will help people remain living independently in their own homes by helping to fund improvements to the property.
- 3.3 The grant can be used for a wide range of improvements, from widening doors and creating access ramps to improving heating systems or providing better or more suitable bathrooms and kitchens.
- 3.4 Grants are means tested to ensure they are targeted at those in most need. Any eligible disabled person can apply for this grant whether they are a homeowner, private tenant or local authority tenant.

### **4. Tenant Empowerment**

- 4.1 We have now reached a major milestone in Tenant Empowerment in Taunton Deane with the first meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board being scheduled for the 29 April 2010.
- 4.2 An Information Pack was sent to all tenants and Councillors at the start of February 2010 which provided an overview of the board and how it would bring improvements and benefits to homes and neighbourhoods in Taunton Deane. It also offered the opportunity for tenants to put themselves forward to serve as one of the ten board members.
- 4.3 Ten applications were received by the deadline, meaning the applicants were elected unopposed. Two Councillors, one from each of the main parties, will now be nominated to serve on the board. The board will meet on a monthly basis and members will serve for a period of two years.

### **5. Review of Homefinder Somerset Choice Based Lettings Scheme**

- 5.1 With the aim of delivering a service that serves the needs of Somerset communities South Somerset District Council's (SSDC) Scrutiny Panel is to conduct a review of the Homefinder Somerset Scheme. The reviews specific focus is on how well the scheme delivers its services to communities.
- 5.2 The review being undertaken by the SSDC Scrutiny Panel will feed into the much broader review of the Homefinder Somerset Scheme currently being undertaken on behalf of the Homefinder Somerset

Monitoring Board. A provisional date for the conclusion of the broader review is September 2010. This is dependant upon the issues identified during the course of the review and the outcomes of the SSDC Scrutiny Panel Review which is expected to be concluded in June 2010.

Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey