

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 July 2010 at 18:30.

Agenda

- 1 To receive the Minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 13 May 2010 and the meeting of the Council held on 24 June 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 Petitions Guidance and amendments to Standing Orders. Report of the Legal and Democratic Services Manager (attached).
- 8 Part I - To deal with written questions to and receive the following recommendations from the Executive:-
 - (i) Councillor Catherine Herbert
Recommendations relating to the Wellington Sports Centre Bid;
 - (ii) Councillor Ken Hayward
Recommendation in respect of Climate Change initiative - Replacement of The Deane House gas boilers;
 - (iii) Councillor John Williams
Recommendations relating to the 2009/2010 Budget Outturn Report.
- 9 Part II - To receive reports from the following Members of the Executive:-

- (i) Councillor John Williams - Leader of the Council;
- (ii) Councillor Mark Edwards - Planning and Transportation;
- (iii) Councillor Joanna Lewin-Harris - Communications and Community Leadership;
- (iv) Councillor Norman Cavill - Economic Development and the Arts;
- (v) Councillor Ken Hayward - Environmental Services and Climate Change;
- (vi) Councillor Catherine Herbert - Sports, Parks and Leisure;
- (vii) Councillor Jean Court-Stenning - Housing Services;
- (viii) Councillor Terry Hall - Corporate Resources.

Tonya Meers
Legal and Democratic Services Manager

06 July 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



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

Council Members:-

Councillor P Watson
Councillor T Slattery
Councillor P Stone
Councillor D Wedderkopp
Councillor M Whitmarsh
Councillor J Williams - Leader of the Council
Councillor A Beaven
Councillor R Bowrah, BEM
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
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
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 the Annual meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council, held at the Queen's Hall, Queens College, Trull Road, Taunton on Thursday 13 May 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, Hayward, Henley, Ms Herbert, C Hill, Mrs Hill, House, Miss James, R Lees, Mrs Lees, Mrs Lewin-Harris, McMahon, Meikle, Morrell, Mullins, Murphy, O'Brien, Paul, Prior-Sankey, Slattery, Mrs Smith, P Smith, Mrs Stock-Williams, Stone, Swaine, Thorne, Watson, Mrs Waymouth, Ms Webber, A Wedderkopp, D Wedderkopp, Mrs Whitmarsh, Williams and Mrs Wilson.

1. Prayers

The meeting was opened with prayers offered by the Mayor's Chaplain, The Reverend James Clapham.

2. Election of Mayor

On the motion of Councillor Meikle, seconded by Councillor Farbahi, it was **resolved** unanimously that Councillor Jefferson Andrew Horsley be elected Mayor of Taunton Deane for the ensuing year. Councillor Horsley made and signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

3. Deputy Mayor

On the motion of Councillor Henley, seconded by Councillor Slattery, it was **resolved** that Councillor Steve Brooks be elected as Deputy Mayor for the ensuing year. Councillor Brooks made and signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

4. Councillor Robert Bowrah BEM

On the motion of Councillor Williams, seconded by Councillor Mrs Allgrove, it was **resolved** that the best thanks of the Council be accorded to Councillor Robert Bowrah BEM for the manner in which he had discharged the duties of the Office of Mayor during his term of office.

Councillor Bowrah replied.

5. Past Mayor's Badge

The Mayor presented Councillor Bowrah with his past Mayor's badge.

6. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 13 April 2010, copies having been circulated to each Member, were signed by the Mayor.

7. Apology

Councillor Stuart-Thorn.

8. Election of Leader 2010/2011

The Mayor invited nominations from the Council for the election of Leader for the 2010/2011 Municipal Year.

Councillor Henley was proposed by Councillor A Wedderkopp, seconded by Councillor Mullins.

Councillor Williams was proposed by Councillor Denington, seconded by Councillor Mrs Court-Stenning.

Councillor A Wedderkopp, seconded by Councillor Mullins, requested that a formal roll call of votes be taken and recorded in the Minutes in accordance with Standing Order 18(2). The request was supported by the votes of at least a quarter of the Councillors present.

Twenty seven Councillors voted in favour of Councillor Henley, whilst twenty eight Councillors voted for Councillor Williams, as follows:-

Henley

Councillor Brooks
Councillor Coles
Councillor Mrs Copley
Councillor Ms Court
Councillor Critchard
Councillor Farbahi
Councillor Mrs Floyd
Councillor Gaines
Councillor Govier
Councillor Henley
Councillor Mrs Hill
The Mayor (Councillor Horsley)
Councillor Miss James
Councillor R Lees
Councillor Mrs Lees
Councillor Mullins
Councillor Murphy
Councillor Paul
Councillor Prior-Sankey
Councillor Slattery
Councillor Mrs Smith

Williams

Councillor Mrs Allgrove
Councillor Beaven
Councillor Bishop
Councillor Bowrah
Councillor Cavill
Councillor Mrs Court-Stenning
Councillor Denington
Councillor D Durdan
Councillor Ms Durdan
Councillor Edwards
Councillor Guerrier
Councillor Hall
Councillor Hayward
Councillor Ms Herbert
Councillor C Hill
Councillor House
Councillor Mrs Lewin-Harris
Councillor McMahan
Councillor Meikle
Councillor Morrell
Councillor O'Brien

Councillor P Smith
Councillor Stone
Councillor Swaine
Councillor A Wedderkopp
Councillor D Wedderkopp
Councillor Mrs Wilson

Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams
Councillor Thorne
Councillor Watson
Councillor Mrs Waymouth
Councillor Ms Webber
Councillor Mrs Whitmarsh
Councillor Williams

Resolved that Councillor Williams be elected as Leader of the Executive for the ensuing year.

9. **Appointment of the Executive 2010/2011**

Resolved that membership of the Executive would continue to comprise 9 Members for the ensuing year.

10. **Appointment of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee**

The appointment of a Corporate Scrutiny Committee for the ensuing year was agreed as follows:-

13 Members, 6 Conservatives, 6 Liberal Democrats, 1 Independent.

11. **Appointment of the Community Scrutiny Committee**

The appointment of a Community Scrutiny Committee for the ensuing year was agreed as follows:-

13 Members, 6 Conservatives, 6 Liberal Democrats, 1 Independent.

(Note: The Chairmanship and Vice-Chairmanship of both of the Scrutiny Committees would be by Members who were not part of the controlling administration).

12. **Appointment of Regulatory Committees and Boards**

(a) The appointment of a Planning Committee for the ensuing year was agreed as follows:-

18 Members, 8 Conservatives, 9 Liberal Democrats, 1 Independent.

(b) The appointment of a Licensing Committee for the ensuing year was agreed as follows:-

15 Members, 7 Conservatives, 7 Liberal Democrats, 1 Independent.

(c) The appointment of a Corporate Governance Committee for the ensuing year was agreed as follows:-

11 Members, 4 Conservatives, 5 Liberal Democrats, 1 Labour and 1 Independent.

- (d) The appointment of a Staffing Board for the ensuing year was agreed with membership being selected on a proportional basis, from a pool of Councillors.

13. **Standards Committee 2010/2011**

The appointment of a Standards Committee for the ensuing year was agreed, with membership to consist of 7 independent members of the public (Mrs A Elder, Mr A Cottrell, Mr R Macey, Mr P Malim OBE, Mr W L Rogers, Mr M Stanbury and Mr R Symons), 3 Councillors (1 from each group) and 3 Parish Members (Mr M Marshall, Mr B Wilson and one vacancy) from whom Panels would be selected when necessary.

14. **Reflections**

The meeting was closed at 8.38 pm with a number of reflections offered by Mr Martin Wall, a member of the Society of Friends.

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 24 June 2010 at 7.35 pm.

Present The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Brooks) (In the Chair)
Councillors Mrs Allgrove, Bishop, Bowrah, Cavill, Mrs Copley, Ms Court, Mrs Court-Stenning, Critchard, Denington, D Durdan, Ms Durdan, Edwards, Farbahi, Mrs Floyd, Gaines, Guerrier, Hall, Henley, Ms Herbert, C Hill, Mrs Hill, House, Miss James, McMahon, Meikle, Morrell, Mullins, Murphy, O'Brien, Paul, Prior-Sankey, Slattery, Mrs Smith, P Smith, Mrs Stock-Williams, Stone, 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. Apologies

The Mayor (Councillor Horsley) and Councillors Govier and Mrs Lewin-Harris.

Councillors Beaven, Coles, Hayward, R Lees, Mrs Lees and Stuart-Thorn were not present at the meeting as they were representing the Council at the latest memorial service held at All Saints Church, Norton Fitzwarren for two Royal Marines of 40 Commando who had been killed in Afghanistan.

2. Communications

The Democratic Services Manager reported that the Mayor had drafted a letter to Mr David Cameron, following comments the Prime Minister had recently made about the death of Royal Marine Richard Hollington, who was the 300th British casualty in Afghanistan.

The Mayor had welcomed Mr Cameron's support for the Marines, their families and friends in the continuing struggle.

A copy of the letter was read out to Councillors and its contents were supported.

3. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Coles declared a personal interest as a Director of Southwest One. Councillors Brooks (the Deputy Mayor), Henley, McMahon, Paul, Prior-Sankey, Mrs Waymouth and D Wedderkopp declared personal interests as Members of Somerset County Council. Councillors Brooks also declared a personal interest as a Council tenant. Councillor Prior-Sankey declared a further personal interest as someone who rented a Council-owned garage. Councillors Henley and Mrs Wilson both declared personal interests as employees of Job Centre Plus. Councillor Mrs Whitmarsh declared personal interests as Members of the Somerset Waste Board. Councillor Slattery declared a personal interest as an employee of Sedgemoor District Council.

Councillor Miss James declared a personal interest as an employee of Viridor. 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.

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

(a) **Review of Cemetery and Crematorium Fees and Charges**

The Executive had given detailed consideration to proposals to make a number of amendments to the current Cemeteries and Crematorium fees.

The areas of change were:-

- (a) Removal of the 4 pm surcharge to help the service become more competitive;
- (b) The introduction of three early times for the delivery of the deceased at a reduced cremation fee without any form of service;
- (c) The removal of double burial fees for non-residents;
- (d) The reduction of the Saturday Cremation fee from £1,100 to £800;
- (e) The addition of a Saturday Burial fee when a Saturday burial is provided; and
- (f) The reduction in the Additional Service Time fee.

The proposed changes would enable the service to become more competitive, offer a better service to the funeral directors and make better use of resources. In addition it was predicted that the overall level of income could rise by as much as £13,000 per annum.

On the motion of Councillor Williams (in the absence of Councillor Hayward), it was

Resolved that the proposed amendments to the Cemeteries and Crematorium fees be approved.

(b) **Revised Charges for Pre-Planning Advice**

The Executive had also considered proposals to revise the charges made for providing officer advice to members of the public, developers and their agents on the merits of planning proposals, prior to an application being submitted.

It was proposed to increase all charges by £10+VAT, except in respect of meetings for major applications where it was felt that a flat rate fee of £235 (£200+VAT) should be charged instead of the current hourly rate.

On the motion of Councillor Edwards, it was

Resolved that the proposed revisions to charges for pre-planning advice be approved.

(c) Housing Revenue Account Reform : Council Housing – A Real Future – Prospectus

Every Local Authority with Council housing had to maintain a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) which was a ring-fenced account.

The current HRA subsidy system was the national redistribution of revenue from Councils that were deemed to have surplus income to those Councils that were deemed to not have enough. The HRA subsidy was the difference between assessed rent and assessed expenditure.

The current subsidy supported a minority of Councils in servicing their historic housing debt. In 2010/2011, Taunton Deane Borough Council was to pay £6,000,000 to the Government in the form of 'negative subsidy'.

The intention of the current review being undertaken by the Department of Communities and Local Government was aimed at dismantling the existing subsidy system and replacing it with a localised system of self-financing for all Councils. The Government's self-financing option involved re-allocating the national housing debt by offering Local Authorities a debt settlement which they would then be responsible for servicing.

If Taunton Deane opted to join the self financing system, it was likely the Council would be allocated additional debt of £86,000,000. The cost of servicing the debt would be ring-fenced to the HRA, but the need to pay £6,000,000 of negative HRA subsidy to the Government would be removed. The debt figure would be subject to confirmation as part of the next Spending Review.

It was intended that self-financing in the future would be achieved by a one off financial arrangement that calculated the spending requirement for each Council. For Taunton Deane, the opening debt settlement was shown as £116,000,000. Councils would be able to borrow up to the level in the settlement, which allowed for additional borrowing without forcing up overall public spending.

The only income assumed in the prospectus was rent and Councils would need to adhere to National Rent Policy. Housing Benefit would only be paid to the level commensurate with this Policy.

Under self-financing, Councils would retain 100% of capital receipts, with the expectation that 75% would be used for affordable housing and regeneration.

Debt would be allocated using the Subsidy Capital Financing Requirement which currently formed part of the subsidy system calculation:-

Amount of debt HRA can service under proposals	£116,294,00
Amount of debt currently recognised by subsidy	£30,585,000
Amount of additional 'settlement' debt under proposals	£85,709,000

Current actual HRA debt (2010/11)	£14,451,000
Actual HRA debt under proposals	£100,160,000

These figures would give Taunton Deane some leeway for further borrowing, however, rigorous testing would be carried out to ensure it could be afforded.

The prospectus asked, through a series of questions, if Councils were in favour of a self-financing HRA, or the continuation of the existing arrangements. The Government expected Councils to test the opening debt figure proposed under self-financing in a local business plan which reflected local information about actual income, spending needs and borrowing costs.

On the basis of a £86,000,000 debt settlement, Taunton Deane would be in a position to repay it and would have scope for additional investment in the stock over the term of a plan. The responses to the questions set out in the prospectus had therefore been drafted on this basis.

The self-financing system had been considered by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 17 June 2010 where it was felt the benefits of the Government's proposals outweighed the risks. The Executive had also come to the same conclusion.

On the motion of Councillor Mrs Court-Stenning, it was

Resolved that the proposed responses to the Department of Communities and Local Government's Consultation Paper set out in Appendix A to these minutes, be accepted.

5. **Change of the Taunton Deane Borough Council Director on the Southwest One Board**

Considered report previously circulated, which recommended a change in Taunton Deane's Director on the Board of Southwest One.

The Council had entered into a contract with Somerset County Council and IBM to form the Southwest One 'joint venture partnership' company during 2007. The Avon and Somerset Police had subsequently joined the partnership.

Under the terms of the contract, the Council was entitled and required to nominate a Director to sit on the Board of Southwest One. The role had been filled since 2007 by Councillor Simon Coles.

However, due to the recent change in leadership of the Council, it was appropriate to nominate a new Director. Councillor Tony McMahon had been nominated by the ruling group to replace Councillor Coles on the board.

Noted that the decision to change the Authority's Director had to be taken by Full Council in its capacity as Taunton Deane's 'Shareholder' in the Southwest

One partnership. The new Director would then be authorised to attend the Southwest One Board meetings.

Resolved that:-

- (1) Taunton Deane's Director on the Southwest One Board be changed with immediate effect from Councillor Simon Coles to Councillor Tony McMahon; and
- (2) Councillor Coles be thanked for undertaking the role of Director on the Southwest One Board over the past three years.

6. **Review of the size of Committees**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning proposals to alter the size of some of the Council's Committees.

Sections 15 and 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 provided a duty for local authorities to regularly review the proportionality of its Committees to ensure that it reflected the political make up of the Council.

Following a change in Taunton Deane's leadership at the Annual Council meeting on 13 May 2010, a review of the Council's Committees had been undertaken to see whether any changes needed to be made to the numbers of Members who currently sat on those Committees.

Two particular factors had been taken into account. Firstly, the changes that had been made approximately three years ago to increase the size of some of the Committees as part of the Scrutiny Pilot Scheme. These changes had been introduced to overcome concerns expressed at the time by some Members that they would not have a sufficient workload following the abolition of the five former Review Panels.

The Scrutiny Pilot had resulted in the decision subsequently being taken to establish a new structure for scrutiny comprising a Corporate Scrutiny Committee, a Community Scrutiny Committee together with task and finish group working.

The second factor was the decision made towards the end of last year by one of the Liberal Democrat Members to join the Independent Group.

A special meeting of the Constitutional Sub-Committee had recently been held to debate the proposed changes to the size and composition of the various Committees and to agree the relevant changes to the Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of the Council's Constitution. The Chairmanships of the three Regulatory Committees had also been looked at.

Resolved that:-

- (1) The changes to the size of the various Committees and the

Chairmanships, as detailed in Appendix B to these minutes, be approved;
and

- (2) The changes to the Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of the Constitution, as detailed in Appendix C to these minutes, be also approved.

(The meeting ended at 8.49 pm.)

Appendix A

Council Housing: A Real Future

Consultation Response

Q1 What are your views on the proposed methodology for assessing income and spending needs under Self Financing and for valuing each council's business?

Our broad view is that the proposed methodology provides a reasonable approach for valuing the housing business. With the uplifts to management and maintenance and major repairs allowances and the proposed 6.5% discount rate, self financing will provide a basis for a viable HRA Business Plan.

Q2 What are your views on the proposals for financial, regulatory and accounting framework for self financing?

We support the proposal for local authorities to report on a separate housing balance sheet and to introduce a separation of the loans pool between the HRA and the General Fund for accounting purposes. This is on the proviso that in practice funds would be managed jointly so that the costs and income potential from our treasury decisions are not adversely affected by this change. This will have the advantage of making the results of investment decisions in the respective areas more transparent. However, we need to go through this in more detail and undertake due diligence in relation to the accounting.

We also welcome the further clarification of the accounting treatment of core, core plus and non-core services.

Whilst Taunton Deane Borough Council is already accounting for expenditure appropriately between the HRA and the General Fund, revised guidance on the operation of the HRA ring fence will improve comparability of actual costs between local authorities.

Q3 How much new supply could the settlement enable you to deliver, if combined with social housing grant?

We are cautiously optimistic that there may be scope for additional new supply, subject to effective running of our business plan for at least 4 years from the onset and the availability of land.

We have modelled a scheme based on 120 new units assuming a 30% grant rate from the Homes and Communities Agency over years 4 to 9 of our business plan and 80 new units assuming a 0% grant rate over years 4 to 9 of our business plan.

Q4 Do you favour a self-financing system for council housing or the continuation of a nationally redistributive subsidy system?

On the basis of the proposals Taunton Deane Borough Council favours a self-financing system.

Q5 Would you wish to proceed to early voluntary implementation of self-financing on the basis of the methodology and principles proposed in this document? Would you be ready to implement self-financing in 2011-12? If not, how much time do you think is required to prepare for implementation?

Moving to early voluntary implementation of self financing based upon the information currently provided is supported subject to obtaining full and acceptable financial details and resolution of the issues raised within our replies to the other consultation questions.

Implementation in 2011/12 would be feasible subject to early receipt of final acceptable details from the government and conclusion of the financing arrangements.

The earliest possible confirmation, even if final implementation is delayed, or a clear statement that self financing on the basis of the proposals is going to happen, will allow us to secure the best terms on loans in the intervening period.

Q6 If you favour self-financing but do not wish to proceed on the basis of the proposals in this document, what are the reasons?

Taunton Deane Borough Council does favour self financing and would like to move to an early implementation of the system.

Review of the size of Committees

Appendix B

Executive Committee

- Councillor Williams – Leader of the Council
- Councillor Edwards – Deputy Leader – (Planning and Transportation)
- Councillor Mrs Lewin-Harris (Communications and Community Leadership)
- Councillor Cavill (Economic Development and the Arts)
- Councillor Hayward (Environmental Services)
- Councillor Ms Herbert (Sports, Parks and Leisure)
- Councillor Mrs Court-Stenning (Housing Services)
- Councillor Hall (Corporate Resources)

Political make up

Conservatives	25	44.6%
Liberal Democrats	25	44.6%
Independents	6	10.75%
	56	99.95%

Committee	Conservatives	Liberal Democrats	Independents
Corporate Governance	5	5	1
Licensing	7	7	1
Planning	7	7	3
Corporate Scrutiny	5	5	1
Community Scrutiny	5	5	1
	29	29	7
	44.6	44.6	10.8
	%		

Chairs

Conservatives 3

Liberal Democrats 2

Vice-Chairmen will be selected by their respective Committees.

Appendix C

COMMITTEES INCLUDING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY –

POWERS AND PROCEDURE RULES

Procedure Rules for overview and scrutiny

1.0 What will be the arrangements to carry out the ‘overview and scrutiny’ function?

The Council will establish the overview and scrutiny committees as detailed in Article 9, part II of this constitution and will appoint thirteen members as set out in 5.0 below or such number as it considers appropriate from time to time. Such committees may appoint sub-committees and/or task and finish groups for specific tasks. Council may also appoint overview and scrutiny committees for a fixed period, on the expiry of which they shall cease to exist.

1.1 Terms of Reference of the overview and scrutiny committees

These are set out in Article 9 of the Constitution.

1.2 Roles and Terms of Reference of the Task and Finish groups

These are set out in Article 9 of the Constitution.

2.0 Who may sit on the Overview and Scrutiny committees and Task and Finish groups

- (a) Any councillor except a member of the Executive may be a member of one of the overview and scrutiny committees or task and finish group. But, no member may be involved in reviewing a decision in which he/she has been directly involved.

3.0 Co-opted Members

Each task and finish group shall be entitled to recommend to the relevant overview and scrutiny committee the appointment of people to their membership as non-voting co-optees.

4.0 Meetings of the overview and scrutiny committees

The overview and scrutiny committee shall each meet once a month. Other meetings may be called from time to time as and when its business requires or where the committee deem appropriate to look at a particular issue.

5.0 The party whip

Whilst the “party whip” can play a proper part in the political environment of local government, it is acknowledged that any “whipping” arrangements do not readily have a place where “overview and scrutiny” are concerned.

A party whip shall not apply to the overview and scrutiny business of either the committees or the task and finish groups.

6.0 Size, Substitutions and Quorum

- (a) The membership of each of the overview and scrutiny committees shall each consist of pro-rata to the number of elected members who must not be members of the Executive.
- (b) the membership of any task and finish group will be no more than 7 and no less than 4 members.
- (c) The allocation of seats on each overview and scrutiny committee shall be on the basis of the 'proportionality rules' in the 1989 Local Government and Housing Act.
- (d) Each party/group - to whom seats have been allocated on any overview and scrutiny committee or task and finish group may - by giving formal notice to the Democratic Services Officer - substitute different members for those seats - either on a temporary or permanent basis. Such formal notice must be given to the Democratic Services Officer not later than the beginning of the meeting concerned, and such substitution will last for the whole of that meeting.
- (e) The quorum for the overview and scrutiny committees and task and finish groups shall be 4 of its members.

7.0 Who chairs meetings?

- (a) The chairmanship and vice-chairmanship of each of the overview and scrutiny committees shall not be a member of the controlling administration.
- (b) The chairmanships of the task and finish groups shall be decided by the relevant group leaders
- (c) Appointments to the chairmanships of the overview and scrutiny committees will be made according to section 16.2 .
- (d) If the chairman and vice-chairman are absent from a meeting of the committee then its members shall appoint one of their number to chair that meeting.

8.0 Co-ordinating Scrutiny Committee (informal)

- (a) The membership of the Co-ordinating Scrutiny committee is set out in Article 9 to this constitution.

- (b) The purpose of this committee is to manage the forward plan for both committees to ensure an even distribution of work. Where a matter for consideration by an overview and scrutiny committee also falls within the remit of another overview and scrutiny committee the decision as to which committee deals with matter will be resolved by this committee in consultation with the Proper Officer.
- (c) Any member shall be entitled to give notice to the chair of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee with a copy to the Democratic Services Manager for an item to be included on the forward plan/agenda that is relevant to that committees functions.
- (d) The Co-ordinating Scrutiny Committee will consider this request at the next available meeting unless the Chair of the relevant committee deems that the matter should be dealt with more quickly.
- (e) If the matter should be dealt with more expeditiously then the Chair of the relevant scrutiny committee will notify the Chair of the other scrutiny committee and the Democratic Services Manager accordingly.

9.0 Policy Review and Development

- (a) The role of the overview and scrutiny committees in relation to the development of the Council's Budget and Policy Framework is set out in detail in the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules (Part 4C)
- (b) The overview and scrutiny committees may make proposals to the Executive for development of policies on other matters which fall within their terms of reference.
- (c) Within any budget which the Council makes available to the overview and scrutiny committees to fund external costs, task and finish groups may make funding requests to the relevant committee to allocate expenditure in carrying through this role. This can include holding inquiries; looking at available options for future policy development and appointing advisers and assessors to assist them in this process where they believe this is necessary. They may ask witnesses to attend to address them on any matter which forms part of this work and may pay reasonable fees and expenses for doing so to any advisers, assessors and witnesses

10.00 Excluded Matters

- (a) Certain matters are excluded from the remit of the overview and scrutiny committees and these are:-
 - (i) any matter relating to a planning decision
 - (ii) any matter relating to a licensing decision

- (iii) any matter relating to an individual or entity in respect of which that individual or entity has a right of recourse to a review or right of appeal conferred by or under any enactment;
- (iv) any matter which is vexatious, discriminatory or not reasonable to be included in the agenda for, or to be discussed at, a meeting of the overview and scrutiny committee or at a meeting of a sub-committee of that committee.

(b) This rule will not apply if there is an allegation or complaint of a systematic failure of an authority to discharge a function for which the authority is responsible and the overview and scrutiny committee will be able to review this process. However it will not be able to alter an individual decision.

11.0 **Requests from Members**

Any member who requests an item is placed on the agenda for overview and scrutiny must include representations as to why it would be appropriate for the committee to deal with this matter.

12.0 **Reports from Overview and Scrutiny committees**

- (a) Once it has formed recommendations, the relevant scrutiny committee will prepare a formal report and submit it to the Democratic Services Manager for consideration either:-
 - (i) by the Executive (if the proposals are consistent with the existing Budgetary and Policy Framework), or
 - (ii) to the Council (if the recommendation would require a departure from or a change to the agreed Budget and Policy Framework).
- (b) The Executive (or the Council as appropriate) shall, where possible, consider the committee's report at its next available meeting.
- (c) If a matter has been referred to the overview and scrutiny committee by a member, a copy of any report or recommendation made by the committee shall be sent to that member.

13.0 **Reports from overview and scrutiny committee to the Executive and the Council**

- (a) if the overview and scrutiny committee publishes its report or recommendations the committee must in writing **require** the Executive or Council to:-
 - (i) consider the report or recommendations;
 - (ii) respond to the overview and scrutiny committee indicating what (if any) action the Executive/Council proposes to take:

- (iii) if the overview and scrutiny committee has published the report or recommendations to publish the response;
 - (iv) if the overview and scrutiny committee provided a copy of the report or recommendations to a member of the Council, to provide the member with a copy of the response.
- (b) The Executive or Council must do so within two months beginning with the date on which it receives the report or recommendations from overview and scrutiny.

14.0 Rights of scrutiny committee members to documents

In addition to their rights as councillors, members of overview and scrutiny and task and finish groups have the additional right to documents, and to notice of meetings as set out in the Access to Information Procedure Rules of this Constitution (Part 4B).

15.0 Members and officers giving account

- (a) Each scrutiny committee may scrutinise and review decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any Council functions within that committee's Terms of Reference as detailed in Article 9.

It may review any documents and/or require the Leader and any member, the Head of Paid Service and/or any senior officer to attend before it to explain matters within their remit which about:-

- i) any particular decision or series of decisions they have taken;
- ii) the extent to which any such actions taken assist in implementing Council policy; and/or
- iii) the members' or officers' performance.

and it is the duty of those persons to attend if so required.

- (b) Where any member or officer is required to attend a scrutiny committee under this provision, the chair of that committee will notify the Democratic Services Manager, who shall inform the member or officer in writing giving at least 5 working days notice of the meeting at which he/she is required to attend. The notice will state the nature of the item on which he/she is required to attend to give account and whether any papers are required to be produced for the committee. Where the account to be given to the committee will require the production of a report, then the member or officer concerned will be given sufficient notice to allow for its preparation.
- (c) Where, in exceptional circumstances, the member or officer is unable to attend on the required date, then the Democratic Services Manager

shall consult with the member or officer so as to make alternative arrangements for attendance.

14.0 Attendance by others

A scrutiny committee may invite people other than those referred to in paragraph 13 above to address it, discuss issues of local concern and/or answer questions.

15.0 CALL-IN

15.1 Types of Decisions which are affected by the Call-in mechanism

The call-in mechanism set out below shall apply to the following types of decision:-

(a) To any decision made by:-

- \$ the Executive, or
- \$ an individual member of the Executive, or
- \$ by any committee of the Executive,
- \$ an area committee, or
- \$ under joint arrangements
- \$ any ward member

and

(b) To any *Key Decision* * - by whomever it is made.

[* a Key decision is defined in Article 13 as a decision which will have a significant impact within the administrative borough, an operational impact on the community of more than one electoral ward, or involves a significant level of expenditure to be incurred by the Council relating to the discharge of a specific Council function (rather than solely staff related), e.g. where the aggregate expenditure is £50k or more (but not to include any expenditure included in a budget which has been approved in a framework policy).

15.2 Decisions which are not subject to call-in

These include:-

- \$ any non-Executive decision – ie: those listed in Part 3 of the Constitution as ones which will not be taken by the Executive - such as Planning, Licensing and Staffing issues
- \$ decisions made by full Council
- \$ all decisions taken by officers within the Scheme of Delegations - unless they are ‘key decisions’
- \$ decisions of the Executive to confirm a previous decision - following a request from the overview and scrutiny committee as

part of this call-in procedure
§ decisions to which the urgency mechanism has been applied
under paragraph 15.9

15.3 Publication of Decision

- (a) With the exception of meetings of the Executive itself, a written record of any decision made - of the types and/or by any of those bodies or people listed in paragraph 15.1 - shall be compiled by the decision-taker and immediately e-mailed (or otherwise forwarded) to the Legal and Democratic Services Manager for publication.
- (b) The record shall be in such standard form as s/he prescribes (the 'decision record') and it (including the minutes of meetings of the Executive) must contain the following details provided by the decision-maker:-
- ! the decision,
 - ! the reasons for the decision,
 - ! any alternative options considered at the time but rejected,
 - ! any conflict of interest on the part of any Executive Councillor involved in or consulted about the decision
 - ! a note of any dispensation which has been granted in relation to such a declared interest
 - ! a note of any report considered when reaching that decision, and
 - ! a list of any "Background Papers" taken into account by the decision-taker.
- (c) By 5pm on the 2nd working day after the decision has been accepted, the Legal & Democratic Services Manager shall publish it in the following ways:-
- (i) the record shall be made available for public inspection at the Deane House
 - (ii) a copy shall be dispatched by email (unless a request has been made for it to be sent by ordinary post) to every councillor,
 - (iii) a copy shall be posted on the Council's Web site
 - (iv) it shall be included in the Council's 'Weekly Bulletin'
- (d) The decision record will be dated and will show the date on which the decision will become effective - unless written notice (as described below) calling in the decision is received. That right of call-in will expire at 12 noon on the 5th working day after the decision has been published. (The call-in period of decisions included in the 'Weekly Bulletin' therefore expires at noon on the Wednesday following its publication). If the Legal and Democratic Services Manager is not satisfied that the decision

record does not contain sufficient detail, then s/he shall not accept it and shall return it to the decision-taker for further clarification.

- (e) Any decision listed in paragraph 15.1 shall:-
- (i) not be implemented for 5 working days unless it has been subject to the special urgency mechanism set out in paragraph 15.9
 - (ii) not be capable of being implemented unless and until it has been published as prescribed in this paragraph

15.4 Call-in procedure

With each decision record being taken, a standard 'call-in request form' will be included for every councillor to complete if they wish to challenge a decision. The form will require the decision to be identified and for the detailed reasons justifying the call-in to be described.

The 'detailed reasons' shall relate to the merits of that decision only, when those calling it in have evidence which would result in a different decision being made.

On receipt of 2 such completed call-in request forms - in respect of the same decision and within the prescribed call-in period - the Monitoring Officer is authorised to call in that decision. In consequence, the Democratic and Legal Services Manager shall then immediately:-

- (a) give notice of the call-in and its consequences to the following:-
- ! the decision taker,
 - ! the Executive Councillor holding the relevant service portfolio,
 - ! those councillors who have challenged the decision and to
 - ! the Director and/or Service Manager primarily affected, and
 - ! the Leader of the Executive and the Head of Paid Service,
 - ! the Chair of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee.
 - ! the next weekly bulletin
- (b) include the call-in request - together with the detailed justification given by the challengers - on the agenda for the next ordinary meeting of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee together with a copy of the report which gave rise to the challenged decision.
- (c) if no overview and scrutiny committee meeting is programmed within 14 days, and the committee's chairman believes that an earlier decision

would be in the Council's best interests, then s/he may instruct the Legal and Democratic Services Manager to convene a special meeting.

15.5 The Role of the overview and scrutiny committee

- (a) It is the function of the overview and scrutiny committee to consider both the views of the challengers and of the decision-taker(s). Each shall have the right to attend and address the committee. Having done so the committee shall decide whether it wishes to pursue the challenge further. The committee's options are:-
 - (i) to support the challenge and to refer the decision to the Executive for further consideration (stating the grounds justifying that request)
 - (ii) to take no further action on the call-in, or
 - (iii) to ask the Executive to consider the decision (under the Council referral process in paragraph (b) below).

- (b) Where the committee certifies those substantial reasons which it believes would justify the issue being brought before full Council for its advice or decision, then it can adopt the following exceptional course of action - a 'Council Referral' resolution. The resolution will be in two parts:-
 - (i) to ask the Executive to re-consider the decision; and
 - (ii) if the Executive is not prepared to reverse or modify its decision in the way that the Committee requests, then the Referral resolution will require that the Executive's decision is immediately referred to an meeting of the full Council.

- (c) A 'Council Referral' resolution can only be agreed at an overview and scrutiny committee meeting when at least 7 of its 13 members vote for that option. The Referral shall be taken to the full Council in the names of those councillors who have voted for it and they shall be deemed to have requisitioned any Special Council meeting which is required under paragraph 15.6 (below).

15.6 Council Referral Procedure

- (a) Where the overview and scrutiny committee passes such a valid Council Referral resolution, then if the Executive is unwilling to substantially accede to the committee's request to reverse or modify its decision, the matter will be automatically referred to full Council as follows:-
 - (i) If the Referral can be taken to an ordinary meeting of the Council within 14 days of the Executive meeting, then it will be reported to that meeting;
 - (ii) If such an ordinary meeting of the Council is not thus available then the Legal and Democratic Services Manager will treat the committee's Referral resolution as a requisition for a Special

Meeting of the Council to be held within two weeks of the Executive meeting

(b) Full Council's role will be to consider one of the following:-

(i) to give its advice on the matter

if the decision challenged is one which, only the Executive can determine, then the Council will be asked to give its advice on how the matter should be dealt with; or

(ii) to decide the issue itself

This alternative will apply in two instances - either:-

(a) where the decision challenged is one which, under the Act, only the Executive can determine, but the Monitoring Officer has nevertheless certified that the decision being challenged is one which is contrary to the Policy Framework, or contrary to or not wholly consistent with the Budget, or

(b) where the matter is not one reserved under the Constitution to the Executive.

(iii) to take no action on the Referral

If such a resolution is passed then the decision which was challenged shall become immediately effective.

(c) Recommendations under paragraph 15.5(b) shall be taken to Council in the name of the overview and scrutiny committee chairman. The report will either seek the advice of the Council on the matter, or will propose the decision to be taken.

15.7 The effect of a Call-in

The effect of any call-in is that implementation of the decision is 'frozen' until such time as:-

- (a) the councillors who requested the call-in withdraw their request; or
- (b) 14 days elapse without the notice convening an overview and scrutiny committee being given for a meeting of the committee resolving to pursue the call-in further; or
- (c) the meeting of the committee has decided (under 15.5 (ii)) to take no further action on the call-in.
- (d) the decision-taker (whether the Executive, an Executive Councillor or an Officer) - on considering the report of the overview and scrutiny committee or the Council - decides to proceed with implementing the previous decision, whether modified or unmodified.

- (e) a decision by the Council under the Council Referral mechanism has been made under either 15.6(b)(ii) or (iii).

15.8 Exceptions and Limitations on Call-In

- (a) To ensure that call-in is not abused, nor causes unreasonable delay through the freeze upon implementation which it brings about, certain further limitations are placed on its use. These are:
 - (i) any decision may only be called in once.
 - (ii) any recommendation from the Executive to full Council or to the overview and scrutiny committee shall not be subject to the call-in mechanism.
- (b) Whilst every effort will be made to circulate all councillors with such Executive decisions (whether as draft minutes or as an individual "decision records") there may be exceptional circumstances where this proves to be impossible. In such cases:-
 - (i) These procedure rules shall be interpreted so as to ensure that no Executive decision shall be frozen for any longer than the periods described in 15.7
- (c)
 - (i) Whilst the above limits apply to the full call-in mechanism, members may instead request that any decision (and the consequences found to result from it) is subsequently reviewed at a future meeting of the overview and scrutiny committee.
 - (ii) Requests to include such later reviews on a overview and scrutiny committee agenda will be dealt with under paragraph 8.0 above. Such requests will therefore not bring about any freeze upon the implementation of the decision referred to.

15.9 Call-in and Urgency

- (a) The call-in procedure set out above shall not apply where the decision is certified under this paragraph as urgent. The factors to be taken into account as to whether a decision is urgent will include whether any delay caused by the call in process would be likely to seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests.
- (b) Urgency Certification and Dispute Resolution

Certification will work as follows:-

- (i) The matter must first be identified as being urgent at or before the time the decision is made.

- (ii) The written record of the decision (under paragraph 15.3 above) shall thus state that - in the opinion of the decision making body or person - the decision is an urgent one, and therefore cannot reasonably be subject to call-in.
- (ii) If it is intended that the decision should be carried out immediately after it is taken then the decision-maker must first obtain the agreement of both the chairman of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee - or (in his/her absence the vice-chairman of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee) - and the Leader before that decision is implemented. Such agreement shall be confirmed in writing or e-mail.
- (iv) If the approval of both is given, then the Legal and Democratic Services Manager shall publish a copy of that decision record (in the same manner prescribed under paragraph 15.3). A copy of the decision record shall also be included for information on the next full Council agenda.
- (v) If such approval is refused by either, then those called upon to make that decision under paragraph (iii) above, shall sign and endorse the written record of the decision with his/her reasons for so deciding. This shall be subject to publication and reporting as in (iv) above.
- (vi) Where the Head of Paid Service believes that, in all the circumstances, this rejection is unreasonable and that the interests of the Council are significantly threatened, then s/he may convene a meeting of the chairmen of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee or (in their absence) their vice-chairman - together with the Leader and the Chair of the Co-ordinating Scrutiny Committee. That meeting shall be convened with the minimum legal notice and shall review that rejection. The meeting shall have the power to confirm, modify or overturn that rejection and their decision shall not be subject to any further review but shall be reported to the next ordinary Council meeting for its information.

16. OTHER COMMITTEES

- 16.1 the total number of seats which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the number of all the seats as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the Authority;
- 16.2 the number of seats on the ordinary committees of the Authority that are allocated to each political group should bear the same proportion to the total of all the seats on the ordinary committees of the Authority as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the Authority..

- 16.3 Chairmen (including Scrutiny) are similarly pro-rata and nominated by the group leaders. A member of the ruling party cannot be chairman of the Scrutiny committees.
- 16.4 Vice Chairman are elected by the respective committees. A member of the ruling party cannot be vice chairman of the Scrutiny committee
- 16.5 Members of the Executive cannot sit on Scrutiny, Licensing or Planning Committees.
- 16.6 Committee meeting agendas are drawn up by officer and agreed at an agenda setting meeting held before the agenda is issued and attended by the Chairman and Vice Chairman.
- 16.7 At the Annual meeting (Mayor Making) or at such other time as may be appropriate the total size of the committees and their composition will be agreed.

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**
- **Employee of Viridor – Councillor Miss James**
- **Employee of Sedgemoor District Council – Councillor Slattery**
- **Employees of Job Centre Plus – Councillors Henley and Mrs Wilson**

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Full Council – 13 July 2010

Petition Guidance and amendments to Standing Orders

Report of Legal and Democratic Services Manager

(This matter is the responsibility of the Leader of the Council, Councillor John Williams)

Executive Summary

Every local authority needs to ensure that it has a scheme in place to deal with petitions. Although the Council already has a scheme to deal with petitions revisions are necessary in order to comply with the legislation and Government guidance.

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To approve the attached guidance and revisions to the Standing Orders.

2. Background

2.1 The provisions relating to petitions were created by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and came into effect on the 15 June 2010. The Act places a duty on local authorities to implement a petition scheme in line with their recommended guidance.

2.2 Members will recall that they provided a response to the consultation process in February this year and it is understood that there have been some amendments made to the guidance following that consultation process.

2.3 At this stage we do not have to have an e-petition scheme in place although we will need to have something in place by December of this year. A further report will be made to Full Council in due course regarding this matter.

2.4 The Corporate Governance Committee has approved both the guidance and the revisions to the standing orders and these are attached at Appendix 1 and 2 respectively.

2.5 Full Council needs to approve both the guidance and the revisions to the standing order for incorporation in the guidance.

3. Finance Comments

3.1 There are no financial implications other than officer and Member time.

4. Legal Comments

4.1 As stated there is a duty upon local authorities to implement such a scheme.

5. Links to Corporate Aims

5.1 There are no direct links to the corporate aims.

6. Equalities impact

6.1 There are no equalities impacts.

7. Recommendations

7.1 To approve the guidance as set out in Appendix 1; and

7.2 To approve the revisions to the Standing Orders as set out in Appendix 2.

For further information please contact Tonya Meers, Legal and Democratic Services Manager on 01823 356391 or t.meers@tauntondeane.gov.uk

Appendix 1

PETITION SCHEME

PETITIONS

The Council welcomes petitions and recognises that petitions are one way in which people can let us know their concerns. All petitions sent or presented to the Council will receive an acknowledgement from the Council within 10 working days of receipt. This acknowledgement will set out what we plan to do with the petition. We will treat something as a petition if it is identified as being a petition, or if it seems to us that it is intended to be a petition.

Paper petitions can be sent to:

**Taunton Deane Borough Council
The Deane House
Belvedere Road
Taunton
TA1 1HE**

What is a petition

A petition is a formal written request signed by the requisite number of people appealing to an authority about a particular cause or issue.

What are the guidelines for submitting a petition?

Petitions submitted to the Council must include:

- a clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition. It should state what action the petitioners wish the council to take
- the name and address and signature of any person supporting the petition

- the name and address of the petition organizer

Petitions must be accompanied by contact details, including an address, for the petition organiser. This is the person we will contact to explain how we will respond to the petition. The contact details of the petition organiser will not be placed on the website.

Petitions which are considered to be vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate will not be accepted. In the period immediately before an election or referendum we may need to deal with your petition differently – if this is the case we will explain the reasons and discuss the revised timescale which will apply. If a petition does not follow the guidelines set out above, the council may decide not to do anything further with it. In that case, we will write to you to explain the reasons.

What will the Council do when it receives my petition?

An acknowledgement will be sent to the petition organiser within 10 working days of receiving the petition. It will let them know what we plan to do with the petition and when they can expect to hear from us again. It will also be published on our website.

If we can do what your petition asks for, the acknowledgement may confirm that we have taken the action requested and the petition will be closed. If the petition has enough signatures to trigger a council debate, or a senior officer giving evidence, then the acknowledgment will confirm this and tell you when and where the meeting will take place. If the petition needs more investigation, we will tell you the steps we plan to take.

If the petition applies to a planning or licensing application, is a statutory petition (for example requesting a referendum on having an elected mayor), or on a matter where there is already an existing right of appeal, such as council tax banding and non-domestic rates, other procedures apply. Further information on all these procedures and how you can express your views is available here [insert links]

We will not take action on any petition which we consider to be vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate and will explain the reasons for this in our acknowledgement of the petition.

To ensure that people know what we are doing in response to the petitions we receive the details of all the petitions submitted to us will be published on our

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website, except in cases where this would be inappropriate. Whenever possible we will also publish all correspondence relating to the petition (all personal details will be removed).

How will the Council respond to petitions?

Our response to a petition will depend on what a petition asks for and how many people have signed it, but may include one or more of the following:

- taking the action requested in the petition
- considering the petition at a council meeting
- holding an inquiry into the matter
- undertaking research into the matter
- holding a public meeting
- holding a consultation
- holding a meeting with petitioners
- referring the petition for consideration by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny committee*
- calling a referendum
- writing to the petition organiser setting out our views about the request in the petition

*Overview and Scrutiny committees are committees of councillors who are responsible for scrutinising the work of the council – in other words, the Overview and Scrutiny committee has the power to hold the council's decision makers to account.

In addition to these steps, the Council will consider all the specific actions it can potentially take on the issues highlighted in a petition. The table below gives some examples.

Petition subject	Appropriate steps
Alcohol related crime and disorder	If your petition is about crime or disorder linked to alcohol

	<p>consumption, the council may, among other measures, consider the case for placing restrictions on public drinking in the area by establishing a designated public place order or, as a last resort, imposing an alcohol disorder zone. When an alcohol disorder zone is established the licensed premises in the area where alcohol related trouble is being caused are required to contribute to the costs of extra policing in that area. The Council's response to your petition will set out the steps we intend to take and the reasons for taking this approach.</p>
<p>Anti-social behaviour (ASB)</p>	<p>As the elected representatives of your local area, as social landlord and licensing authority, the Council plays a significant role to play in tackling anti-social behaviour. The Council, in conjunction with our partners in the local crime and disorder partnership have set out minimum service standards for responding to issues of anti-social behaviour, you can find more details about these standards here [insert link].</p> <p>When responding to petitions on ASB, we will consider in consultation with our local partners, all the options available to us including the wide range of powers and mechanisms we have to intervene as part of our role as social landlord and licensing authority. For example, we will work with the neighbourhood policing team in the affected area to identify what action might be taken including what role</p>

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	CCTV might play, consider identifying a dedicated contact within the council to liaise with the community and neighbourhood partners on issues of ASB in the area in question and, where appropriate, we will alert the crime and disorder reduction partnership and crime and disorder overview and scrutiny committee to the issues highlighted in the petition.
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If your petition is about something over which the Council has no direct control (for example the local railway or hospital) we will consider making representations on behalf of the community to the relevant body. The Council works with a large number of local partners [link to list of LAA partners] and where possible will work with these partners to respond to your petition. If we are not able to do this for any reason (for example if what the petition calls for conflicts with council policy), then we will set out the reasons for this to you. You can find more information on the services for which the Council is responsible here [link].

If your petition is about something that a different council is responsible for we will give consideration to what the best method is for responding to it. This might consist of simply forwarding the petition to the other council, but could involve other steps. In any event we will always notify you of the action we have taken.

Full council debates

If a petition contains more than 1,500 signatures it will be debated by the Full Council unless it is a petition asking for a senior council officer to give evidence at a public meeting. This means that the issue raised in the petition will be discussed at a meeting which all councillors can attend. The Council will endeavour to consider the petition at its next meeting, although on some occasions this may not be possible and consideration will then take place at the following meeting. The petition organiser will be given five minutes to present the petition at the meeting and the petition will then be discussed by councillors for a maximum of 15 minutes. The Council will decide how to respond to the petition at this meeting. They may decide to take the action the petition requests, not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate, or to commission further investigation into the matter, for example by

a relevant committee. Where the issue is one on which the Council Executive are required to make the final decision, the council will decide whether to make recommendations to inform that decision. The petition organiser will receive written confirmation of this decision. This confirmation will also be published on our website.

Officer evidence

Your petition may ask for a senior council officer to give evidence at a public meeting about something for which the officer is responsible as part of their job. For example, your petition may ask a senior council officer to explain progress on an issue, or to explain the advice given to elected members to enable them to make a particular decision.

If your petition contains at least 750 signatures, the relevant senior officer will give evidence at a public meeting of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny committee. A list of the senior staff that can be called to give evidence can be found here [insert link]. You should be aware that the Overview and Scrutiny committee may decide that it would be more appropriate for another officer to give evidence instead of any officer named in the petition – for instance if the named officer has changed jobs. The committee may also decide to call the relevant councillor to attend the meeting. Committee members will ask the questions at this meeting, but you will be able to suggest questions to the chair of the committee by contacting Richard Bryant, Democratic Services Manager up to three working days before the meeting.

What can I do if I feel my petition has not been dealt with properly?

If you feel that we have not dealt with your petition properly, the petition organiser has the right to request that the Council's Overview and Scrutiny committee review the steps that the council has taken in response to your petition. It is helpful to everyone, and can improve the prospects for a review if the petition organiser gives a short explanation of the reasons why the Council's response is not considered to be adequate.

The committee will endeavour to consider your request at its next meeting, although on some occasions this may not be possible and consideration will take place at the following meeting. Should the committee determine we have not dealt with your petition adequately, it may use any of its powers to deal with the matter. These powers include instigating an investigation, making recommendations to the Council Executive and arranging for the matter to be considered at a meeting of the Full Council.

Once the appeal has been considered the petition organiser will be informed of the results within 5 working days. The results of the review will also be published on our website.

Appendix 2

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS *

16. (1) (a) A petition is a written request signed by the requisite number of people appealing to an authority about a particular cause or issue.

(b) A petition requiring debate by full council is a petition that contains more than 1,500 signatures and will be debated by full council unless it is a petition asking for a senior council officer to give evidence.

(c) A petition containing at least 750 signatures may ask for a senior council officer to give evidence at a public meeting about something for which the officer is responsible as part of their job.
- (2) Excluded Matters are matters that are excluded from the scope of the petitions duty and these are:-
 - (a) any matter relating to a planning decision, including about a development plan document or the community infrastructure levy;
 - (b) any matter relating to an alcohol, gambling or sex establishment licensing decision;
 - (c) any matter relating to an individual or entity in respect of which that individual or entity has a right of recourse to a review or right of appeal conferred by or under any enactment
- (3) Petitions submitted to the Council must include:-
 - (a) a clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition. It should state what action the petitioners wish the Council to take;
 - (b) the name and address and signature of any person supporting the petition;
 - (c) the name and address of the petition organiser
- (4) All petitions will be acknowledged within 10 working days.

(5) The Council may respond to the petition in a number of ways such as taking the action requested, considering the petition at a Council meeting, holding an inquiry into the matter, undertaking research into the matter, referring the matter to one of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee or holding a meeting with the petitioners.

(6) If a petition contains more than 1500 signatures the petition will be debated at the next scheduled meeting of Full Council unless it is a petition requiring a senior council officer to give evidence at a public meeting.

6.1 The petition organiser will be given 5 minutes to present petition at the meeting;

6.2 Councillors will discuss the petition up to a maximum of 15 minutes;

6.3 The Council will decide how to respond to the petition which may include to take the action requested, not to take the action requested for the reasons given in the debate, refer the matter for further investigation, or refer the matter to the Council Executive for final decision.

(7) A petition may ask for a senior council officer to give evidence at a public meeting about something for which the officer is responsible as part of their job. Any petition requesting this must contain at least 750 signatures. The level of senior officer will be limited to the Council's Corporate Management Team.

(8) A petitioner has the right to request a review of the steps taken in response to the petition if they are unhappy and that request shall be made to one of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees which cannot decide but can only recommend to the Executive Committee or Full Council.

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Council Meeting – 13 July 2010

Part I

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

(i) Councillor Catherine Herbert

Wellington Sports Centre Bid

Wellington Sports Centre is well used but is in need of further investment to enhance and develop the facilities on offer and improve the swimming experience, ensuring sustainability of current usage and increasing the number of new swimmers.

A refurbishment proposal has been submitted to Sport England for funding of a capital grant of £350,000. To date the formal decision on this bid is still awaited.

The aim of the project is to increase swimming participation and to sustain the swimmers who have taken advantage of the Free Swimming initiative by making a series of improvements to both the pool and the changing facilities at Wellington Sports Centre.

The estimated budget for the work is £600,000, which means that a contribution from the Council, of £250,000 is required. It is proposed that this funding should be taken from the Earmarked Asset Management Maintenance Reserve which was set up to meet the needs of Tone Leisure's 10 year maintenance Programme.

It is **recommended** that subject to written confirmation being received from Sport England of £350,000 grant funding:-

- (a) the addition of the Wellington Sports Centre refurbishment to the 2010/2011 Capital Programme with a budget of £600,000 be approved; and
- (b) the virement of £250,000 from the Asset Management Earmarked Maintenance Reserve to the Capital Programme be also approved.

(ii) Councillor Ken Hayward

Climate Change – Revenue contribution to Capital

In April 2010 the Executive approved the Council's Carbon Reduction Plan which is aimed at delivering on the 10:10 challenge.

The Plan includes the replacement of the old gas fired boilers at The Deane House with more modern, high efficiency gas boilers at a cost of approximately £55,000.

The funding for the replacement boilers (and associated zoning of the heating system) is available within the existing Climate Change revenue budget. However, the boiler replacement is a capital project.

It is therefore **recommended** that a Revenue Contribution to Capital of £55,000 to enable the funding of replacement gas boilers at The Deane House, in line with the Council's agreed Carbon Reduction Plan, be agreed.

(iii) Councillor Williams

2009/2010 Budget Outturn Report

The Executive received a detailed report on the outturn position of the Council on revenue and capital expenditure for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and trading services for 2009/2010 at its meeting on 16 June 2010.

A number of issues including the general economic climate and the recession in the United Kingdom and major changes within the Council's organisation, have impacted on Taunton Deane's services and financial performance in a variety of ways. However, the Council has continued to operate within the framework of its Budget Strategy and the overall financial standing at the end of the financial year is sound.

There are two matters which require the approval of Full Council due to slippage in the original spending plans. These are in connection with the net transfer of earmarked reserves and the Carry Forward of Capital Programme Budgets.

During the discussion of the Outturn Report at the Executive's meeting it was decided that, subject to a Supplementary Estimate being agreed, funding should once again be made available to enable the Council to enter a display in this year's Taunton Flower Show.

It is therefore **recommended** that:-

- (i) the net transfer of £856,000 to earmarked reserves for use on General Fund Services and £513,000 to earmarked reserves for use on Housing Revenue Account Services, in 2010/2011 or later years, as set out in the report to the Executive, be approved;
- (ii) the Carry Forward of General Fund Capital Programme Budget totalling £1,026,580 for slippage into 2010/2011 and the carry forward of Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme Budget of £1,497,820 for slippage into 2010/2011 as set out in the report to the Executive, be approved; and
- (iii) a Supplementary Estimate of £8,500 within the Leisure Portfolio for entry in the Taunton Flower Show in 2010, to be funded by a one-off transfer from the Deane DLO Trading Account Earmarked Reserve in 2010/2011 be approved; and that funding for entry in the Show in future years be considered as part of budget setting for 2011/2012.

Council Meeting – 13 July 2010

Report of Councillor John Williams – Leader of the Council

1. A new Coalition Government and a New Administration Locally

- 1.1 There are many challenges that face us from the numerous changes coming out of national Government that will impact upon us locally. Having said this it is an exciting time as I do genuinely believe we are about to be given much greater control of our own destiny than we have previously experienced. However, this comes at a price.
- 1.2 Budget reductions - it is with certainty that we will have to deal with severe reductions to our budgets in future years. The Government mantra is that we must all learn “to do more for less”. I believe universally as Members we all want the best for our community therefore it will be essential to maintain much valued front line services and create the efficiencies in back office services. It must be acknowledged this is getting harder as we have now been doing this for some years!
- 1.3 Abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategy - this will be dealt with in more detail by my colleague Mark Edwards but it has to be welcomed. The numbers imposed by this strategy were unachievable and so therefore, incomprehensible to our community. This is certainly one of those opportunities where we can inject realism into the number of jobs and new homes to be created that will allow Taunton and the wider area to grow in a sustainable manner. But let us be under no illusions, the Government still expect growth as being necessary and we need to work with our communities to deliver.
- 1.4 The proposed abolition of Regional Development Agencies and replacement with Local Enterprise Partnerships is a change that will bring huge challenges but offer great opportunities. I believe the essence is keeping the focus as local as possible with local business and public support but with the ability to work cross boundary for the necessary infrastructure improvements that will be required. We need to be pro-active in this and ensure we create a partnership that will promote the clear objectives and strategic leadership that has stood us in such good stead to date.
- 1.5 The great question mark over the proposed changes to the Regional Development Agency (RDA) is how we access vital funds for infrastructure development. If we are to grasp the opportunities for development of homes and our economy we will most certainly need additional funding and here we will be working with Somerset County Council and other Somerset District Councils. Local Enterprise

Partnerships will need to be established and work as a credible force for Somerset. As ideas are formulated we will ensure they are presented to Members for consideration.

2. Project Taunton Progress

- 2.1 Despite the severe economic recession afflicting the country and the world we have much to be thankful for. The planned regeneration of our town is still generating a lot of interest and major projects are under way. Some notable achievements being:-
- 2.2 Inner Relief Road construction is now well under way which includes a new bridge across the River Tone and is scheduled for completion in spring 2011. It is in fact ahead of programme at present so hopefully will open earlier than scheduled as this road will provide much needed relief to the town centre traffic congestion that occurs. It will also provide access to the Tangier area, yet another town centre site for regeneration.
- 2.3 Northern Inner Distributor Road and East Goods Yard - the road construction to extend it to the East Goods Yard has now commenced. This opens up the site for construction of 108 affordable homes being built for Knightstone Housing with funding from the Homes and Communities Agency. Completion is scheduled for March 2011.
 - 2.3.1 The old Livestock Market site and car park - planning consent has been granted for the first phase of the riverside development works and our development partners St Modwen are hopeful they will shortly be submitting a planning application for offices and homes on the car park site. Serious negotiations are under way for a pre-let of a 20,000 sq ft office building as part of this phase.
- 2.4 Somerset County Cricket Club has successfully completed and opened their new conference centre which is a great addition to the facilities Taunton can offer. They have the ability to serve 350 diners at functions and a similar number can be accommodated in the Long Bar at a separate drinks reception if required. An exciting future project on the cards is the possibility of a new hotel utilising part of the car park on St James Street side overlooking the pitch. Feasibility studies are presently being carried out.
- 2.5 High Street and the Orchard Centre - an exclusivity agreement was entered into with the owners of the Orchard Centre giving them one year to demonstrate they can design a workable scheme that will improve our retail offer in Taunton at affordable cost. This agreement runs until September 2010 and from work so far, it is looking positive that a workable scheme can be produced. If an acceptable scheme is produced then the developers have a further six months to agree heads of terms for a development or sale contract.

3. Hinkley Point Opportunities

- 3.1 Even though Hinkley Point is not within Taunton Deane we do recognise that with such a massive project taking place on our doorstep we must ensure that opportunities for employment and trade are made the most of for our community. In this respect we have received presentations from EDF, met with relevant Portfolio Holders from Somerset County Council to link in with their economic development aims and pressed the case for wider Somerset economic benefits at the County and District Leaders and Chief Executive's meetings.
- 3.2 As a result of pressing our case we now have a Nuclear Development Update presentation arranged for 28 July 2010 for Leaders and Chief Executives of all Somerset authorities. I am also concerned that of the scheduled round of public consultation meetings commencing on 9 July 2010, none are scheduled for our communities in Taunton Deane. I believe this to be a mistake and will be working to rectify this.
- 3.3 We must recognise and grasp the opportunities that will arise if this development proceeds and I believe Taunton Deane Borough Council needs to be very proactive to ensure our community benefits. After all this will be the largest development project ever undertaken in the South West if it proceeds

4. Taunton Cultural Consortium

- 4.1 Recently the 2009 – 2010 report from the Cultural Consortium was sent to me which is a report on the fourth year's work of the consortium. I must commend this organisation who are our protectors and promoters of cultural regeneration in Taunton. I particularly extend my thanks to Max Hebditch and his committee for the work they do on a voluntary basis. For our part I acknowledge for the Council that culture is an absolutely essential part of the huge regeneration taking place and it must form an integral part of our thinking when producing our development plans.
- 4.2 Under "Key Points" of the report, it is pragmatic in recognising that we have difficult economic times ahead. But, the plea is that as one of the funding authorities we should pay particular attention to continuing the development of the Cultural Quarter as it is needed for the wider successful economic development of Taunton Deane. It has great economic benefit in its own right. I do have considerable sympathy with this view and I do believe that the Castle Green works should proceed and the extension of the Brewhouse has to be a priority as and when resources allow.

5. Affordable Housing Day

- 5.1 I was delighted to attend and open the Affordable Housing Day in The Deane House and my congratulations to Lesley Webb and staff for such a successful day judging by the number of exhibitors and attendees. I opened the first exhibition five years ago and in the intervening period Taunton Deane has facilitated the construction of 511 new homes which is an extremely creditable effort. Even though we are presently in difficult economic times, the need for housing still remains and more so for affordable houses. With a need established from the last survey of 576 affordable house required per annum it gives a clear indication why this is, and remains, an absolute priority of this Council

6. Funding News

- 6.1 Let me end on some good news just breaking as I write this. I have received two letters from Grant Shapps MP, Minister for Housing and Local Government dated 2 July 2010, notifying us of release of the following:-
- 6.2 Growth Point funding of £2,200,000 as first announced in 2009. We have to satisfy various points as to how this money will be used to achieve the Government's aims of increasing the housing supply but we have clear plans to move forward so this is not seen as an obstacle. It is to be welcomed and further details of how and where it can be used will be produced shortly.
- 6.3 Eco-Housing Grant - we did not expect this funding stream to be continued but we welcome an award of 50% of that previously agreed which will be extremely welcome in our bid to develop sustainable homes. Based on the 50% award we will be receiving £325,000 and again there are conditions to be fulfilled so the use and allocation of this funding will be the subject of a further report in due course.
- 6.4 Government has made it clear that these funding streams have been released to assist local authorities to raise the rate of house-building which is at a desperately low ebb; the lowest rate of build since 1924, and to improve sustainability of the houses built.

Councillor John Williams

Council Meeting – 13 July 2010

Report of Councillor Mark Edwards – Planning and Transportation

The recent change in Government followed by the change in administration of the Council has meant a review of a number of areas relating to this portfolio.

I am challenging the officers to look at all aspects of the Planning process and see what changes can or should be made with regards the position of this Council and to make sure that we address any concerns or problems that the community encounters or challenges.

We have to be careful not to be too reactive to all signals of change from central Government but have to be minded that change is going to occur and change that will potentially fundamentally alter how the Council operates its planning function. One message is clear - there will be change and more decisions will be made locally.

1. Regional Spatial Strategy and the Core Strategy

- 1.1 Eric Pickles has confirmed that the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) will be abolished and although it will take legislation to do so, we should no longer consider it as material for the development of Core Strategies.
- 1.2 The demise of the RSS means some changes to our work on the Core Strategy. The latest changes in the RSS meant that Taunton was required to accommodate a housing target of 18,000 new homes by 2026.
- 1.3 We had, and still have, an evidence base that around 14,000 new homes are needed in Taunton and a total of 17,300 required for the district as a whole. However, we want housing growth that is broadly in sync with employment growth. We are therefore doing some further work on what the opportunities for employment growth are and will then calculate this against housing numbers.
- 1.4 We also have to take account of other studies – such as the Strategic Housing Market Assessment which tells us what the future housing needs are within Taunton Deane and the population trajectories which help to inform future needs. Whatever the final figures are, they need to be well evidenced and justifiable, or we will face the prospect of having an “unsound” Core Strategy and equally lose the confidence of our community that projections are based on sound evidence.

1.5 Whilst we are taking time to consider these issues, work on other aspects of the Core Strategy will continue. However, it does mean that the timetable we were working to may, but not definitely, be delayed slightly.

2. Five Year Supply

2.1 Whilst we need this time to ensure we are proposing what is best for the future of the district, presently not having a five year land supply could leave us open to development where we might not have planned it.

2.2 We therefore need to move as quickly as possible to consider all the information coming forward and move to agree a sound Core Strategy that will set the scene for the planned and prosperous development of Taunton Deane. We do presently have a five year supply based on the recent inclusion of Nerrols and Cades Farm as interim sites.

2.3 The Government has indicated that they will be addressing the problem of the five year supply in particular to stop developers forcing their will on the community by challenging the Council and threatening to develop land on the basis that they believe they will win on appeal. This is far from satisfactory and I am in contact with Grant Shapps MP the Minister for Housing seeking further confirmation of the changes being proposed.

2.4 The following quote is from Grant Shapps MP Minister for Housing taken directly from Hansard in answer to questions around development. It may create more questions than answers but certainly gives a flavour of the Governments thought process.

“There is the question of the five-year land target. In the previous Administration’s view, unless local authorities planned for five, or even 15, years’ worth of land availability for housing, land simply would not become available. That is because they simply did not trust people.

By contrast, we have said that, with the abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies, we will ensure that the incentive scheme is all that is required to guarantee that local authorities will want to look a reasonable distance in advance to decide whether they need to make land available. That can be done according to local objectives, with local plans in mind and without reference to Regional Spatial Strategies imposed on the area by national Government.

I confirm to my hon. Friend that, although we will not impose five-year plans, we freely expect that many councils will want to adopt them. They may want to look ahead, mainly for reasons of their own financial and sustainable development, to see whether they want to pinpoint land because they will know that a large chunk of their funding will be down to their decision about how much development they want in their area. I confirm to my hon. Friend that the decision will be a local one”.

- 2.5 The indication is that changes will be more of a carrot rather than stick approach with Government incentives for growth but there is also a clear indication that we still need to be planning for the future and the new administration at Taunton Deane has every intention of doing so.

3. The Planning Process

- 3.1 I have concluded that the time is right to hold a review of the Planning process in Taunton Deane. We have to make sure that the service is fit for purpose and delivers what is required of the residents, local professionals and developers in a quick and efficient way without compromising the processes, which protect our communities from inappropriate development.
- 3.2 I believe that improvements can be made and I will work with the officers to instigate this review. There will be more detail to follow on this within the next month.

4. Planning Applications

- 4.1 There are two significant applications being progressed at present:-

- **Tesco**

Tesco are about to submit a planning application to extend their Castle Street store in Taunton. The proposal will be in line with the plans shown at their recent public consultation event. The proposed net floor space would increase by 1,300 square metres from 2,792 to 4,092.

The additional car parking (54 spaces) would be provided on land to the north of the existing car park across Marshalsea Walk and the proposed cycle link to Somerset College and Castle School could be facilitated.

- **Firepool**

St Modwen have submitted an outline planning application for the Priory Bridge Road Car Park site as part of the Firepool redevelopment proposals. The proposed development consists of:-

- Up to 11,200 square metres of office accommodation;
- Up to 49 residential apartments;
- Up to 4,475 sq m of hotel accommodation;
- Up to 112 car parking spaces to serve the offices (and potentially hotel) and a further 52 spaces to serve the residential apartments;
- Within the identified building zones the maximum height will be no greater than 24m (including plant);
- Two vehicular access points both of which will be taken from Priory Bridge Road; and

- Associated landscaping and infrastructure.

It is expected that this application will be determined by the Planning Committee on 22 September 2010.

Councillor Mark Edwards

Council Meeting – 13 July 2010

Report of Councillor Joanna Lewin-Harris – Community Leadership and Communications

1. Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)

- 1.1 The LSP has recently appointed Steve Rose to advise on the development of the LSP, establishing its key priorities and the most effective structure to ensure progress is made against them. This appointment (8 days of Steve Rose's time) is funded by the South West Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (SW RIEP). This work is currently going on and there will be an initial briefing to members at Community Scrutiny on 20 July 2010.
- 1.2 This is an important piece of work as, in my view, the LSP has long struggled to define its role. There is clearly value in the partnership approach and I very much hope that this process leads to a more focussed body, with clear (and possibly more limited) aims and a structure specifically designed to deliver those aims.
- 1.3 One of the main ways in which Taunton Deane plans to tackle the deprivation priority is by developing a Priority Areas Strategy. This is currently being developed by the Strategy Unit. The initial stage of the work is assembling as much information as possible about the deprived wards including a complete picture of the public sector spend in them. Community engagement will follow at the end of the year. The aim is to have a long term Priority Areas Strategy and shorter term (3 year) Action Plan agreed by the end of 2011.
- 1.4 The LSP has set up a Priority Areas Sub-Group with the Chairs of the Taunton East and North Taunton Partnerships and also the Chairs of the Multi Agency Groups for each area. The sub-group will act as a sounding board for taking forward the Priority Areas Strategy and will also help to improve discussion and links between the two areas.
- 1.5 North Taunton Partnership has organised a programme of activities for young people every Tuesday between 11 am and 3 pm during the summer holidays. For details contact Mark or Lesley on 01823 353643 or email rmll@hotmail.co.uk or lesley.resource@btconnect.com.
- 1.6 On 21 August, there will be a Community Day in and around the All Saints Church and the Link Centre, Halcon from noon to 4 pm. For details contact Karen Cole or David Baker on 350788 or email chair@linkpartnership.org or manager@linkpartnership.org

1.7 Energise has organised an Activity Day on 26 August in Vivary Park 12 noon to 4 pm. For details contact Craig Lloyd on 07919 540989 or email clloyd@somerset.gov.uk

1.8 Councillors would be most welcome at any of these events.

2. Youth Initiatives Fund

2.1 £30,000 was set aside in this year's budget to fund projects which help to improve the lives of children and young people within Taunton Deane (the Youth Initiatives Fund).

2.2 Any applications for a grant from this scheme should show that they will benefit children and young people from Taunton Deane, target local need and be in line with our Corporate Priorities. I would also be keen to favour schemes which attract match funding.

2.3 It is currently proposed that decisions on applications to the Youth Initiatives Fund should be made by the Portfolio Holder for Community Leadership, with support from the Community Development Team and advice from external partners and groups where appropriate.

2.4 Detailed proposals on a mechanism for allocating monies from this fund will come to Community Scrutiny on 20 July 2010.

3. Communications

3.1 Many of the press releases issued over the past couple of months have, very sadly, been in connection with the losses suffered by 40 Commando Royal Marines. I very much welcome the lead the Mayor has taken in recognising the sacrifice made by these fine young men, paying our respects to them, expressing our collective grief and wish to support the families and friends of those who have died.

3.2 Other press releases have covered happier topics: the opening of the new play areas in Lyngford Park and Hamilton Gault, the successful Affordable Housing Open Day, re-opening Station Road public toilets, free parking in Wellington during the visit of the Tour of Britain in September and the Regeneration in Halcon, Taunton.

3.3 I would be interested to know how many members actually use, or even know how to access, the Members Portal? This was an initiative led by the Member Development Steering Group and has the potential to be a valuable tool but my guess is that very few Members make use of it.

3.4 It should function as an on-line library for Councillors, providing easy access to a wide range of information. Currently the information on it is patchy and not always easy to find, but it is not worth putting a lot of

officer/Member time into improving it if is not used. I would welcome feedback.

Councillor Mrs Joanna Lewin-Harris

Council Meeting – 13 July 2010

Report of Councillor Norman Cavill - Economic Development and the Arts

1. Economic Development

- 1.1 As a result of the Core Council Review, the Economic Development Section has been ably managed by Stephanie Payne and assisted by Matthew Parr for the last couple of months. Our thanks go to them for ensuring the delivery of the ongoing work load, and keeping the links with our partners and organisations.
- 1.2 David Evans was appointed to the post of Economic Development specialist and started in the middle of June. He is now reviewing how we will deliver our services alongside the Development Strategy that we have recently adopted. We look forward in the near future to the return of Hattie Winter, who will take up her appointment on a part time basis in August 2010.
- 1.3 The Core Council Review also deleted the post of Arts Development Officer from Economic Development and very recently transferred the Arts budget to the Community Development Lead.

2. Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs)

- 2.1 On the 29 June 2010, the Government sent a letter informing all Local Authorities that it wished to see economic development business led. This presents an opportunity for Councils to work with businesses, strategically and practically, in moving the economy of the area forward. The Government has requested that the proposals for new LEPs be submitted by 6 September 2010.
- 2.2 This is a tight time scale, requiring a significant amount of work from our officers as it will be necessary for a report to be submitted to the Executive by August 2010. We are fortunate to have well established links with businesses in the Taunton area, however, any submission will be much wider than just Taunton Deane.

3. Proposed Hinkley Point C

- 3.1 The proposed EDF development will be without doubt the major project in the South West for many years to come. Our officers have been striving to ensure that the enormous economic benefits from that development are shared throughout Somerset, rather than being restricted to the northern end of the

County.

- 3.2 The Economic Development department has ensured that good publicity has been given to businesses for the first information event, which was scheduled for 6 July 2010 in Bridgwater. This presents an opportunity to understand the planning stages and the likely supply chains.

4. **Low Carbon Economy**

- 4.1 Achieving funding which will enable the delivery of our Economic Development strategy projects is becoming ever more difficult. Several applications have been made and their outcome is awaited. If successful it will enable such projects as the retro fitting of Duke Street flats to proceed.
- 4.2 A green exhibition is being planned which will take place on 7 – 9 October 2010. The exhibition will give local businesses an opportunity to showcase their green products and services, and give the public the chance to learn more about a low carbon economy.

5. **Local Action for Rural Communities (LARC)**

- 5.1 The Moors and Levels LARC run two project grants schemes, a main scheme which has had a large number of applications, and a small business grant programme for funds between £1000 and £5000. The latter is to assist the development of small businesses and enable them to reduce their carbon footprint. There is an opportunity here, which the Economic Development team is promoting, for businesses operating within these areas.
- 5.2 To further assist businesses in finding sources of finance, our officers are considering producing a grant directory for business and community groups. This would be linked to Taunton Deane's Homepage. It would include LARC small business grants and other information such as from the Fredericks Foundation.

6. **Taunton Tourist Information Centre (TIC)**

- 6.1 I should like to take this opportunity to thank Jill Cooper, Kathy Epps and Eleanor Samuel for the many years of loyal and excellent service that they have given to the TIC. The team is now made up of Andrew Hopkins, Jane Pemberton and assisted by Grace Rayson. The opening hours have been slightly reduced, and the centre now closes at 4.30pm.
- 6.2 The TIC has maintained its income levels on target, and a representative of Fyne Court is now at the TIC each Monday, from 9.30am to 2.00pm to promote the work of the Trust in the area. As ever, a wide variety of tickets are on sale, and the travel centre has just signed up a self catering agency 'Cottages4U'. Do take

the opportunity of meeting the team at Taunton Flower Show.

7. Asset Management

- 7.1 The various surveys required for planning permission for the redevelopment of the old nursery at Mount Street, Taunton are now virtually complete. This will enable an outline planning application to be submitted within the next couple of months.
- 7.2 The planning permission for the land at Frobisher Way, Taunton for industrial units which has lapsed is now being applied for again. All the regulations have changed, the additional work is all but complete and an outline planning application should be submitted within the next week or so.
- 7.3 The Auction Room at the Old Market site is to be used for an Arts Exhibition, starting on 10 July 2010, and afterwards will be let on a short term lease.
- 7.4 Other work continues to ensure that best use is made of our assets as laid out in the Asset Management Plan which has recently been presented to Council.

Councillor Norman Cavill

Council Meeting – 13 July 2010

Report of Councillor Ken Hayward – Environmental Services

1. Environmental Health Team

- 1.1 There has been considerable change in the Environmental Health Team, in terms of increased workload and reductions in staff. Add to this an anticipated busy summer with lots of events coming up in the next few weeks which will keep them busy - the Flower Show, Buddhafield and the Brewhouse organised events in Vivary Park all requiring considerable input from Environmental Health. Despite these challenges I am pleased to report that, Charlotte Dale and her Team have taken a proactive approach to their work, and are well-motivated. They are an excellent team.

Air Quality

- 1.2 Our Air Quality specialist, Sarah Taylor has left the Council to concentrate on family life. The in depth knowledge and skills needed for this role are not readily available within the local area and we are currently looking at outsourcing some of the valuable work she did to University of West of England (who have previously done some work for us), and sharing out the less technical work among the four remaining members of Environmental Protection.

Food Health and Safety

- 1.3 The Food, Health and Safety Team have reported to me that they are noticing an increase in poorly performing businesses. The biggest majority are, of course, continuing to maintain good standards in this tough time for businesses, but with some their standards are slipping.
- 1.4 Recent complaints and inspections have resulted in a considerable increase in the amount of time and visits needed to improve standards to an acceptable level. Staff resources are targeting businesses who are putting public health at risk; however this may mean delays to the inspection of the lower risk businesses.
- 1.5 Food Officers have been working closely with butchers on a one to one basis to improve standards, following the publication of the second Pennington Report on E.Coli O157 (summary report circulated for information last year).
- 1.6 Officers have carried out very thorough and detailed inspections in accordance with the advice in the report and found that butchers needed additional help with their food safety management systems. It is hoped that

through this proactive approach, the time invested with the butchers will help them improve working practices in the long term and build good working relationships with the trade.

- 1.5 We have now had the Food Standards Audit final report, and as reported by my predecessor, Cllr Tim Slattery, the auditors were particularly impressed with our internal monitoring procedures, how we assess Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) compliance in our businesses, and also the blank action plan that we send out with all our letters. The minor recommendations they made have been actioned.

Licensing

- 1.6 Licensing are carrying out a statutory consultation on the Licensing Act Policy, this has to be done every three years. There have been some very minor amendments, and we are anticipating little feedback. At the time of writing, this is planned to go to the trade and public on 9 July 2010 and ends on 24th September 2010.

Pest Control

- 1.7 The Pest Control Service has continued since the Core Council Review with one officer (previously two), however the service is getting very busy with wasp treatments and we are likely to have to turn away potential customers if demand increases much further.
- 1.8 It is anticipated that the level of service available to the public will decrease when the Pest Controller is absent from work, however two members of Environmental Protection are being trained to carry out emergency pest treatments to provide holiday or sick cover.
- 1.9 We are currently looking at the work carried out over the whole year to ensure we are as cost effective as possible, and potentially expanding the advice and services we can offer to other local authorities on seagull control as we have an officer in Environmental Protection with considerable expertise in this area.

Private Water Supply Regulations

- 1.10 The new Private Water Supplies Regulations came into force on 1 January this year and have completely changed how local authorities inspect/enforce private supplies. The main aim of these new regulations is to bring the quality of the water supplied by private supplies in line with mains water. This is achieved by introducing Risk Assessments from 'source to tap' and giving Councils more powers to make sure this happens (notices/prosecutions).
- 1.11 The guidance document telling local authorities how to implement the new regulations (over 600 pages in length) was meant to come out at the same time as the legislation but did not – we had to wait until mid-April for this to

arrive and even now it is classed as a 'living draft' and has already been amended since first being released. We are still waiting for exact definitions on information provided in the guidance from the Drinking Water Inspectorate.

- 1.13 Taunton Deane has been preparing itself as best as it can for these new regulations and everything from the analysis/laboratory/courier collection arrangements to draft letters are in place and ready to go. As the Executive Member I approved the new fee structure at the end of May. These fees have now been published. It is anticipated that we will start sampling/risk assessing during July 2010. This is required to be far more detailed than in the past and will increase the amount of time spent on this area of work. Commercial private water supplies are being prioritised this year with domestic supplies being sampled/risk assessed next year.¹
- 1.14 I am assured by Simon Moon that Taunton Deane is well prepared for the new regulations, and that we are on par with Somerset's other District Councils. The regulations bring a lot more extra work that we previously did not do which Simon says "is a challenge in these difficult times when resources are tight." but would like to assure Members that "although it may be a while before we catch up with everybody on a private supply, we will do our best."

Public Toilets

- 1.15 The public lavatories in Station Road, Taunton were reopened on 29 June 2010. As Members are aware, they were closed in April as a cost-cutting measure but budget efficiencies have now been identified which have enabled this important public facility to be provided once again.
- 1.16 The loos are the only public facilities on the station side of town, and part of the decision making process was, for me, the knowledge that some 'clients' were using the public gardens in this area, which of course is totally unacceptable. I am pleased we have found the money to ensure that they can be reopened as this forms part of our new administration's commitment to maintain services which we know are valued by the community. This is proof of our commitment.
- 1.17 I do not however want to just maintain these services. It is my aspiration to improve them. I have therefore asked officers to look at innovative ways in which we can further improve facilities across Taunton Deane with crucially little or no extra burden on the public purse.

Welfare Funerals

- 1.18 The number of Welfare Funerals arranged by Environmental Protection has increased rapidly over the past few months. Colleagues in other Councils have reported similar trends. Numbers have gone from approx 12 per year to

¹ TDBC has approximately 350 private water supplies

11 since January 2010. It is anticipated that this time consuming area of work will continue to increase over the next few years.

- 1.19 Note: Welfare funerals are arranged by Environmental Health when no next of kin can be found. The costs are kept to a minimum by the funeral directors as a service to the community, but are still around £900, plus officer time spent trying to locate family members. As we have Musgrove Park Hospital in our area we receive more than our neighbouring local authorities, and we often have to travel outside of the area to deal with the personal effects of the deceased.

2. Waste Management

Somerset Waste Board

- 2.1 Councillor Mary Whitmarsh and I took our seats for the first time on the Somerset Waste Board at its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 25 June 2010. Mr Derek Yeomans was appointed Chairman of the Board for the forthcoming year, Mr Nigel Woolcombe-Adams as Vice-Chairman.
- 2.2 With regard to the review of Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy, it had been intended to carry public consultation on the revision of the Somerset Waste Partnership's Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy between June-August 2010. A number of stakeholder workshops were held in November 2009, March and May 2010.
- 2.3 There was strong consensus that the Board should continue to pursue a waste minimisation and recycling led strategy, with aspirations to drive down average arising per household and maximise recycling and/or composting of the material that is discarded. Despite narrowing down the field of options and investigating the financial and environmental costs associated with each, there was no clear consensus among stakeholders or Board members about an energy recovery route for the remaining residual waste. It was therefore resolved:-
- a) to confirm that the Board requires more information before it can recommend a preferred option; and
 - b) That the strategy review be extended with a view to identifying a preferred option by March 2011 and completing public consultation within 12 months (that is, by the time of the next AGM). This is effectively a nine month extension.

SORT IT Plus

- 2.4 Officers reported a problem-free first Phase rollout, resulting in the plastic and cardboard kerbside collection being provided to around 27,000 properties within Taunton Deane.

- 2.5 The scheduled September expansion of service will be provided to another 20,000 properties which will represent district-wide coverage of the service. There has been no slippage to the service commencement dates and it is expected services will begin during the weeks commencing the 13 and 20 September 2010. After the September service expansion all suitable properties will be receiving a kerbside collection of plastic and cardboard throughout Taunton Deane.
- 2.6 Unfortunately there are some properties such as flats, to which it will remain difficult to provide a box recycling service. They are currently offered a slightly different service where wheeled bins containing recycling are collected. Due to confines of the method of collection these properties are restricted to collections of glass, paper and cans. However we are looking at methods to provide this service to these locations in the next financial year.
- 2.7 I have received some communication on the removal of the Bring Banks – a few complaints. Members will recall that the reason for the early removal of these Bring Banks was in order to release money to facilitate the Sort It Plus rollout. We have had only a few complaints and we have evidence that traders were using them. Members also are asked to bear in mind that this final phase is now just nine weeks away.
- 2.8 We have asked Bruce Carpenter to consider bringing forward the rollout schedule for the final phase of Sort It Plus in Taunton Deane. However, this is not possible – the new collection vehicles will not be available until September.

Fly Tipping

- 2.9 The incidents of fly tipping have fallen again in the first three months of this year from 135 in 2008/2009, 134 in 2009/2010 and down to 96 in this period this year. Possibly as a result of recent enforcement action.
- 2.10 One of those resulted in a Simple Caution being issued, and accepted, regarding the fly-tipping of hardcore/rubble in a lay-by off Haydon Lane, Taunton. The person responsible attended the Council Offices for an interview and admitted the offence. This information has been forwarded to the National Criminal Database for recording purposes.
- 2.11 Street cleansing - the recent return to Encams for NI195 for last year (2009/2010) also shows an increase in the standards of cleanliness for the Borough and are above the national average.

3. Climate Change / Carbon Management

- 3.1 NI 185 Reporting – Percentage CO₂ reduction from local authority operations. We have submitted our return on time – the only Authority in Somerset to do so! An overall reduction of 7.6% (4,806 tonnes CO₂ in 2008/2009 to 4,441 tonnes in 2009/2010).
- 3.2 NI 186 Reporting – Reducing CO₂ emissions. Torsten Daniel is sketching out an Action Plan and Roger Mitchinson is preparing a presentation on why we are doing it and what it entails, for the meeting of the Local Strategic Partnership on 17 August 2010.
- 3.3 **Carbon Management Plan (CMP) and 10/10.** The CMP was agreed by the Executive on 28 April 2010. Current CMP savings for 10/10 is c5%. Kevin Toller and Torsten Daniel are continuing one-to-one meetings with Managers and Green champions campaign to find the extra 5%.
- 3.4 I am acutely aware that Members' views on the topic of Climate Change differ wildly, and I count myself amongst the sceptics. However, I take a pragmatic view. It is now undisputed that fossil fuels are a finite resource. As the supply/demand balance on oil shifts (some say it has already happened, others say we are looking at that shift to occur within the next 5 to 10 years), so we shall have significant changes in the way we consume fossil fuels forced upon us.
- 3.5 It is my belief that as a Local Authority we have an obligation to be leaders in the management of that change. I am therefore delighted to provide Executive support to the matter and ensure that it remains high on the Council's priority agenda and that we were able to 'outshine' many of the other Somerset districts with our proactive approach to the issue.

Councillor Ken Hayward

Council Meeting – 13 July 2010

Report of Councillor Catherine Herbert – Sports, Parks and Leisure

1. Parks

- 1.1 I am pleased to be able to contribute to the Taunton in Bloom bid for 2010. Judging day on Monday, 19 July 2010 is coming fast and the team are working hard to make sure Taunton will look its best. The long awaited sensory garden will be completed in time for the day and a special floral display in recognition of the Girl Guide's 100th anniversary will take pride of place in Vivary Park.
- 1.2 The Department are also pleased to be displaying again at the Taunton Flower Show, where they will be using the event to showcase what the business can offer to potential clients.

2. Community Leisure

- 2.1 The summer season of Vivary Park Sunday bandstand concerts have been programmed to run from 6 June 2010 and continue until 5 September. Making a welcome return to Vivary Park in September is the Entertainment Corporation which is this year bringing us the Moscow State Circus.
- 2.2 The summer edition of The Deano has been sent to all primary school aged children in Taunton Deane.
- 2.3 A family fun day is planned to take place in French Weir Park on Sunday 22 August 2010. The event is being organised by the Friends of French Weir Park with assistance from the Community Development Team.
- 2.4 Applications for capital grant aid assistance from the Parish Play Area Grant Scheme have been received and are currently being processed along with applications for assistance from the Council's capital scheme, for voluntary village halls and community centres and sports clubs.

3. Play

- 3.1 The new play areas at Hamilton and Lyngford, Taunton have been officially opened and are well used by the local communities.

- 3.2 The skate park at Hamilton has also been officially opened and is being hailed as a great success with visitors coming from far and wide to enjoy this new facility.
- 3.3 Consultation has started at Greenway Recreation Ground and Taunton Green on two new Play Builder sites, with expected completion by Christmas 2010.

4. Tone Leisure (Taunton Deane) Limited Activities

Sports Development

- 4.1 Over 400 people entered the 13th annual Triathlon race on Sunday, 16 May 2010 at Wellington Sport Centre. The event, which is organised by Tone Leisure in partnership with Somerset RC Triathlon Club and sponsored for the 4th year by Foot Anstey, proved more popular than ever, selling out in just two days. Tone Leisure is now planning the Junior Aquathlon for 8-16 year olds, which takes place on 26th September at Queen's College, Taunton.

Young People

- 5.1 Energize held its Easter Activity Day on 15 April 2010 in Vivary Park and over 300 young people attended enjoying a climbing wall, bouncy castle and circus skills workshops. Local organisations hosted stands, such as the Scouts, County Youth Workers, and Tone Leisure Fitness Teams who provided information on activities and services in the town. Energize are now planning for the Summer Holiday Activity Day on Thursday, 26 August 2010 in Vivary Park.

Health Development

- 6.1 Five children and their families successfully completed the Taunton Big Lottery Funded MEND 7-13 Programme in May, achieving exceptional results at the end of the 10 week course. The improvements in the children and their parents/carers included; reduction in Body Mass Index (BMI), improved eating habits and increased physical activity. The focus is now on recruitment of families for programmes in September and January.
- 6.2 In June, Wellsprings Leisure Centre achieved re-recognition as a provider of the ProActive Scheme. A detailed portfolio was submitted and an on-site assessment involving the Fitness Team was carried out by Somerset Physical Activity Group, with complimentary feedback being given by the team of assessors.

- 6.3 Since its start in 2005 Tone Leisure's "Walk Well in Taunton" Health Walk Programme has gone from strength to strength. 3,385 participations were recorded between 2009 and 2010 compared to 254 five years ago. The average number of walkers per outing has also risen from 11 to 31 in the same period, with the number of walks provided increasing from 24 to 110.
- 6.4 A new look Summer Programme was launched in June with the addition of new shorter led walks of 1.5 miles at a slower pace, aimed at older people who may have a lower level of fitness.

Play Development

- 7.1 Tone Leisure has co-ordinated a Giant Play Day on Sunday, 18 July 2010 (1-4 pm) at Wellsprings Leisure Centre. This has been supported by Somerset Play Forum and there will be lots of activities to take part in, including pillow bash, bouncy castle, family fun sports, trampolining, skateboarding, archery, crafts, street dance, woodland crafts and den building.
- 7.2 Wild About Play Days are funded by the Big Lottery and activities include football, cricket, lots of different games, parachutes, den building, woodland arts and crafts. All the activities are free to attend and are suitable for children aged 5-12 years. Children under the age of 8 must be accompanied by an adult.
- 7.3 Wild About Play Days will be held at 8 locations across Taunton Deane between 28 July and 18 August 2010.

Active Lifestyles

- 8.1 A six week Active Living programme has been drafted and due to start in three Active Living Centres in July along with free Flexercise Training being offered to a volunteer or staff member in each centre. Working in partnership with the Alzheimer's Society we also plan to deliver a Memory Walk in 2010.
- 8.2 An additional seven Community Activators have been recruited for Active Somerset since May 2010. An Outdoor Circuits class is set to start in Halcon through the Link Centre on Wednesday, 21 July 2010.

Facility News

- 9.1 Following the announcement of the withdrawal of the Free Swimming revenue funding, further analysis and close communication between Taunton Deane and Tone Leisure is currently taking place, and a report will be coming to Community Scrutiny later this month.
- 9.2 At the time of writing, there is still no word on the Wellington Sports Centre Capital Bid from the Free Swimming Initiative.

- 9.3 At St James Street Pool works to the pool disinfection, circulation and filtration system will start in September 2010, which will alleviate the recent problems with pool water quality. In the interim, staff have instigated additional water testing regimes and extra bacterial assessments in order to maintain water quality within the required parameters. In recent weeks, in particular, this has proved to be very challenging and there have been some unplanned closures to the small pool.
- 9.4 A full programme of summer events is ready to launch across the facilities including a full range of children's camps at Wellington Sports Centre, Wellsprings Leisure Centre and Blackbrook Pavilion.
- 9.5 The Summer Events programme at Wellsprings includes an unprecedented third visit from Jimmy Carr and a number of regional gymnastic and trampolining events.
- 9.6 Taster sessions for both adults and juniors are being offered at Vivary Golf Course during July. These are being offered at no charge and provide the ideal introduction to golf.
- 9.7 Tone Leisure staff will be attending community events being run during July and August in the North Taunton area, aiming to increase awareness of the activity programmes on offer and to enable those interested to give activities a try.
- 9.8 All Tone Leisure sites are being assessed against a national, best practice health and safety standard, called LeisureSafe, over the next year. Station Road Pool was the first of the Taunton Tone sites to undergo a rigorous, 2 day assessment. The site has performed very well, achieving a score of 73% (well above its target of 65%) demonstrating compliance against a full range of safety indicators.

Councillor Mrs Catherine Herbert

Council Meeting – 13 July 2010

Report of Councillor Jean Court-Stenning – Housing Services

1. Tenant Services Management Board

- 1.1 The Board has now held its first two meetings. Mr Dustyn Etherington was elected Chairman and two Councillors have been appointed to the Board - Councillors Bob Bowrah and Steve Brooks.
- 1.2 One of the first decisions made by the Board was to recommend the approval of the response to the Government's consultation concerning Housing Revenue Account reform proposals, which was subsequently agreed at a Special Executive and Full Council.

2. Affordable Housing

- 2.1 Another successful Affordable Housing Open Day was held on 10 June 2010, attended by more than 200 visitors.
- 2.2 Stands included one from a firm of solicitors offering a low cost package to purchasers of part-ownership properties, a transaction which requires more complex legal documents than outright ownership does.
- 2.3 Other stands included a display of the plans for the proposed scheme on National Trust land at Cheddon Road, Taunton which have been submitted for planning approval.
- 2.4 Other affordable housing schemes are well under way with completion of all units expected this year at Holyoake Street, Wellington, Westford and the Denmark Inn, Taunton whilst some completions will be also be delivered at Hyde Lane, Creech St. Michael.
- 2.5 Whilst this is good news, many more homes are needed and I am pleased to report that there are more than ten other schemes in the pipeline with work soon to start at Firepool Lock and Wordsworth Drive, Taunton.

3. Regeneration of Halcon, Taunton

- 3.1 The project at Halcon, which the Executive recently approved developing further, subject to funding being found, is more than an affordable or social housing scheme - it is about a community and its needs. It will form part of the Council's Regeneration Strategy for deprived areas which is currently being developed.

- 3.2 The community consultation is proceeding apace, with meetings being held with small groups, such as owner-occupiers and individuals who live in the affected roads. Drop-in surgeries, which I will attend, will also be held at the Link Centre, to enable the wider community to express their views and share both ideas and anxieties.
- 3.3 The consultation evenings and Community Scrutiny Committee meeting which were held at Halcon School were well attended by residents and have produced some positive feedback. Tenants have been reassured by learning about the statutory Home Loss Payment and displacement compensation, which would be paid to private, as well as Council tenants.

4. **Somerset Strategic Housing Project**

- 4.1 The project is still in existence, having been formed to address issues which received a red flag from the Audit Commission. Although Comprehensive Area Assessment has gone away, it is the general view that some of the issues raised have not.
- 4.2 Leadership passed to Mendip District Council on 18 June 2010 and Taunton Deane will continue to be actively involved in this collaboration. I have attended one meeting of the group and another which was to have been held recently was postponed by the Chairman, Councillor Ric Pallister, due to the number of changes coming out of Whitehall needing to be digested.

Councillor Mrs Jean Court-Stenning

Council Meeting – 13 July 2010

Report of Councillor Terry Hall – Corporate Resources

1. Customer Contact

- 1.1 During April to June Customer Contact have continued to provide an excellent level of service to telephone callers as well as visitors to The Deane House receptions and Wellington Community Office. This is supported by the latest customer satisfaction results that show that over 90% of callers rate the service as being “very good”.
- 1.2 Customer Contact has now completed the roll out of OLA’s (Operating Level Agreements) for Taunton Deane. These agreements vitally underpin the relationship between the contact centre and the various service departments throughout the Council. 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 improves service to the end customer.
- 1.3 The figures in the table below show that Customer Contact exceeded agreed standards in each of April, May and June:-

Month	April	May	June
CALLS OFFERED	16092	12756	15025
ABANDONED % [Target less than 5%]	4.21	4.52	4.41
G.O.S.% [Target 80% within 20 Secs]	84.94	81.85	84.58
% Answered 1st POC (Target 85%)	99.1	99.8	99.8

- 1.4 The SAP CRM has now been incorporated into day to day operations. From April to June a total of 3272 enquiries have been dealt with at The Deane House receptions and Wellington Community Office. Housing Reception came under the responsibility of Customer Contact on the 1 April 2010 and has been integrated into the rest of the operation.

2. Revenue and Benefits

- 2.1 As members will be aware, the recent Corporate Scrutiny Committee reviewed the Performance of the Revenues and Benefits Service. Highlights

included the best ever collection of Business Rates achieved in 2009/2010 of 98.9%, improved processing times for working out new claims for Housing and Council Tax Benefit and very positive feedback from customers on the service we provide.

- 2.2 At the end of Quarter 1 of 2010/2011, we are on track to meet all Key Performance Indicators. This is despite the on-going increase in the number of customers contacting us because of financial difficulties they are having. The service has also been able to progress projects to review entitlement to Single Person Discounts, a canvass on Small Business Rate Relief and full roll out of the "There and Then" initiative to enable faster benefit claiming in future.
- 2.3 We submitted our final subsidy claim to the Department for Work and Pensions on time at the end of May 2010. We will be claiming Housing Benefit subsidy of nearly £26,000,000, while our claim for Council Tax Benefit subsidy is £6,500,000. The service is continuing to explore ways to make better use of resources.

3. Performance and Client Team

Client Function

- 3.1 The Client Team monitors the Authority's major partnerships – Southwest One, Tone Leisure and Somerset Waste. The team has been working closely with Tone Leisure to develop and submit the Wellington Sports Centre bid and to analyse the impact of Central Government having cut the free swimming grant.
- 3.2 The Waste Partnership has been rolling out 'Sortit 2' and is due to commence 'Sortit 3' in September. The Client Team is monitoring this rollout and providing support on behalf of the Authority.
- 3.3 In relation to Southwest One the team has continued to implement the new performance monitoring processes agreed last year. This has resulted in the running of the first Business Review Group with representatives from each service and Southwest One attending Corporate Scrutiny in May to present the first of what will become their regular 6-monthly update reports.
- 3.4 The team has also been working directly with the IT service within Southwest One to ensure that the necessary changes are being made to our data security provisions to enable the Authority to maintain compliance with the Government Connect standards. Additionally, the team has been working closely with Southwest One to resolve a number of performance indicator failures.

Corporate Performance Management

- 3.5 We have recently received confirmation from Central Government of the scrapping of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) inspection programme. Consequently any work we were undertaking to support this has ceased, although the impact has been minimal as CAA was mainly focussed at county level.
- 3.6 The new corporate performance reporting process and 'scorecard', which we introduced last year, is now well 'bedded in' with regular, quarterly reports going to Corporate Management Team (CMT), the Executive and Corporate Scrutiny. The process is delivering, as intended, a mechanism to enable us to quickly pull together a short, factual update on current performance across the Authority. The next stage is to embed this methodology at service level. With this in mind the Performance and Client Team is currently trialling the use of a 'Service Performance Scorecard'.
- 3.7 The processes for managing the Corporate Improvement Plan and Corporate Risk Register are both now back on track with regular reports being made to CMT and the Corporate Governance Committee.
- 3.8 The team has recently taken on the responsibility for managing the Corporate Feedback and Complaints reporting process and will be producing an annual update report to Members. In addition the team is focussing on the completion of the 2009/2010 Annual Report, which is due to be published shortly.

Procurement Transformation

- 3.9 The total savings delivered to date are £450,000. We need to save an additional £700,000 during the current financial year however, current trends indicate a shortfall of £250,000 at the end of the year. We are working closely with the Procurement Team within Southwest One to close the gap. The position is being monitored closely by CMT.
- 3.10 Further savings initiatives are due to start delivering shortly with utilities and office supplies savings due to come into effect from September 2010. Additionally, the Procurement Team will shortly commence a review of our existing contracts and last year's spend data to identify further potential savings opportunities.

Retained Finance

- 3.11 The accounts for 2009/2010 have been completed and signed off by the Corporate Governance Committee. The external auditors will commence their inspection of the accounts on 19 July 2010.

- 3.12 During July we will be reviewing all the earmarked reserves that the Council holds. The major challenge is the budget setting for 2011/2012 and closing the budget gap, which is currently estimated at being £1,300,000. Maggie Hammond has been working with Southwest One on the re-launch of SAP. The re-launch will see Taunton Deane using the full Procure-to-Pay system as designed.

Retained HR (Human Resources)

- 3.13 The key focus for the Retained HR team in the last 2 months has been on the following:-
- Supporting Themes 3 and 5 of the Core Council Review process;
 - Completing the Organisational Management (OM) Structure Project for the SAP re-launch;
 - Developing and maintaining the working relationship with UNISON, ensuring staff consultation on major projects, for example the essential and casual car user review;
 - Working with the Southwest One HR service to develop the Service Development Plan and Improvements with the HR Service;
 - Developing and supporting the recent Staff Briefings/Workshops to feedback on the staff survey results and explain the new 'On TRAC' corporate priorities;
 - Developing the Learning and Development Programme.

SAP System Implementation

- 3.14 The initial phase of the phased re-launch programme, which lasted throughout June, had two objectives:-
- To have all staff that need to access the SAP system log-in to the system to ensure that they have access to the correct programmes within the system.
 - To conduct a pilot exercise, with 12 staff, on the use of the full Procure-to-Pay. The exercises conducted in June have been successful and we are ready to move to phase 2.
- 3.15 Phase 2, which will take place during July and August, will see the launch of the full Procure-to-Pay functionality across the Council. Once in place, this should reduce the amount of manual processing required in the payment process and improve the speed and efficiency with which we pay suppliers. During July detailed training will given to appropriate staff in the use of the Procedure.

- 3.16 In August we will formally move to using the new processes. It is anticipated that there may well be some initial delays in making payments whilst staff get used to the new processes, but these should be minimal.
- 3.17 Phases 3 and 4 of the re-launch, which will see the launching of the 'reporting and notifying and HR Management' functionality, are scheduled to take place in October and November respectively.

4. **Civic Activities**

- 4.1 The Mayor attended the Repatriation of Royal Marines Sergeant Steven William Darbyshire, Lance Corporal Michael Taylor and Marine Paul Warren. Both the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor have also attended Candle lit Vigil Services at All Saints Church, Norton Fitzwarren.
- 4.2 The Mayor has a new official car, a Ford Mondeo with an Econetic, fuel efficient engine which replaces the previous Jaguar. The Sergeant at Mace and Mayor's driver, Mike Coy, has recently attended a training session organised by the Council aimed at further reducing fuel consumption and running costs.

Councillor Terry Hall