

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 23 July 2013 at 18:30.

Agenda

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

- 1 To receive the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 9 May 2013 and the meeting of the Council held on 15 May 2013 (attached).
- 2 To report any apologies for absence.
- 3 To receive any communications.
- 4 Declaration of Interests
To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or personal or prejudicial interests, in accordance with the Code of Conduct. The usual declarations made at meetings of Full Council are shown on the attachment.
- 5 To receive questions from Taunton Deane Electors under Standing Order 15.
- 6 To receive any petitions or deputations from Taunton Deane Electors under Standing Orders 16 and 17.
- 7 Potential Acquisition of the Brewhouse Theatre and Arts Centre. Report of the Strategic Director (Brendan Cleere) (attached).

See also the Confidential Appendix at agenda item No. 14.
- 8 West Somerset and Taunton Deane Joint Management and Shared Services Project - Joint Chief Executive Proposal. Report of the Leader of the Council.

See also the Confidential Appendices A, B and D at agenda item No 15.
- 9 The story of Taunton Street Pastors - "here to listen". The showing of a 10 minute DVD.
- 10 The possibility of a transition to a Committee system in May 2014 - To consider the attached Motion proposed by Councillor Jefferson Horsley and seconded by Councillor Simon Coles. A briefing paper prepared by the Legal and Democratic Services Manager on this topic is also attached.

11 Review of the size of Committees. Joint report of the Legal and Democratic Services Manager and Councillor David Reed (Chairman of the Corporate Governance Committee).

12 Part I - To deal with written questions to, and receive the following recommendations from, the Executive:-

(i) Councillor Jean Adkins - Recommendations relating to the Halcon North Regeneration - Creechbarrow Road Project, Taunton; and

(ii) Councillor Cavill - Recommendations in connection with the sale and acquisition of the freehold interest in land at Lisieux Way, Taunton.

With regard to the latter recommendation, a copy of the Confidential Report which was submitted to the Executive is attached as an appendix at agenda item No. 15.

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

(a) Councillor John Williams - Leader of the Council;

(b) Councillor Jean Adkins - Housing Services;

(c) Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams - Corporate Resources;

(d) Councillor Mark Edwards - Planning, Transportation and Communications;

(e) Councillor Jane Warmington - Community Development;

(f) Councillor Norman Cavill - Economic Development, Asset Management, Arts and Tourism;

(g) Councillor Ken Hayward - Environmental Services and Climate Change;

(h) Councillor Catherine Herbert - Sports, Parks and Leisure.

The following items are likely to be considered after the exclusion of the press and public because of the likelihood that exempt information would otherwise be disclosed relating to the Clause set out below of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

14 Potential Acquisition of the Brewhouse Theatre and Arts Centre - Confidential Appendix (to follow). Paragraph 3 - Information relating to Financial and Business Affairs.
See also agenda item No. 7.

15 West Somerset and Taunton Deane Joint Management and Shared Services Project - Joint Chief Executive Proposal - Confidential Appendices A, B and D (attached). Paragraphs 1 and 3 - Information relating to any individual and information relating to Financial and Business Affairs.
See also agenda item No.8.

16 Recommendation relating to the sale and acquisition of freehold interest in land at Lisieux Way, Taunton - A copy of the Confidential Report submitted to the Executive is attached. Paragraph 3 - Information relating to financial or business affairs.
See also agenda item No. 12(ii).

PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL THE CONFIDENTIAL APPENDICES WILL BE PUBLISHED IN A SEPERATE BOOKLET FOR THE INFORMATION OF MEMBERS.

Bruce Lang
Assistant Chief Executive

13 April 2016

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.

Except at meetings of Full Council, where public participation will be restricted to Public Question Time only, 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 the Corporate Support Unit on 01823 356414 or email r.bryant@tauntondeane.gov.uk

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Council Members:-

Councillor M Hill (Chairman and Mayor of Taunton Deane)
Councillor V Stock-Williams (Deputy Mayor)
Councillor J Adkins
Councillor J Allgrove
Councillor J Baker
Councillor A Beaven
Councillor C Bishop
Councillor R Bowrah, BEM
Councillor S Brooks
Councillor N Cavill
Councillor S Coles
Councillor B Denington
Councillor D Durdan
Councillor K Durdan
Councillor M Edwards
Councillor H Farbahi
Councillor M Floyd
Councillor J Gaden
Councillor E Gaines
Councillor A Govier
Councillor J Govier
Councillor T Hall
Councillor K Hayward
Councillor R Henley
Councillor C Herbert
Councillor C Hill
Councillor J Horsley
Councillor J Hunt
Councillor L James
Councillor R Lees
Councillor S Lees
Councillor L Lisgo, MBE
Councillor J Meikle, MBE
Councillor N Messenger
Councillor I Morrell
Councillor B Nottrodt
Councillor U Palmer
Councillor H Prior-Sankey
Councillor D Reed
Councillor J Reed
Councillor S Ross
Councillor T Slattery
Councillor G Slattery
Councillor (Historic) F Smith
Councillor F Smith
Councillor P Smith
Councillor P Stone
Councillor B Swaine
Councillor P Tooze

Councillor J Warmington
Councillor P Watson
Councillor (Historic)Mrs E Waymouth
Councillor D Webber
Councillor A Wedderkopp
Councillor D Wedderkopp
Councillor J Williams - Leader of the Council
Councillor G Wren

Taunton Deane Borough Council

At the Annual meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council, held at the Lyngford House Conference Centre, Selworthy Road, Taunton on Thursday 9 May 2013 at 6.30 pm.

Present The Mayor (Councillor Hall)
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Ms Lisgo)
Councillors Mrs Allgrove, Mrs Baker, Beaven, Bowrah, Brooks, Cavill, Coles, Denington, D Durdan, Ms Durdan, Edwards, Farbahi, Mrs Floyd, Mrs Gaden, Gaines, A Govier, Mrs Govier, Hayward, Mrs Herbert, C Hill, Mrs Hill, Horsley, Hunt, Miss James, R Lees, Mrs Lees, Meikle, Mrs Messenger, Morrell, Nottrodt, Prior-Sankey, D Reed, Mrs Reed, Ross, Mrs Slattery, T Slattery, Mrs Smith, P Smith, Mrs Stock-Williams, Stone, Tooze, Mrs Warmington, Watson, Mrs Waymouth, A Wedderkopp, D Wedderkopp, Williams and Wren.

The meeting was preceded by a Prayer offered by the Reverend James Clapham.

1. **Election of Mayor**

On the motion of Councillor Ross, seconded by Councillor A Govier, it was **resolved** unanimously that Councillor Elizabeth Susan Lisgo MBE be elected Mayor of Taunton Deane for the ensuing year. Councillor Ms Lisgo made and signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

2. **Deputy Mayor**

On the motion of Councillor Hayward, seconded by Councillor Miss Durdan, it was **resolved** that Councillor David William Durdan be elected as Deputy Mayor for the ensuing year. Councillor D Durdan made and signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

3. **Councillor Terence John Hall**

On the motion of Councillor Meikle MBE, seconded by Councillor Williams, it was **resolved** that the best thanks of the Council be accorded to Councillor Terence John Hall for the manner in which he had discharged the duties of the Office of Mayor during his term of office.

Councillor Hall replied.

4. **Past Mayor's Badge**

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

5. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 9 April 2013,

copies having been circulated to each Member, were signed by the Mayor.

6. Apologies

Councillors Mrs Adkins, Bishop, Henley, Ms Palmer and Ms Webber.

The Mayor reported that Councillor Mrs Adkins was currently unwell and would be away from Council business some time. She undertook to send the Council's best wishes for a speedy recovery to Councillor Mrs Adkins.

7. Borough Council By-Election – 2 May 2013

The Democratic Services Manager and Corporate Support Lead, on behalf of the Returning Officer, reported that Judith Ann Gaden of 9 Lambrook Close, Taunton had been elected as a Councillor at the By-Election held on 2 May 2013 to fill the vacancy in the Halcon Ward of Taunton.

8. Appointment of the Executive 2013/2014

Resolved that membership of the Executive would continue to comprise 8 Members for the ensuing year.

9. Appointment of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee

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

12 Members, 6 Conservatives, 4 Liberal Democrats, 1 Labour and 1 Independent.

10. Appointment of the Community Scrutiny Committee

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

12 Members, 6 Conservatives, 4 Liberal Democrats, 1 Labour and 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).

11. Appointment of Regulatory Committees and the Staffing Board

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

18 Members, 9 Conservatives, 8 Liberal Democrats and 1 Labour.

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

15 Members, 8 Conservatives and 7 Liberal Democrats.
- (c) The appointment of a Corporate Governance Committee for the ensuing year was agreed as follows:-

13 Members, 6 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.

12. Standards Committee 2013/2014

The appointment of a Standards Committee for the ensuing year was agreed, with membership to consist of 5 Councillors (2 Conservatives, 2 Liberal Democrats and 1 Independent), an Independent Person (Mrs L Somerville-Williams, with her reserve Ms Laura Williams), 2 non-voting Parish Members (Mr M Marshall and Mr B Wilson) and 3 non-voting independent co-optees (Mr T Bowditch, Mr A Cox and Mrs A Elder).

13. Intercessional Prayer

The meeting was closed at 8.22 pm with a prayer offered by the new Mayor's Chaplain, the Reverend Iain McFarlane.

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 15 May 2013 at 7.50 pm.

Present The Mayor (Councillor Ms Lisgo)
 The Deputy Mayor (Councillor D Durdan)
 Councillors Mrs Allgrove, Mrs Baker, Beaven, Bishop, Bowrah, Cavill,
 Coles, Denington, Miss Durdan, Farbahi, Mrs Gaden, Gaines,
 Hayward, Mrs Herbert, C Hill, Mrs Hill, Horsley, Hunt, Miss James,
 R Lees, Mrs Lees, Meikle, Morrell, Nottrodt, Ms Palmer, Prior-Sankey,
 D Reed, Mrs Reed, Ross, Gill Slattery, T Slattery, Mrs Smith, P Smith,
 Mrs Stock-Williams, Stone, Mrs Warmington, Watson,
 A Wedderkopp, D Wedderkopp and Williams

1. Apologies

Councillors Mrs Adkins, Edwards, Mrs Floyd, A Govier, Mrs Govier, Tooze and Wren.

2. Declaration of Interests

Councillors Mrs Baker, Coles, Hunt, Prior-Sankey, A Wedderkopp and D Wedderkopp declared personal interests as Members of Somerset County Council. Councillor Coles also declared a personal interest as a holder of a Leisure Card issued by Tone Leisure. Councillors Mrs Hill declared a personal interest as an employee of Somerset County Council. Councillor T Slattery declared personal interests as an employee of Sedgemoor District Council and as a holder of a Leisure Card issued by Tone Leisure. Councillor Wren declared personal interests as an employee of Natural England and as Clerk to Milverton Parish Council. Councillors Hayward and Ross declared personal interests as the Council's representatives on the Somerset Waste Board. Councillor Ross also declared a personal interest as the alternate Director of Southwest One. Councillor Nottrodt declared a personal interest as a Director of Southwest One. Councillors D Durdan declared a prejudicial interest as a Tone Leisure Board representative. He left the meeting during the consideration of the recommendation relating to the proposed new swimming pool. Councillor Gill Slattery declared personal interests as a member of the Board of Governors at Somerset College and a Patron of the Supporters of Taunton Women's Aid. Councillor Farbahi declared a personal interest as a local owner of land in Taunton Deane. Councillor D Reed declared a personal interest as a Director of the Taunton Town Centre Company.

3. Recommendations to Council from the Executive

(i) Proposal to build a Swimming Pool at Blackbrook Pavilion Sports Centre, Blackbrook Way, Taunton

At its meeting immediately beforehand, the Executive had considered a report

detailing work which had been undertaken with Tone Leisure since September last year in relation to the options for future swimming pool provision in Taunton.

The Project Team had been working on the following project objectives:-

- A suitable renovation of the Station Road Pool to increase the life of the facility by 15–20 years;
- To produce a detailed Business Case for the provision of a new Swimming Pool Facility at the agreed site of Blackbrook with the decommissioning of St James Street Pool - including how this could be funded and procured; and
- Optimisation of swimming activities for the community now and in the future.

As far as the Station Road Pool was concerned, an application to Sport England had recently resulted in £497,802 being awarded to the Council towards the refurbishment of the pool. Added to the £770,000 from unallocated capital receipts the Council had allocated to the project, the scope of the refurbishment would consist of:-

- Pool Side;
- Changing Facilities;
- Reception; and
- Pool Plant Equipment.

Work had already begun on the detailed design and procurement with an anticipated start time of October/November 2013.

One of the criteria that the application to Sport England had to meet was an increase in participation figures. This included the whole Pools Project scheme involving the closure of St James Street and the opening of a new pool.

If the new swimming pool was not advanced then swimming participation figures would be lower than those currently. Sport England had indicated that they would need to work closely with the Council to manage this and, there was a small risk that Sport England might claim some of its funding back.

In order for the St James Street Pool to remain operational and meet modern day standards a significant amount of spend would be required to rebuild the pool/building. In economic terms, trying to modernise this pool did not make sense.

Now that the detailed Business Case work had been completed there were three questions for Councillors to consider:-

- Based on the findings, did the Council wish to proceed with the build of a

new swimming pool?

- Did the Council wish to support the Business Case with an extra income generating activity of a Spa?
- Was the chosen option affordable and would the Council agree to the finance option?

The production of the Business Case had been a detailed and complex process and had been modelled on four options to provide a detailed evaluation. These options were as follows:-

4a	Closure of St James Street Pool leaving Station Road Pool (including the £1,270,000 refurbishment) and no new pool at the Blackbrook site.
4b	Closure of St James Street Pool leaving Station Road Pool (including the £1,270,000 refurbishment) and a boom to create a teaching pool (additional cost £200,000) to be included and no new pool at the Blackbrook site.
5	Closure of St James Street Pool leaving Station Road Pool (including the £1,270,000 refurbishment) and a new pool at Blackbrook site.
6	Closure of St James Street Pool leaving Station Road Pool (including the £1,270,000 refurbishment) and a new pool and Spa facility at the Blackbrook site.

The options had been modelled covering capital costs, operating income and expenditure, building life cycle costs and the potential loss of income claims for Station Road and St James Street.

The costed design for a potential pool would provide a facility that met modern day standards operationally and would provide a greatly enhanced customer experience.

The capital cost for a new pool at Blackbrook was estimated at £4,400,000 which compared well with the data base held by Sport England.

There was also an opportunity to support the Business Case further with an income generating facility - a Spa. The total Capital Cost including a Spa was estimated at £5,400,000.

The current proposal would not increase the amount of available water space. If a new pool was not built and St James Street was decommissioned this would leave the Council with one pool to service the Taunton community.

Presently St James Street Pool accommodated all of the swimming lessons and club sessions. If these were transferred to Station Road Pool, there would be a significant impact on the available public swimming for members of the public.

The design of a new swimming pool at Blackbrook would provide a wide range of facilities including a 25m x 6 lane swimming pool; 25 pool side

spectator seats; a 8m x 12m learner pool; a changing village; and a café/kitchen.

The Project Team had commissioned independent research of current users and the wider community to gauge attitudes towards a Spa proposal. The key findings could be summarised as follows:-

Non user/Community

- Blackbrook Pavilion was the leisure facility with the widest awareness in the community;
- 47% would very likely use a Spa; and
- Most popular choices of Spa facilities people would like to see were heat treatment, steam rooms, hydro therapy pool and treatment rooms.

Existing Users

- 46% would very likely use a Spa;
- 56% would definitely use a Spa at Blackbrook; and
- Most popular choices of Spa facilities people would like to see were heat treatment, steam rooms, hydro therapy pool and treatment rooms.

A range of funding mechanisms had been considered by the Project Team, including potential access to external finance through delivery by a developer, to a more traditional use of the Council's own capital resources and prudential borrowing.

The funding options were closely linked to the Procurement Strategy and the Business Case had therefore been prepared on the basis of using a combination of revenue resources (Earmarked Reserves and General Reserves), capital receipts, and prudential borrowing.

The Business Case assumed that the Council would be able to recover the Value Added Tax (VAT) costs on the capital investment. This was based on the lease of the buildings to the operator at a peppercorn rate with no consideration value (cash or non-cash) received in return.

However, consideration had also been given to the potential risks around VAT partial exemption, and specialist advice had very recently been obtained in respect of the lease of the Blackbrook Pavilion Sports Centre and the potential new pool / spa.

The advice had concluded that there were potential VAT risks that could be material to the affordability of the project, and it had therefore been recommended that a submission to Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs was developed confirming the Council's assessment of the nature of the transactions.

This was a major capital project for the Council and as such would require adequate resource in terms of capacity and skill level to ensure it was delivered safely. It was proposed that a Project Team working in partnership with Tone Leisure should be formed and that external expertise was obtained.

The first stage of the project would be to prepare to procure. It was proposed that external expertise from a leisure consultant was utilised to support the Council in the preparation of options and proposals to develop a clear brief to prepare a detailed design, to assist the procurement and contract works and by working alongside the Council and Tone Leisure complementing the capacity and capability that the Project Team would bring to the project.

The proposed resources for the next stages of the project were as follows:-

Role	Who	Cost (Est) £
TDBC Lead	Alison North, Community Leisure Manager	
Finance	Paul Fitzgerald, SWOne Finance	
Procurement	SWOne Procurement	
Legal	External expertise, Leonie Cowen and VAT Advice from LAVAT	100,000
Operator Lead	Tone Leisure	
Leisure Procurement Advice	External Leisure consultancy expertise	50,000
Contingency		50,000
TOTAL		200,000

It was recommended that this cost should be funded from the Leisure Asset Maintenance earmarked reserve.

When this issue was considered by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 25 April 2013, the Committee's recommendations were that:-

- All were in favour of the proposal to build a new swimming pool at Blackbrook;
- Members were against the proposal to build a Spa; and
- £200,000 should be taken from the Leisure Asset Maintenance Reserve to pay for the 'next steps' set out in the table above.

The Executive was of the view that the replacement of the pool at St James Street was essential and that the construction of a new swimming pool at the Blackbrook Pavilion Sports Centre should be supported.

The Executive was also of the view that the opportunity should be taken to provide a Spa facility in conjunction with the new pool which was likely to prove very popular and would provide a further income generating facility.

On the motion of Councillor Mrs Herbert, it was

Resolved that:-

- (1) Option 5 - Closure of St James Street Pool to leave the Station Road Pool (including the £1,270,000 refurbishment) and the provision of a new pool

at the Blackbrook Pavilion Sports Centre, Blackbrook Way, Taunton, be supported;

- (2) A Spa facility be also provided in conjunction with the new swimming pool;
- (3) A Supplementary Estimate of £5,353,000 be approved in the General Fund Capital Programme, for the capital costs involved, with related approval to allocate £1,500,000 from the Growth and Regeneration Reserve and £1,500,000 from General Reserves towards the funding of the capital costs, with the balance to be funded through borrowing;
- (4) £200,000 from the Leisure Asset Maintenance Reserve be approved to take the project forward to the next stage; and
- (5) Officers be requested to prepare a submission to Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs (HMRC) to confirm the VAT position of the project. In the event that estimated costs of the project were increased as a result of advice from HMRC, the Business Case be updated and resubmitted to Members for consideration, prior to commencement of any procurement for capital works.

(ii) Asset Strategy Project Funding

Central Government had provided a clear direction to local authorities to make better use of property assets in order to minimise Council Tax increases and protect services.

In January 2013, the Executive formally adopted a new Asset Management Plan (AMP) subject to a more detailed and strategic review of Taunton Deane's approach to asset management being undertaken following the agreement of the Corporate Business Plan.

The Business Plan recognised that to achieve this objective the Council needed to bring in specialist external expertise to help develop a new Asset Strategy.

The objective of the review would be to develop a new Asset Strategy, which maximised the return from assets and which provided a clear decision making framework for future property asset decisions.

Specifically the new Asset Management Strategy and decision making framework would:-

- i) Ensure the Council made best use of its property assets to deliver the Corporate Objectives and to help deliver financial sustainability;
- ii) Clearly articulated the balance between financial return and wider objectives;
- iii) Clearly reflected the Council's appetite for risk and reward; and
- iv) Provided a clear framework for future decisions about acquisitions and disposals, with appropriate levels of delegations regarding decisions.

Once the external expert was appointed, the strategy development work would commence. It was anticipated that between 20 and 30 days of external consultancy would be required at a potential cost of £40,000, although efforts would be made to minimise the cost involved.

A draft strategy and decision making framework would then be brought to Members through the normal Scrutiny, Executive and Full Council process for agreement. The draft strategy and decision making framework would include details of the impact on our current property portfolio if it was adopted.

It was hoped the new Asset Strategy would be ready for adoption in October 2013.

When developed and agreed, the new Asset Strategy and decision making framework would be applied to existing and future non-housing assets by the Property Service.

On the motion of Councillor Cavill, it was

Resolved that:-

- (1) £40,000 be allocated from the General Fund Reserve to fund the procurement of external expertise to enable a new Asset Strategy to be developed; and
- (2) It be noted that costs would be minimised wherever possible and any under spend would be returned to the General Fund Reserve.

(iii) Introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy in Taunton Deane – Declaration under Section 212(4) of the Planning Act 2008

When the Council submitted its Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Draft Charging Schedule for Examination it had to be accompanied by a Declaration that:-

- (a) It had complied with the requirements of Section 212(4) of the Planning Act 2008 and CIL Regulations (including the requirements to have regard to the matters listed in Sections 211(2) and (4));
- (b) The charging authority had used appropriate available evidence to inform the draft Charging Schedule, and
- (c) It dealt with any other matters prescribed by CIL Regulations.

This Declaration is set out in full in the attached Appendix to these minutes.

On the motion of Councillor Williams, it was

Resolved that the Declaration under Section 212(4) of the Planning Act 2008 be approved.

(iv) Council Accommodation and Customer Access Project – Project Mandate

One of the recommendations contained in the report considered by the Executive last year in connection with The Deane House Accommodation Project was to look comprehensively at the Council's future accommodation needs in the light of the priorities identified in the Corporate Business Plan (CBP).

A mandate to undertake this review, which would also need to take into account access to services, was now required.

The latest Customer Access Strategy was approved in 2005 as part of the Southwest One project. This needed to be revisited and updated in the light of both social and technological changes and the Council's changing role.

Other Councils were very much in the same position and were, or had, re-considered their approach to accommodation (with a view to reducing their overheads) and their customer access. In Somerset there were several Councils, including the County Council, who had implemented "smart office" standards to release space which could then be let out to other organisations.

In the current economic climate it was important for the Council to consider its overhead costs and seek to reduce these. The recent report about the opportunity to share The Deane House with the Police had shown that the investment required to bring the building up to modern day standards outweighed the financial return that the Council was likely to receive from rental income sharing with only one other organisation.

However, some of this investment would be required for any option that retained The Deane House as an office base. As such, it was proposed to commission a full condition survey of The Deane House as part of this project so that the true costs of continuing within this building were fully understood.

It was appropriate that the Council considered all the options available to it for the future. The scope of the project would therefore include:-

- To remain as sole / key occupier at The Deane House;
- To review the business case for making changes to The Deane House in order to make it fit for purpose for sharing with other partners;
- Joining a public sector hub at another location;
- Moving as sole occupier to another location;
- Dispersing the Council to a number of locations within the community; and
- To review all customer access channels: web, physical premises, telephone, social media;

All of these would have an impact on the communities the Council served and each would need to be assessed as to this impact.

The fundamental outputs from this project had to be a Business Case to provide:-

- (1) flexible office accommodation for staff and Members which reduced our overhead costs; and
- (2) customer access to Taunton Deane services that was cost effective for the Council and best met the future needs of its customers.

It was important for the Council to undertake this work in the near future to ensure that:-

- The Council had customer access that was fit for purpose;
- To drive down costs;
- To make the most of the Council's resources;
- To enable decisions on investment priorities; and
- To ensure that any opportunities to share overheads were not missed.

The project would require project management resource above the day to day work of the Council plus funding to employ external expertise in the areas of property advice and updating the way Taunton Deane worked and the Council's interaction with customers, including new technologies.

Such funding – estimated in the region of £70,000 – would pay for the external expertise as well as a Project Manager to work part time for up to a nine month period plus some dedicated administrative support. Any monies not used would be returned to the General Fund at the end of the project.

This topic was discussed at the meeting of the Community Scrutiny Committee on 2 April 2013. Although the recommendations were supported, concerns were raised on the following issues:-

- Consideration should be given to ensuring the Council continued to serve those who did not wish or were unable to use self help mechanisms;
- That the true value of the Council's assets was established; and
- That Members were involved with the project and that the Portfolio Holders for Asset Management were included in the governance arrangements.

Moved by Councillor Horsley, seconded by Councillor Coles that the proposed recommendations be replaced with the following:-

“That £30,000 be allocated from General Fund Reserves to fund the cost of preparation of a scheme to ensure that a sound Business Case was made for the sale of The Deane House site and the transfer of its office requirements to existing offices within Taunton according to the five points set out in the preamble to the amendment; and

Such a scheme would take account of the recognised need for taxpayers, tenants and other users of Taunton Deane's services to have good customer access and could well lead to a separate site from the rest of the accommodation.”

The amendment was put and was lost.

On the motion of Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams, it was

Resolved that:-

- (1) The Council's Accommodation and Customer Access Project was mandated; and
- (2) £70,000 be allocated from General Fund Reserves to fund the costs of the project, recognising that costs would be minimised wherever possible and any under spend returned to the General Fund.

(The meeting ended at 9.14 p.m.)

Appendix

Compliance with the Requirements of the Planning Act 2008	
Section 211	<p>In preparing the Draft Charging Schedule Taunton Deane Borough Council has had regard to the actual and expected costs of infrastructure; the economic viability of development; other actual or expected sources of funding for infrastructure; the actual or expected administrative expenses in connection with CIL; and the Statutory Guidance.</p> <p>Taunton Deane Borough Council has consulted a range of stakeholders in preparing the Draft Charging Schedule, with consultations taking place as follows:</p> <p>Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule: 29 June 2012 to 27 July 2012</p> <p>Draft Charging Schedule: 1 February 2013 to 15 March 2013</p>
Section 212	<p>Taunton Deane Borough Council has appointed the Planning Inspectorate to examine the Draft Charging Schedule, as an appropriate independent body that has suitable qualifications and experience for the task. All persons who have submitted representations about the Draft Charging Schedule have been given the opportunity to be heard by the Examiner.</p>
Section 212	<p>The following appropriate, available evidence has informed the Draft Charging Schedule:</p> <p>Taunton Deane Borough Council Infrastructure Delivery Plan June 2011 Taunton Deane Borough Council Community Infrastructure Levy Viability Appraisal May 2012 PDCS Summary of Consultation Responses January 2013 Taunton Deane Core Strategy September 2012</p>
Regulation No.	Compliance with the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations, 2010 as amended by the CIL Regulations 2011
12	<p>The Draft Charging Schedule contains the information required by the Regulations, namely (a) the name of the charging authority; (b) the rates (in pounds per square metre) at which CIL is to be chargeable in the authority's area; (c) the location and boundaries of the zones for differential rates, on an Ordnance Survey base showing grid lines and references; and (d) an explanation of how the chargeable amount will be calculated.</p>
13	<p>Taunton Deane Borough Council's differential Levy rates are compliant with Regulation 13, which enables charging authorities to set differential rates (including nil rates) by location and type of development.</p>

14	<p>In setting its differential Levy rates, Taunton Deane Borough Council has complied with Regulation 14(1), which requires that it ‘...must aim to strike what appears to the charging authority to be an appropriate balance between (a) the desirability of funding from CIL (in whole or in part) the actual and expected estimated total cost of infrastructure required to support the development of its area, taking into account other actual and expected sources of funding; and (b) the potential effects (taken as a whole) of the imposition of CIL on the economic viability of development across its area.’</p>
15	<p>A Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule was approved on 20 June 2012 and published on 29 June, together with the accompanying evidence base. Consultation occurred in accordance with the Regulations over the period from 29 June 2012 to 27 July 2012 with the prescribed consultation bodies. Comments were also invited from residents, businesses and voluntary bodies, including:-</p> <p>All parties on the LDF consultation database; The public – a press release was issued, a press advertisement published and a copy of the Preliminary Draft (and supporting documents) was made available at the Borough Council’s offices and on the Council’s website.</p> <p>25 responses were received on the Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule (PDCS). These informed the preparation of the Draft Charging Schedule, and were reported to Taunton Deane Borough Council’s Executive on 16 January 2013. Full details are contained in the CIL PDCS Consultation Responses, available on the Council’s website.</p>
16	<p>In accordance with the Regulations, the Draft Charging Schedule was published, together with relevant evidence and Representations Procedure on the Council’s website on 1 February 2013. The webpage stated that the documents could be inspected at The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton. Copies were sent to each of the prescribed consultation bodies.</p> <p>In addition, all previous respondents on the Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule and consultees on the LDF Consultation database were notified of the publication of the Draft Charging Schedule.</p> <p>A local advertisement notice was placed in the Somerset County Gazette and the Wellington Weekly News.</p> <p>25 representations on the Draft Charging Schedule were received.</p> <p>All those making representations will be informed of each subsequent stage in the examination and adoption process, including submission, publication of the Examiner’s report and approval of the charging schedule by the charging authority.</p>

17	The period for representations on the Draft Charging Schedule was 1 February to 15 March 2013.
19	<p>Taunton Deane Borough Council will submit this Declaration and the following to the examiner in accordance with the Regulations: (a) the Draft Charging Schedule; (b) a summary of the main issues raised by the representations; (c) copies of the representations; (d) any modifications; (e) copies of the relevant evidence.</p> <p>Copies of the above documents will be made available at the Council's offices as required by the Regulations. All documents will be available on the Council's website and a statement of the fact that the documents are available for inspection and where they can be inspected will be published.</p> <p>Any modifications to the Draft Charging Schedule will be published on the Council's website and notified to all prescribed consultation bodies as required by the Regulations.</p>

Usual Declarations of Interest by Councillors

Full Council

- **Members of Somerset County Council – Councillors Mrs Baker, Coles, A Govier, Henley, Hunt, Prior-Sankey, A Wedderkopp and D Wedderkopp**
- **Employees of Somerset County Council – Councillors Mrs Hill and Stone**
- **Employee of Sedgemoor District Council – Councillor Slattery**
- **Employee of Job Centre Plus – Councillor Henley**
- **Employee of UK Hydrographic Office – Councillor Tooze**
- **Employee of Natural England and Clerk to Milverton Parish Council – Councillor Wren**
- **Somerset Waste Board representatives – Councillors Hayward and Ross**
- **Director of Southwest One – Councillor Nottrodt**
- **Alternate Director of Southwest One – Councillor Ross**
- **Tone Leisure Board representatives – Councillors D Durdan and Stone**
- **Part-time Swimming Instructor – Councillor Swaine**
- **Member of the Board of Governors at Somerset College – Councillor Gill Slattery**
- **Patron of Supporters, Taunton Women’s Aid – Councillor Gill Slattery**
- **Owner of land in Taunton Deane – Councillor Farbahi**

- **Director of the Taunton Town Centre Company –
Councillor D Reed**

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Full Council – 23 July 2013

Potential Acquisition of the Brewhouse Theatre and Arts Centre

Report of Strategic Director – Brendan Cleere

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Norman Cavill)

1. Executive Summary

This report seeks Full Council consideration of the potential purchase of the remaining lease on The Brewhouse Theatre and assets within

Trustees of the Brewhouse Theatre – an independent charity – decided to appoint administrators resulting in the closure of the venue on 21 February 2013.

Administrators are now seeking to surrender the lease and sell the contents to the Council, in return for an appropriate sum. The Council owns the land and the lease contains a number of restrictive covenants, giving the Council powers to ensure that the use remains as a theatre.

A mandate to continue negotiations with the administrators was given by Full Council in April 2013. These negotiations have been ongoing since that time, with Group Leaders briefed and providing policy guidance at all key stages.

Matters have now reached a point where the Council has reached an ‘in principle’ agreement with administrators, subject to Full Council approval.

There are risks associated with owning the property which are outlined in section 11.

The financial implications associated with owning this property are outlined in the confidential Appendix.

An independent consultant has been appointed to advise on potential operating models and proposals emerging for the operation of the theatre. The work of this consultant will be overseen by a Steering Group approved by Full Council in April 2013, comprising Group Leaders, portfolio and shadow portfolio holders and the Chairman of the Taunton Cultural Consortium.

2. Background

- 2.1 Management and trustees of the Brewhouse Theatre and Arts Centre approached the Council in early January 2013 to give notice of their severe financial predicament and to request significant additional funds to enable the venue to continue trading.
- 2.2 The Council provided a grant of £152,000 per annum to The Brewhouse, and the view was taken that there should be no further funding without a clear recovery plan, showing how the theatre could be put onto a sustainable financial footing.
- 2.3 Trustees of the Brewhouse (an independent charity) then engaged a firm called BDO – specialists in financial insolvency and administration – to advise on their options for the future. This resulted in trustees recommending an option whereby the theatre would be placed into administration and the administrators would immediately enter into a license with the Council to enable the theatre to remain open.
- 2.4 Again, the view was taken that the Council could not consider entering into a license with the administrators, due to the scale of the financial risks and uncertainties involved.
- 2.5 BDO were formally appointed as administrators of The Brewhouse on 21 February 2013 and the venue closed on that day.
- 2.6 The administration process is ongoing and BDO are currently looking to sell the remaining 61 years of the lease.
- 2.7 The Council's annual grant of £152,000 remains protected in the 2013/14 budget towards any successor venture. A further sum of £35,000 was also set aside in February 2013, to assist with any costs incurred in protecting the Council's interest in the asset and facilitating a sustainable future for the venue.

3. Potential Purchase of The Brewhouse

- 3.1 Full Council (9 April 2013) gave a mandate for continued negotiations towards the purchase of the remaining 61 year lease on the venue, as a means of both protecting the asset and having a strong role in facilitating a sustainable future for the theatre. It was agreed that the Council should act as facilitator, rather than prospective theatre operator.
- 3.2 A detailed valuation exercise has been undertaken and negotiations are ongoing with administrators over the potential acquisition of the building and contents. Appendix A (confidential) provides a summary of these negotiations and a number of recommendations for consideration by Full Council.

- 3.3 Additional 'Holding costs' for the property are estimated at up to £140,000 for a twelve month period and £69,000 for a six month period. These costs include utilities, 24 hour security, insurance and business rates.
- 3.4 A survey of the building and infrastructure has been carried out and costs associated with this are referred to in the confidential appendix.

4. Determining Options for the Future of The Brewhouse

- 4.1 An independent consultant has been appointed to advise the Council on options for the future of the venue. The range of potential options are many and varied, including potential for the use of the venue as a 'learning theatre' promoted by Somerset College, a wholly community run operation, a fully commercial model or potentially a mix of different approaches. The timetable for implementation of any new venture will depend to a large extent on whether the Council acquires the venue and the merits of the business case for the different operating models being proposed.
- 4.2 At this stage, the consultants have met with a range of potential interested parties and they are scheduled to complete their work in Autumn 2013 (this timetable is indicative and subject to clarification on ownership of the Brewhouse). The final report of the consultant will be subject to scrutiny and further decision, if appropriate, by Executive and Full Council.
- 4.3 The work of the consultants will be overseen at key stages by the Steering Group of elected members approved by Full Council in April 2013.

5. Finance Comments

- 5.1 As highlighted elsewhere in this report, there are both capital and revenue costs associated with acquiring and holding the asset. There are also costs which have been identified by the recent survey which the Council, should it acquire the building, may face an obligation to address or pass on the liability through any subsequent lease arrangement.
- 5.2 Further comments are provided in the confidential appendix.

6. Legal Comments

- 6.1 As the Council owns the freehold of the Brewhouse, if the Council acquires the lease, the lease will merge with the freehold and cease to exist. The Council could then grant a new lease on such terms as can be agreed with a new tenant. If the Council does not acquire the lease there is a restriction on assigning the lease to a new tenant. If the Administrator sought to assign the lease in breach of the terms of the lease then the

Council could (if they chose to do so) take enforcement action through the Courts.

6.2 Further legal comments are provided in the confidential appendix.

7. Links to Corporate Aims

7.1 A vibrant arts and culture scene makes a significant contribution to the local economy and the Council's growth and regeneration priority.

8. Environmental Implications

8.1 There are no specific environmental implications arising from this report. Should the Council acquire the property, any improvement works required would need to consider environment and sustainability issues.

9. Community Safety Implications

9.1 24 hour security is currently in place to protect the property against potential vandalism or anti-social behaviour. If the Council acquired the property, the holding costs referred to previously in this report include continuation of 24 hour security.

10. Equalities Impact

10.1 The closure of the Brewhouse has impacted on many groups and individuals.

10.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out in respect of any subsequent business case from a third party to re-open and run the theatre, which depends on support of the Council. These matters will also be considered by the steering group referred to in the Executive Summary and in the previous report to Full Council (April 2013).

11. Risk Management

11.1 Key risks associated with this report are set out below:

Risk	Comment/Mitigation
A bid from the Council is not acceptable to the administrators	The Council will be able to exert significant influence over prospective purchasers through the terms of the lease.
The Brewhouse is acquired by a third party, resulting in a potential reduction in the amount of control that the	Whilst the Council would lose a degree of control over the venue, the terms of the remaining lease are such that the

Risk	Comment/Mitigation
Council can apply over the future of the venue.	Council can still exert substantial influence, through the terms of the lease, over the future of the venue.
The Brewhouse is acquired by a third party, who expects TDBC to provide unconditional support for their activities.	Restrictive covenants give TDBC substantial influence over the use of the venue. Members are strongly advised not to lend support of any kind to any third party unless a sustainable operating model is in place. This will take some time and the independent consultant will advise in this regard.
The costs of 'holding' the asset in the event of the Council owning the venue are deemed too high and/or property related costs are prohibitively high following detailed survey.	This is a matter for members to consider in deciding whether or not to proceed with a purchase of the venue
Following purchase of the venue, the Council fails to find a party willing to operate it.	The steering group will be notified at the earliest possible stage whether any operating models have a realistic prospect of success in financial terms. It is suggested that alternative options for the venue may be needed if a successor operator cannot be found during the period to Christmas 2013.
Following any surrender of the lease to the Council, there is pressure to 'open the doors' prematurely, and without a clear and sustainable operating plan.	It is strongly advised that the Council does not bow to pressure to open the doors prematurely, without a clear and financially viable operating model in place. The independent consultant will advise on this matter.

12. Partnership Implications

12.1 There are no partnership implications at this stage.

13. Recommendations

13.1 Full Council is recommended to decide whether or not to proceed with acquisition of the Brewhouse, based on the further details provided in Appendix A (confidential).

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Taunton Deane Borough Council

Full Council – 23 July 2013

West Somerset and Taunton Deane Joint Management and Shared Services Project - JOINT CHIEF EXECUTIVE PROPOSAL

Report of Councillor John Williams, Leader of Council

1. Executive Summary

This report outlines a proposal that West Somerset Council (WSC) and Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) move to a shared Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) at the earliest opportunity.

This was considered at the Joint Members Advisory Panel on 25 June and at the 'All Member Briefings' held on 3 July 2013 in both Councils.

This report considers:

- i) The principle of sharing a Chief Executive; and if approved
- ii) Options for achieving this.

The report sets out my recommendations as Leader which I would urge the Council to unanimously support.

2. Background

- 2.1 In February 2013, West Somerset Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council agreed to work together to prepare a business case for Joint Management and Shared Services arrangements.
- 2.2 A Project Team has been put in place to progress this with the ambition of delivering a business case for consideration by Full Council decision in October 2013.
- 2.3 The project has appropriate governance arrangements in place, with a Joint Project Board (JPB) and a Joint Members Advisory Panel (JMAP) both meeting monthly to review progress and share key developments.
- 2.4 Two 'All Member Briefings' have taken place in both Councils. The first providing an update on project progress, an overview of the project team,

an outline of the intended approach to developing the business case, notification of our intention to bid for Transformation Funding from the Government, and a contextual overview of our organisations and communities. The second dealt solely with the proposal for a joint Chief Executive.

3. Joint Chief Executive Proposal

- 3.1 Whilst developing the business case as described above, it has become increasingly obvious to us as Leaders of the Councils that the sharing of a Chief Executive (role of Head of Paid Service) would be a positive development.
- 3.2 The financial savings are significant and this will be a key message of the more detailed business case that flows from this project. We have concluded that it makes sense to progress this issue in advance of the other aspects of the business case as this solution would work with or without the full scale implementation of Shared Management / Services.
- 3.3 We briefed the Project's Joint Member Advisory Panel on this on 25 June 2013 and then held 'All Member Briefings' in both authorities on 3 July 2013. West Somerset Council will consider this at their Full Council meeting of 22 July 2013.
- 3.4 We are asking Members to consider this decision now (ahead of the full business case) as it:-
 - Delivers savings for both Councils
 - Provides a clear message to the organisation, our communities and Government that we will progress savings from our senior management posts.
 - Can operate on a 'stand-alone' basis and therefore does not prejudice the consideration of the full business case – but allows for the implementation of joint management and shared service arrangements to be progressed "at pace".
 - Offers the opportunity to give clear strategic direction to both Councils as further funding cuts hit following the Spending Review.
 - Offers the opportunity to develop relationships with elected Members in both Councils and provides a single focus for the development of the project.
 - Adds weight to the Transformation Challenge Award Fund bid being made to Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).
- 3.5 Since discussing this proposal at JMAP we, as Leaders, have reflected on the choices we have on implementing a Joint Chief Executive position and have outlined this for consideration below. This clear choice is being given to Councillors in both Councils but I have made clear my recommended course of action.

- 3.6 This report now separates the issue of 'post' and 'post holder'. We want to first establish the appetite for having a Joint Chief Executive. Should this be supported, then we need to consider how this could be achieved.
- 3.7 In both options we acknowledge that the full business case will need to address the salary levels for all senior management posts and this may see some potential changes in salary levels but, where this occurs, this will need to be supported by market evidence. However, if option 2 is preferred, then the salary level for the Joint Chief Executive will need to be considered in advance of the recruitment, and decision on the full business case.

4 Operational Considerations - Joint Chief Executive Post

- 4.1 We have asked both Chief Executives to consider the feasibility and impact of having a Joint Chief Executive post. Their feedback below is based on learning from Joint Chief Executive colleagues, other Local Authorities involved in joint arrangements and from their own knowledge of both Councils including the way their current roles are delivered. They have also been consulted on both the principle and the "process" and their detailed consultation responses are contained in the confidential Appendices A and B.
- 4.2 They have concluded that:-
- This proposal is an entirely realistic proposition and the benefits set out by the Leaders are real. It saves money and it will enable the two organisations to work better and faster together irrespective of future decisions on wholesale change on joint management and shared services.
 - This is a very different job. Being a joint Chief Executive isn't one person doing two jobs in the way they were done before. The key difference is that the role is much more strategic and it will be necessary to step away from some of the day-to-day detail.
 - It is essential that the joint Chief Executive is perceived to be full time for both Councils, their partners, communities and local businesses.
- 4.3 They have the following observations for Members, staff and other stakeholders to consider when debating this proposal:-
- There will be an overall additional time commitment falling on the joint Chief Executive as a result of working in two Councils. This is manageable but will be challenging and the post holder will need the support of Members and staff to make the arrangement a success. The further development of joint management and shared services will undoubtedly help this as it will enable the joint Chief Executive to more readily change structures, systems and ways of working to enable the

overall joint arrangements to work as effectively as possible. Having said that the arrangement can work stand alone and be separate to other changes, albeit that the personal challenges to the joint Chief Executive to perform to the highest level will be greater.

- This is a different job; the proposal is not to create a part time Chief Executive for two Councils. Whilst time allocation will be important to be “fair”, the 50:50 cost allocation does not mean that the joint Chief Executive will rigidly be in one authority for two and a half days and vice versa. In fact the post holder could be working in one authority but doing work for the other or for both. Nor does it mean if the post holder is working in one authority they are not available to the other. Technology and Personal Assistant (PA) arrangements will help deliver the perception that the role is full time in both Councils and the reality that the post holder can be as responsive as possible to both Councils and its customers. Having said that, physical visibility and availability will have to change. The joint Chief Executive will need to use their judgement and carefully prioritise and place themselves where they are most needed at any point in time.
- The Chief Executives both have strong teams around them and this will be critical in ensuring substitution and delegation is effective. There will be an impact on Corporate Management Team (CMT) colleagues, it is likely that they may be required to do additional work, take on new challenges or take on extra responsibility as a consequence of this proposal. It is pleasing to report that the proposal has the “in principle” support of both management teams. Other changes to governance and systems will also be helpful and the Councils may wish to review delegation arrangements to ensure the joint Chief Executive can get on and manage the organisations and operations in the most effective and efficient way possible, without negating Member involvement in policy issues that are important to them.
- The relationship with the Leaders, Executive Councillors and all Members will be very important. The learning to date clearly shows that where the relationships are actively and positively managed, the arrangements have greater chances of success. Building the relationship between both sets of Members, whilst protecting democratic differences, has also been shown to be very helpful not just to the joint Chief Executive in the smooth running of the Councils, but also for the Members themselves. Informal meetings can help build trust and could lead to joint working where appropriate. One of the biggest risks is either Council not feeling they are getting their “fair share” of the joint arrangements and as such the right culture, environment and relationships that enable concerns to be articulated and discussed as early as possible. The Members must be able to trust and work with each other.

4.4 Taking all of the above into account, the Chief Executives are firmly of the

view that this proposal is a good opportunity for both Councils. The proposal can be made to work in isolation of further organisational change. Having said that all of the learning to date from the thirty plus authorities that are part of joint arrangements is that the greatest overall benefits to the Councils and their customers ultimately accrue from the further joining up of management and the sharing of services. This process is made so much easier by the initial and early joining up of the Chief Executive post.

5. JMAP Feedback

5.1 The Panel discussed our proposal on 25 June 2013 and supported our request to progress to a Full Council decision.

5.2 They made requests that the following issues were clarified in the Full Council papers:-

Further details of the S113 Agreement / or any Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that may be required

Details of arrangements for the performance appraisal of the shared Chief Executive

5.3 The Local Government Act 1972 (S113) allows a local authority to enter into an agreement with another authority to place its officers at the disposal of the other authority, subject to consultation with the staff concerned. Staff that are made available under such an arrangement are able to take binding decisions on behalf of the body at whose disposal they are placed, although they remain an employee of their original authority for employment and superannuation purposes.

5.4 This report recommends that, should members approve the principle of a Joint Chief Executive and approve Option 1, the responsibility be delegated to the respective Monitoring Officers to draw up the appropriate agreement for sign off at JMAP. Appendix C gives an example list of the headings that such an agreement may include.

5.5 As set out in 5.2 above JMAP also requested details of the performance appraisal process that would be put in place for the Joint Chief Executive. Guidance on appraisal arrangements for Chief Executives is set out in the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) for Chief Executives Conditions of Service.

5.6 West Somerset Council have already put in place a scheme which was agreed by the Council after taking advice and support from the Chief Executive at South West Councils and we ourselves have been taking advice on a scheme. This report recommends that a draft scheme is presented to JMAP for consideration.

6. Member Briefings Feedback

6.1 'All Member briefings' took place at both West Somerset and Taunton Deane on 3 July 2013 and the proposals and options set out in this report were explained to members in more detail.

6.2 A range of issues were raised at these briefings and these included:

- Whether, should WSC choose to retain their current Chief Executive for a limited period to safely manage the handover of key projects, a contribution could be made by TDBC;
- Clarity on the role of Chief Executive;
- Consideration of performance based pay for the Chief Executive;
- Clarity on whether both posts are redundant if Option 2 is preferred;
- A request for clear recommendations from the Leader of each Council and also a set of recommendations which closed down the potential for this to keep being reconsidered should the two Councils make different decisions;
- A request to concentrate on jobs and roles and depersonalise the issue.

6.3 Section 8 of this report deals with the financial implications of these proposals but does not include a contribution from Taunton Deane for West Somerset retaining their current Chief Executive in an alternative role as this relates to work not covered by the Joint Chief Executive decision. This is a matter for West Somerset Council to consider.

6.4 The role of Chief Executive in local government is well defined and set out below is the definition as contained in JNC Terms and Conditions of Employment. With regard to the use of performance related pay then this is something that would be reviewed if members decide to progress with option 2 and, if moving forward with option 1, could be reviewed as part of the business case.

The term "chief executive" means the officer who is the head of the council's paid service. The duties and responsibilities of the post shall be determined by the individual employing authority. They shall include the statutory responsibilities of the head of the paid service, and such other duties as determined by the authority, which should include the following:-

(i) Responsibility for:

(a) leading the management team or equivalent, in particular in securing a corporate approach

(b) securing the provision of advice on the forward planning of objectives and services

(c) ensuring the efficient and effective implementation of the council's programmes and policies across all services and the effective deployment of the authority's resources to those ends.

For these purposes the chief executive has authority over all other employees of the council.

(ii) Advising the council, its executive and its committees on all matters of general policy and all other matters upon which his or her advice is necessary, with the right of attendance at all committees of the council and all subcommittees and working parties.

(iii) Advising the leader or elected mayor of the council, or where appropriate the party group leaders, on any matter relevant to the council's functions.

(iv) Representing and negotiating on behalf of the council on external bodies and networks.

(v) Advising or making suitable arrangements for advising the Lord Mayor, Mayor or Chair of the council on all matters within the duties of that office.

6.5 Redundancy is set out in employment legislation as:-

Section 139 Employment Rights Act 1996

Apply the definition of redundancy given by Section 139 Employment Rights Act 1996:

"... an employee who is dismissed shall be taken to be dismissed by reason of redundancy if the dismissal is attributable wholly or mainly to:

- the fact that his employer has ceased, or intends to cease, to carry on the business for the purposes of which the employee was employed by him, or has ceased, or intends to cease, to carry on that business in the place where the employee was employed or
- the fact that the requirements of that business for employees to carry out work of a particular kind, or for employees to carry out work of a particular kind in the place where he was so employed, have ceased or diminished or are expected to cease or diminish".

As has been set out in this report the creation of a Joint Chief Executive is substantially different to a stand alone post and those posts at Taunton Deane and West Somerset will no longer exist.

6.6 In developing our reports we, as Leaders, have attempted to provide the clarity on the decisions that need to be made to assist members.

7. Implementation Choices

- 7.1 Having reflected on the feedback we have had, both during and since the JMAP meeting of 25 June 2013 we now feel it is appropriate to offer Councillors a choice of implementation routes. Our reasons for doing this (including openness and transparency) were explained at the Member Briefing sessions held on 3 July 2013
- 7.2 Assuming the principle of having a Joint Chief Executive post is supported, there are two ways in which we can believe this can be achieved.
- 7.3 **Option 1** - Under the auspices of a s113 Agreement (where West Somerset would make their CEO redundant and ask to share the services of TDBC's existing CEO);
1. WSC and TDBC agree to the principle of a Joint Chief Executive position.
 2. WSC Chief Executive post declared redundant and the post holder given three months contractual notice with an effective last day of service as Chief Executive of 23 October 2013.
 3. That WSC retain the services of the current Chief Executive in a temporary post of Executive Director (Interim) reporting directly to the Joint Chief Executive. This would be until the 31 March 2014 to allow for the details and responsibilities of non chief executive duties such as Hinkley Point, Strategic Finance and Sale of Capital Assets to be handed over in a safe and structured manner.
 4. That the WSC request to share current TDBC Chief Executive be agreed by TDBC and the current postholder to undertake this Joint Chief Executive role under a LGA 1972 S113 Agreement with effect from 24 October 2013. This would be on existing terms and conditions of employment but would be subject to review when the full Joint Management and Shared Service business case is considered.
 5. Detailed handover of key tasks will take place during the period 24 July and 23 October 2013 during which time the Chief Executive for West Somerset Council will delegate all responsibility for the development of the Joint Management and Shared Services Project to the Joint Chief Executive 'elect'.
 6. That if the Joint Management and Shared Services business case is approved in October 2013, this arrangement is made permanent. If the business case is not approved then the Joint Chief Executive arrangement remains until May 2015 when it can be reviewed again (by either Council) after the District Council elections

7.4 Option 2 - (open recruitment)

1. WSC and TDBC agree to the principle of a Joint Chief Executive position.
2. WSC and TDBC determine that the Joint Chief Executive should be made by appointment (complying with relevant Regulations, Constitutional requirements etc) which would see the following indicative timetable adopted:*
 - i) Agreement of Joint Appointment Committee Members for both WSC and TDBC by 7 August 2013
 - ii) Determination of whether external resources for recruitment will be engaged to manage the appointment and advise elected members to be agreed by 7 August 2013.
 - iii) Sign off by Appointment Committee of Job Description, Person Specification and Recruitment Literature plus consideration of Joint Chief Executive salary** by 31 August 2013
 - iv) External advertisement during period 1 to 21 September 2013
 - v) Assessment Centre during week commencing 30 September 2013
 - vi) Full Interviews held week commencing 7 October 2013
 - vii) Appointment ratified by Full Council meetings week commencing 14 October 2013.
 - viii) Expected start date on new Joint Chief Executive 1 January or 1 February 2014 based on being employed by TDBC and operating under a S113 Agreement.
3. These arrangements would be permanent arrangements.

* If members determine that an external recruitment process is necessary then it is not expected that either current postholder would choose to apply.

**This is required to be approved by Full Council before the advertisement is placed.

8. Finance Comments

- 8.1 The move to a Joint Chief Executive will save money. For modelling purposes it has been assumed that the salary for the new joint post will be that currently in place at Taunton Deane. The paper makes it clear that this will be reviewed in October 2013, when any change would need to be

modelled – either into the overall project business plan, or into each Council’s stand-alone plans.

8.2 The proposal delivers an ongoing revenue saving of £76,400 per annum. This saving materialises regardless of the implementation route (which of course impacts on the payback period).

8.3 As with all “invest to save” proposals, it is important that Councillors understand the payback period (how long it would take to return any up-front investment required to the Councils’ reserves). The initial investment for either option would need to come from the Councils Reserves. We are currently bidding to the Government for Transformation Funding and would aim to use this (if successful) to cover the termination costs, thereby preserving each Council’s limited Reserves for further transformation work.

8.4 Members should note that the payback position for the two implementation options in this paper show very different results.

8.5 **Option 1 s113 Agreement**
Revenue Savings Position (Joint CEO Commences mid Oct 13)

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
TDBC – Ongoing	(27,000)	(65,000)	(65,000)	(65,000)
WSC – Ongoing	(4,800)	(11,400)	(11,400)	(11,400)

In addition to the above, due to the handover period re key projects (Oct – March), West Somerset Council will incur additional one-off costs of £31,833 in 2013/14.

Termination Costs

The termination costs for this option would be shared 50:50 between the Councils (as would the ongoing cost of the Joint CEO).

The payback period for Taunton Deane Borough Council is nine months. This is well within the usual parameters of acceptable “invest to save” proposals.

The payback period for West Somerset Council is four years. This is within the usual parameters of acceptable “invest to save” proposals.

8.6 **Option 2 Recruitment**
Revenue Savings Position (Joint CEO Commences mid Oct 13)

The ongoing savings are similar to those set out for Option 1, but with a later implementation date.

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
TDBC – Ongoing	(10,800)	(65,000)	(65,000)	(65,000)
WSC – Ongoing	(1,900)	(11,400)	(11,400)	(11,400)

It has been assumed, for modelling purposes that the existing CEOs will leave in Jan and the new Joint CEO will start in Feb. There will be a handover period on West Somerset Council issues only – incurring additional one-off costs of £12,733 in 2013/14 for West Somerset.

Termination Costs

The termination costs for this option would be funded by each individual Council.

The payback period for Taunton Deane Borough Council is almost two and a half years. This is also within the usual parameters of acceptable “invest to save proposals”.

The payback period for West Somerset is eight years. This is outside of the normal parameters of acceptable “invest to save proposals”. Members would need to consider the “value for money” issues associated with progressing this route and be clear that the operational and strategic advantages to be gained by following this option outweighed the financial disadvantages.

9. Legal Comments

The legal implications are fully set out in this report. If Option 1 is agreed then an agreement will be required pursuant to s113 of the Local Government Act 1972

10. UNISON Consultation Responses

The report has been provided to both UNISON Branches and Regional Office as part of the consultation. UNISON believe that Option 2 is not an acceptable option due to the costs that will be incurred and that they believe that the posts are not substantially different which should lead to a slot in of the remaining post holder where one has opted not to be considered.

11. Links to Corporate Business Plan

- 11.1 The development of the Joint Management and Shared Services Project is a key element of our Corporate Business Plan and this report supports this aspiration as well as meeting the needs of the Medium Term Financial Plan to make revenue savings.

12. Environmental Implications

- 12.1 There are some minor environmental impacts linked to the creation of the Joint Chief Executive position if looked at solely from the perspective of each individual Council which relate to potential additional mileage between districts.
- 12.2 This mileage can be mitigated against through new ways of working, technology etc and the reduced mileage from the Joint Chief Executive attending county and regional meetings can be offset.

13. Community Safety Implications

- 13.1 There are no community safety implications associated with this report.

14. Equalities Impact

- 14.1 There are no adverse equality impacts identified.

15. Risk Management

Risk	Consequence	Probability	Impact	Treatment
Joint Chief Executive arrangements not supported by changes to working practices, member interaction etc	Ineffective support from Chief Executive and vice versa from elected members damages service delivery, reputation etc	3	3	Review of working arrangements, constitution etc
New Joint Chief Executive arrangements not fully supported if approved.	Damage to reputations of Councils, damage to Joint Management and Shared Services Project.	3	2	Review of working arrangements, constitution etc
Joint Chief Executive put in place through Option 1 and necessary skills not available.	Joint Chief Executive arrangements fail to work damaging future arrangements and credibility.	1	3	Mentoring and support from LGA
Joint Chief Executive put in place through Option 2 increasing costs and causing delays.	Delays to integration plus significant loss of knowledge and capacity. Also additional costs criticised Staff morale impacted.	3	2	Project Plans to be re-evaluated and realigned. Clarity on press coverage and responses.
New Joint Chief Executive proposals criticised with regard to costs and benefits.	Damage done to reputations of Councils; staff morale impacted	2	2	Process to be managed against agreed policies and procedures.

16. Partnership Implications (if any)

- 16.1 This report goes to the very heart of our partnership aspirations. Not only with the West Somerset Project but also as a local authority capable of and willing to work in partnership to ensure that services are protected for the public.

17. Recommendations

It is recommended that:-

- 17.1 Members approve the principle of sharing a Chief Executive with West Somerset Council.
- 17.2 Members delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to draw up amendments to the Council's constitution and Scheme of Delegation to provide for the Authority working with a joint chief executive.
- 17.3 The Retained HR Manager be asked to develop, in consultation with the Chief Executive of South West Councils, a performance appraisal scheme for the Joint Chief Executive post for consideration by Joint Member Advisory Panel.
- 17.4 To implement recommendation 17.1 above members approve Option 1 (as set out in paragraph 6.2) as the process for achieving the shared Chief Executive, subject to West Somerset Council, at their Full Council meeting of 22 July 2013, having agreed the same principle and option process.
- 17.5 Members delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to draw up an agreement pursuant to S113 of the Local Government Act 1972 with the Monitoring Officer of West Somerset Council for consideration by Joint Member Advisory Panel.
- 17.6 That should West Somerset Council, at their Full Council meeting of 22 July 2013 recommend Option 2 (open recruitment) then members will be asked to consider whether this is a viable option.
- 17.7 Members note the ongoing saving delivered from the Joint Chief Executive post and ensure the Councils medium term financial plans are updated accordingly.

AND EITHER

Option 1 - Approve a supplementary estimate of £46,100 to fund the termination costs associated with Option 1 (£34,575 from the General Fund Reserve and £11,525 from the HRA Reserve).

OR

Option 2 - Approve a supplementary estimate of £156,200 to fund the termination costs associated with Option 2 (£117,150 from the General Fund Reserve and £39,050 from the HRA Reserve); and

Approve a further supplementary estimate of £10,000 to fund 50% of the recruitment expenses that will be incurred (£7,500 from the General Fund Reserve and £2,500 from the HRA Reserve).

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Appendix C

Local Government Act 1972 S113 Agreement – Indicative Headings

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Motion to Full Council – 23 July 2013

The possibility of a transition to a Committee System in May 2014

Motion proposed by Councillor Jefferson Horsley and seconded by Councillor Simon Coles

Taunton Deane Borough Council notes the provisions in the Localism Act 2011 which now enables English Local Authorities to operate a different form of governance including a Committee system from their Annual Meeting. It further notes that the resolution to start to operate a different form of governance must be made at a meeting in advance of their Annual Meeting in order to be implemented from the aforesaid Annual Meeting.

Taunton Deane Borough Council therefore believes research should begin now to consider the possibility of a transition to a committee system in May 2014 after weighing up the advantages and disadvantages of such a system and comparing it with the current “Stong Leader – Executive” model.

Taunton Deane Borough Council therefore instructs its officers to prepare such a report for its 8 April 2014 meeting ahead of Annual Council to be held on 8 May 2014 in such a manner that the options are clearly set out for Members to decide to adopt Governance by Committee should it so decide at that meeting.

Briefing note on Change to Governance Arrangements Under the Localism Act 2011

Background

The Localism Act was introduced on the 15 November 2011 with the aim of improving freedoms and flexibility for Local Government as part of those freedoms and flexibilities are the provisions to allow local authorities to change their governance arrangements and to enable them to return to a Committee system from operating executive arrangements.

Commencement orders have now been issued that have brought in some of the powers to allow local authorities to do this. Further regulations have been issued and work can now be done on how to set up a Committee system.

Process

In order for a local authority to be able to change to a Committee system the Council must pass a resolution in order to enable the change.

The Council must then make available copies of all of the relevant documents detailing the changes as soon as possible as well as advertising it in at least one local newspaper.

It should be noted that once the resolution has been passed to agree these changes no further change can occur again for five years.

Any change will take effect at the first annual meeting after the resolution has been made or at any specified annual meeting if not the next one following the decision. This means that it will not take effect until next May now.

It is also understood that no change can occur in an election year, that is a decision in the April to take effect at the Annual Council in the May.

What's to come

Further regulations have now been released that set out the relevant parts of Schedule 2 to the Act and these establish:-

1. The functions of any Committee that are non-delegable;
2. Cases/actions that are non-delegable;
3. Any action in connection with the discharge of any function that is non-delegable.

If a function etc is non-delegable then it must be carried out by the Full Council and Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 may not apply.

In addition, the Council will have to decide whether or not it has one or more Overview and Scrutiny Committees but the way the regulations are drafted it appears that we are being guided that there should be Scrutiny Committees.

What the Committee system could mean

There would be no Cabinet/Executive.

We would need to have a Policy and Resources Committee which would be chaired by the Leader.

There would be a number of managerial Committees, which in turn could also have sub-committees and Scrutiny Committees will be a choice.

Other considerations to be taken into account:-

The system is generally resource intensive for professional officers and Democratic Services staff.

More evening meetings for officers which is likely to lead to increased claims for overtime and therefore increased costs, not to mention the facilities staff unless there is a move to day time meetings or late afternoon meetings.

There is a danger of officers not getting sufficient time to get the 'day job' done, therefore there will need to be clear prioritisation on what work needs to be done and what will not.

We would still need regulatory committees such as the Planning Committee and Licensing Committee.

More Members would have a role in the council although this may lead to more special responsibility allowances therefore further increasing the cost of the system.

A re-write of the Council's Constitution would be required.

Proportionality would be governed by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and will be decided based on our current numbers. The Policy and Resources Committee will need to be looked at in terms of how it recommends the budget, so numbers will be an issue. However it will depend on the number of Committees and number of members of those Committees.

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Full Council - 23 July 2013

Review of the size of Committees

Report of the Legal and Democratic Services Manager and Councillor David Reed (Chairman of the Corporate Governance Committee)

(This matter is the responsibility of the Leader of the Council)

1. Executive summary

To approve the changes to the size of the various Committees following a review in light of the change of administration.

2. Background

- 2.1 Following one Member of the Conservative Group moving to become an Independent Councillor in May 2013 and the changes to the Standards Committee now being a politically balanced Committee, a review of the size of Committees was deemed appropriate.
- 2.2 Sections 15 and 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 provides a duty on authorities to review the proportionality to ensure that it reflects the political make up of the Council.
- 2.3 The matter was discussed at the Constitutional Sub-Committee on the 4 June 2013 and referred the matter to the Corporate Governance Committee.
- 2.4 On the 24 June 2013, the Corporate Governance Committee also discussed this matter and agreed the changes as detailed in Appendix 1.

3. Finance Comments

- 3.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

4. Legal Comments

- 4.1 There are no legal implications other than those already mentioned in this report.

5. Links to Corporate Aims

- 5.1 There are no specific links to the corporate aims.

6. Environmental and Community Safety Implications

- 6.1 There are no implications for the environment or community safety.

7. Equalities Impact

7.1 An impact assessment is not required in respect of this report.

8. Risk Management

8.1 There are no risks attached to this report.

9. Recommendations

9.1 To recommend to Full Council that the changes to the size of the various Committees as detailed in Appendix 1 to this report be approved.

Contact

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Full Council – 23 July 2013

Review of the size of Committees – Appendix 1

Executive Members:-

- Councillor Williams – Leader of the Council
- Councillor Edwards – Deputy Leader – (Planning and Transportation and Communications)
- Councillor Mrs Adkins (Housing Services)
- Councillor Cavill (Economic Development, Asset Management, Tourism and the Arts)
- Councillor Hayward (Environmental Services and Climate Change)
- Councillor Mrs Herbert (Sports, Parks and Leisure)
- Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams (Corporate Resources)
- Councillor Mrs Warmington – (Community Leadership)

Political make up

Conservatives	27	48.2%
Liberal Democrats	23	41.1%
Independents	3	5.4%
Labour	3	5.4%
	56	100%

Committee	Conservatives	Lib Dems	Independent	Labour
Community Scrutiny	7	6	1	1
Corporate Governance	7	6	1	1
Corporate Scrutiny	7	6	1	1
Licensing	7	6	1	1
Planning	7	6	1	1
Standards	2	2	1	
	37	32	6	5

Chairs

Conservatives 4

Liberal Democrats 2

Vice Chairs will be selected by their respective committees.

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Council Meeting – 23 July 2013

Part I

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

(i) Councillor Mrs Adkins

Halcon North Regeneration - Creechbarrow Road Project, Taunton

The Executive has recently considered a report concerning the outline detailed proposals of the Creechbarrow Road Project, Taunton primarily in relation to the Council's portion of the site.

The revised development project sought to maximise the opportunities afforded by Homes and Communities Agency funding allocated to Knightstone Housing Association (KHA) and changes to housing finance resulting in more resources available for the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to invest in new affordable housing.

Much work has been undertaken to progress the scheme since it was last brought to Full Council, to the point where final approval for the Taunton Deane element is now required.

The site is currently being assembled by decanting the current tenants and buy back of the leasehold properties along with giving notice to quit on the garages.

All the current flats/houses on the Creechbarrow Road site will be demolished. One end of the site will be transferred to KHA and they will construct 32 affordable rented houses on this area. The remainder of this site will remain in Taunton Deane ownership, on which 60 new homes for Social rent will be built.

Whilst the project is housing driven, it is also designed to help tackle the deprivation in the area. The proposed play/green area will provide a new central focus and help integration of the new and the existing properties and provide a quality open space and the Community Hub building will potentially provide a valuable facility for the provision of services to the Halcon Ward.

The KHA outline development is comprised of 32 dwellings in total, consisting of the following:-

- 1 x 1 bed two-person Flat Over Garage (FOG);
- 3 x 2 bed four-person FOG;
- 9 x 1 bed two-person elderly persons flats (including 3 wheelchair compliant);

- 6 x 2 bed three-person elderly persons flats (including 2 wheelchair compliant);
- 3 x 2 bed four-person houses;
- 9 x 3 bed five-person houses; and
- 1 x 4 bed seven-person house.

KHA funding is supported by Homes and Community Agency (HCA) grant for 30 of the 32 new dwellings. The grant conditions require completion of these properties by 31 March 2015.

Heads of Terms for the disposal of the KHA portion of the site are currently being prepared. Previously the Council has commissioned Savills to undertake an assessment of the residual value of the KHA portion of the site for affordable housing. This confirmed a negative residual value, and consequently the site will be disposed of for £1. The Council is operating in an "open book" fashion with KHA and the total scheme cost for the KHA part was likely to be £3,972,000 and showed a substantial loss.

If during contractor procurement the KHA scheme reveals a changed position to generating a surplus, an overage agreement has already been negotiated where KHA and the Council will benefit equally in any surpluses derived. In addition a buy back for £1 clause has been included in the draft Heads of Terms so the Council will be able to re-purchase the site if the scheme falters.

The outline of Taunton Deane's development is comprised of 60 new properties in accordance with the mix below:-

- 9 x 1 bed two-person elderly persons flats (including 3 wheelchair compliant);
- 6 x 2 bed three-person elderly persons flats (including 2 wheelchair compliant);
- 1 x 1 bed two-person (FOG);
- 3 x 2 bed three-person (FOG);
- 6 x 1 bed two-person wheelchair compliant flats;
- 8 x 1 bed two-person flats;
- 6 x 2 bed three-person flats;
- 4 x 2 bed four-person houses;
- 13 x 3 bed five-person houses;
- 2 x 4 bed seven-person houses;
- 1 x 5 bed eight-person house; and
- 1 x 6 bed nine-person house.

An Elderly Persons Court will be provided comprising six two-bed and nine one-bed properties all designed to cater for non close-care elderly persons, with the inclusion of wheelchair transfer areas and level access showers in all flats with the option of reverting to baths should they be required. In addition, six ground floor wheelchair compliant ground floor flats have been included in the scheme proposal.

The development will include the following Design Standards:-

- Code for Sustainable Development – Level 4 - The new homes will be much cheaper to run for the occupants in that they will be 25% more energy efficient than current Building Regulations.
- Lifetime Homes - The Creechbarrow Road scheme layout and house layouts will fully conform to the latest Lifetime Homes design criteria, which ensures that a home built to the standards will be adaptable to allow future changes in an occupant's circumstances to be accommodated through pre-planned alterations rather than requiring them to move house.
- Secured by Design - An integral part of the overall sustainable development strategy is to adopt the Secured by Design Police initiative providing guidance and encouragement to those engaged within the specification, design and build of new homes to adopt crime prevention measures in new development.
- Taunton Protocol – This was adopted by the Council in November 2011 and set out the Council's aspirations for development in the fields of carbon reduction, building design and valuation, producing significant reductions of Co2 to help meet the Government's challenging targets for reducing the impact of climate change.

The scheme would remove a current HRA owned play area at the northern end of the site which is of poor quality. In its place a new, more central play area/open space will be provided in the scheme. An equipped area for younger children known as a Local Equipped Area for Play is also to be provided.

A three storey building is proposed at the end of Moorland Road. This will provide dwellings (8 x 1 bed, 2 person flats) on the first and second floors and a community facility on the ground floor which potentially could include the following features:-

- Walk in community facilities such as youth meeting place, internet provision and community café;
- Access to advice and services via volunteers and agencies;
- Meeting/activity rooms;
- Smaller interview rooms; and
- Landing pad workstations (hot desks) for partner agencies working in the area.

It is the intention through the construction phase to maximise opportunities for local community involvement and benefit through such things as requiring contractor(s) to provide training/apprenticeship opportunities that might lead to longer term employment. Such opportunities will initially be ring-fenced to persons within the Ward and the involvement of local and feeder schools in design and public art throughout the site.

In order to maximise the benefits of the scheme, it is important to let the new properties in a way that will facilitate and enable the greatest positive impact.

Consequently a draft Local Lettings Plan has been created in consultation with partners and KHA which will apply to the whole development area.

The new Council properties will be subject to Right to Buy (RtB), therefore if they were let to a tenant with existing, or, in time, earned RtB eligibility, they could make an application to purchase the property.

However, the Council is afforded some protection by the “Cost floor” provision. This means that for new build property for a period of 15 years, the RtB discounts will be limited to ensure that the purchase price of the property does not fall below what has been spent on building, buying, repairing or maintaining it over a certain period of time, up to the market value of the property. Therefore, in order to RtB a property, applicants will be required to pay the full build costs of the property.

An extensive public consultation/engagement process had been undertaken, in terms of preferences and concerns. All of the points have been assimilated into a composite design development process, which has informed the planning submission.

The current position as far as site assembly was concerned is as follows:-

- (i) Notice to quit has been issued to all tenants of garages. Many are now vacant with keys returned;
- (ii) 15 properties have been decanted to alternate accommodation;
- (iii) 15 accepted offers on alternate property are in the process moving home; and
- (iv) Negotiations are continuing with leaseholders for the buy back of properties.

The area of the scheme includes four properties at the end of Moorland Road. Of these, one (No 1) was owned by the General Fund (GF) as it was “bought back” by Housing Enabling during the course of the original larger project. The remaining three properties are owned by the HRA. It is proposed that the property is transferred to the HRA from the GF at a price agreed following formal valuation.

A detailed financial appraisal of the current proposed scheme has been undertaken and provides the following conclusions:-

- The Total Scheme Costs for the project are £8,143,000;
- Based on income from rents over a 30 year period the scheme could afford to repay £5,764,000 over 30 years.
- Therefore the scheme required a subsidy of £2,379,000
- The payback period (the time at which the full cost – including the £2,379,000 above - is paid back) = 46 years.

The current 2013/2014 Capital Programme includes an approved budget for the scheme totalling £7,667,000. In addition, there is an approved budget allocation of £200,000 included in the 2012/2013 Capital Programme for this scheme, giving approval for Total Capital Expenditure of £7,867,000.

The updated estimate of Total Scheme Costs exceeds the current approval, therefore it is necessary to request a budget increase of £276,000 in order to proceed to tender, as shown in the following table:-

	£
Current Capital Expenditure Budget for the scheme:	
2012/13 Capital Programme	200,000
2013/14 Capital Programme	7,667,000
Current Budget	7,867,000
Updated estimate of Total Scheme Costs	8,143,000
Additional Budget Approval Required	276,000

In terms of funding arrangements for the scheme when the initial proposals were approved, £200,000 was allocated from HRA Reserves and Members agreed in principle to approve funding for the balance via borrowing. The Council has experienced significant growth in RtB sales – and therefore capital receipts – in the last year. It is therefore proposed to use RtB capital receipts to fund 10% of the scheme, taking into account the requirement to meet the conditions of the One for One Replacement Agreement with the Government. The following table summarises the proposed funding at this stage:-

	£
Estimated Total Funding Required	8,143,000
Proposed Funding:	
HRA Reserves	200,000
RtB Capital Receipts	814,000
Social Housing Development Fund (indicative only)	1,686,000
Borrowing (indicative only)	5,443,000
Total Funding	8,143,000

Giving approval to support expenditure through borrowing will enable the scheme to proceed.

Although the Business Case indicates that the HRA would effectively provide a subsidy for the scheme within the current 30-year plan, the investment in the increased housing that the scheme will provide did pay back over 46 years. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the investment is affordable over the long term and that the properties should have a useful life of at least 46 years if properly maintained as planned.

In the circumstances, it is **recommended** that:-

- (1) Authority be granted to the Housing and Health Manager to progress and implement the Creechbarrow Road, Taunton Redevelopment Scheme;
- (2) An 'in principle' commitment to promoting a Compulsory Purchase Order(s) to progress the redevelopment scheme be approved;
- (3) Subject to valuation, the transfer of 1 Moorland Road, Taunton from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account be approved;

- (4) A Supplementary Estimate of £276,000 be also approved thus increasing the total Capital Expenditure Budget for the scheme to £8,143,000, and the proposed funding plan for the scheme, including borrowing, be noted; and
- (5) The principles contained within the proposed joint Taunton Deane and Knightstone Housing Association Local Lettings Plan for the development be supported.

(ii) Councillor Cavill

Sale and Acquisition of Freehold Interest in Land at Lisieux Way, Taunton

The Executive recently considered the proposed sale of a freehold interest in part of the site at Lisieux Way in Taunton, plus a freehold acquisition of an alternative part of the site. The proposal, if approved, will 'open up' the site for development as employment land, under the Council's priority of growth and regeneration.

The site in total extends to approximately 6 acres with the Council currently owning the freehold interest in approximately 4.41 acres.

A business has held this part of the site on a lease from the Council for many years with approximately 58 years of the term to run. The Council is currently receiving a ground rent each year in respect of this lease. Rent reviews are held at 14 year intervals but, as the last review was held in 2006 it is unlikely that the rent will increase in the foreseeable future. The business owns the freehold interest in the remainder of the site.

The whole site has unsuccessfully been marketed over the past few years due to the lease of part of the site, which makes it an unviable purchase in its current situation for a private investor.

The result of the inability to sell the combined interests of the Council and the existing business on the open market is that the site remains mainly vacant. The site is well located for redevelopment for employment use and is currently undeveloped at a time when there is demand for employment space in such a good location and a severe shortage of suitable alternative sites. There are currently two tenants on the site occupying Buildings "1" and "3".

A Property Development Company has recently agreed terms to purchase the business's interest in the site. The company has now approached the Council with a view to purchasing Taunton Deane's interest to give them the freehold of the whole site. They propose to redevelop the site for employment uses and this will be reflected in any legal agreement between the parties.

The consideration for the purchase will be the transfer of the freehold interest in the newly refurbished "Building 3". The building is currently occupied on a Full Repairing and Insuring Lease which commenced on 31 May 2012 and is for a term of 25 years with 5 yearly rent reviews.

As the rental income available under this lease will be greater than the rent received

by the Council from the business which currently leases the Council's land by a significant sum each year, there is additional value to the Council from the proposed sale and acquisition. A proposed consideration has been negotiated and provisionally agreed with the Property Development Company for the acquisition of the freehold of "Building 1". With Stamp Duty and a contingency for other associated costs of acquisition, the difference in rent will represent an annual return of 8% gross on the up front capital investment.

From an investment perspective, the positive Net Present Values indicate the investment opportunity represents an attractive proposition.

The proposal is likely to produce a continuing net saving to the Council, indicating that the proposal will be affordable if fully funded through borrowing. The annual savings will be higher if the Council uses reserves (cash) towards the funding of the capital costs.

It is **recommended** that:-

- (1) The proposed sale and acquisition of land and buildings at Lisieux Way, Taunton be supported and that a Supplementary Estimate to the Capital Programme to the amount detailed in the report for this purpose be approved, via borrowing;
- (2) It be noted that the continuing revenue implications would be taken into account as part of the annual budget setting process; and
- (3) The proposed economic development uses of the site in the future be approved in conjunction with the Section 151 Officer, the Portfolio Holder and the Shadow Portfolio Holder.

Council Meeting – 23 July 2013

Report of Councillor John Williams – Leader of the Council

1. Northern Inner Distributor Road (NIDR)

- 1.1 The great news is that the £15,200,000 funding has now been confirmed by the Government and by the time of presenting this report work on site will have started. This has to be a major vote of confidence in our plans for regeneration of this strategic employment and housing site, also delivering a £22,000,000 construction contract that will give a major boost to our local economy.
- 1.2 The NIDR is the key to unlock the Firepool site and we will now be redoubling our efforts with our partners, St Modwens, to deliver development on the site. For the housing aspect it is recognised that the original concept of flats is not particularly saleable in this present market. We have therefore, requested a review of the scheme to meet market demands and deliver an acceptable scheme. It has to be relevant that the adjacent housing development on the East Goods Yard is being rapidly constructed and trading well.

2. Castle Green Development

- 2.1 Further good news that the works and design of the above have been regarded as of sufficient merit to win the following:-
 - The national award, from the Association for Consultancy and Engineering, in respect of the design and construction of the iconic glass-sided bridge that spans the Castle Moat.
 - Commendation from the Royal Town Planning Institute, in the South West awards, for the design of this prestigious open space.
 - Our Contractor for the works, Britania Construction, nominated as one of three Contractors for the “Heritage Award” from the Chartered Institute of Building for works on Castle Green.
 - The bridge has also been nominated for a further award and judging by the British Construction Industry took place very recently. The outcome is not yet known.

- 2.2 To receive four accolades from independent organisations for the same project has to be testament to the design, construction and quality of the open space created. This is a great achievement for all involved.

3. Taunton Railway Station

- 3.1 We have recently received further details of how Network Rail proposes taking the project "Creating a New Gateway into Taunton" forward. A scheme has been produced that does propose the all important change of relocating the ticket booking hall and visitor concourse to the Firepool side of the track. Associated with this is a new commercial development around the forecourt of what is now the back entrance to the Station, together with improved taxi and bus drop off and collect provision.
- 3.2 This will be the first phase of the exciting overall scheme presented to us last year which included new housing development, new workshops and a multi-storey car park. These elements are still very much intended but have been delayed because of the short term extension of the Rail Operating Franchise. At present we do not have a long term operator to work with, as was anticipated in 2012.
- 3.3 We are in the process of arranging a presentation of these plans when further details will be available. The object of this first phase is to start creating that "New Gateway into Taunton" that is so needed to improve on what we have, but only carry out works that fit within the parameters of the overall scheme to minimize any abortive work. It is to be commended and we will be doing all possible to ensure this comes forward as again, the driver for this, is the impending construction of the NIDR.

4. Major Flood Alleviation Scheme

- 4.1 This is now proceeding apace with access to the land resolved and agreed with the Environment Agency and landowners. As a consequence the consultants carrying out the appraisal have been able to complete their on site surveys and the results of these should be assessed against the preliminary designs to confirm the assumptions made to date. This will confirm the feasibility or otherwise of the current designs and, if confirmed, allow us to commence the more detailed designs with certainty. Initial feedback from the consultants following on from their site visit confirms that 'no showstoppers' were identified.
- 4.2 I have no illusions that we have many challenges ahead to deliver this major scheme and other associated measures which are estimated to cost £12 to £15 million. The Environment Agency remains fully supportive as it will deliver protection to existing properties for which

they will contribute. The scheme, when finished, will also deliver essential protection to sites across Taunton that will drive economic development, with that link other sources of funds become available. As I have said, a challenge, but with persistence and commitment not one that is insurmountable.

5. Shared Management/Services Project with West Somerset Council

- 5.1 Suffice to say this is the subject of a separate report to Council tonight and I do hope that Members have accepted the recommendations being proposed. There is no doubt we, and many other Councils, will have to confront the difficult decisions in front of us tonight but I think I can assure Members it is one of those situations that you either plan for and adopt on your own terms or be driven to it through lack of funding. Continuing in the same old way is not a choice! The future could be stark, either choose to save money by cutting the cost of delivery or cut the very front line services that I know are so valued by our community, and that we all expect to be able to deliver for them! I know where my vote is going, I do hope it gets cross party support.
- 5.2 To reinforce comments above about reductions in funding please find attached to my report an official chart from Department for Communities and Local Government showing the potential trend of Local Government funding to 2020. As you will note the Revenue Support Grant as predicted virtually drops to zero. This Grant is worth a substantial amount of £3,500,000 this year, with our overall formula grant (including Business Rates) having already fallen by £2,300,000 over the last three years. This is not replaced by any proposals from the Government and the only increases shown are nominal uplifts for inflation which in turn will no doubt be matched by inflationary increases in our costs!
- 5.3 If any Members doubted the necessity for radical change then I hope this peek into the future will reassure them of the need. I for one would rather plan and be in control of our future rather than have it imposed upon us through lack of funding.

6. Taunton Deane Leading the Field! (Ahead of the Game?)

- 6.1 An article in Saturday's Telegraph of 13 July caught my eye where "senior Liberal Democrats" have come up with this brilliant idea that by moving a motion at their next Conference to build 25,000 more Council houses it helps save the economy.
- 6.2 A most interesting proposal because, although admirable to increase housing supply, if divided between about 340 Councils across the land it works out as an average of 74 houses for each authority.

- 6.3 On that basis we are well ahead of the game, in Halcon where we have plans for 92 new homes, (60 for Taunton Deane at Social Rent and a further 32 for Knightstone Housing Association at Affordable Rent), and approximately a further 20 new Taunton Deane homes for Social Rent on other sites across the district. Totalling 80 new social rented houses. This suggests the powers are already there from Central Government and our administration has taken full advantage of it by not waiting for motions to be moved in conference but getting on with delivery. We had already recognised the economic boost this provides. I would suggest that what is required is a motion exhorting far more Councils to be proactive and use the powers already given by Central Government, as our administration has done!
- 6.4 Taunton Deane Borough Council is again “leading the field” and others are following!

7. EDF South West Office Requirement

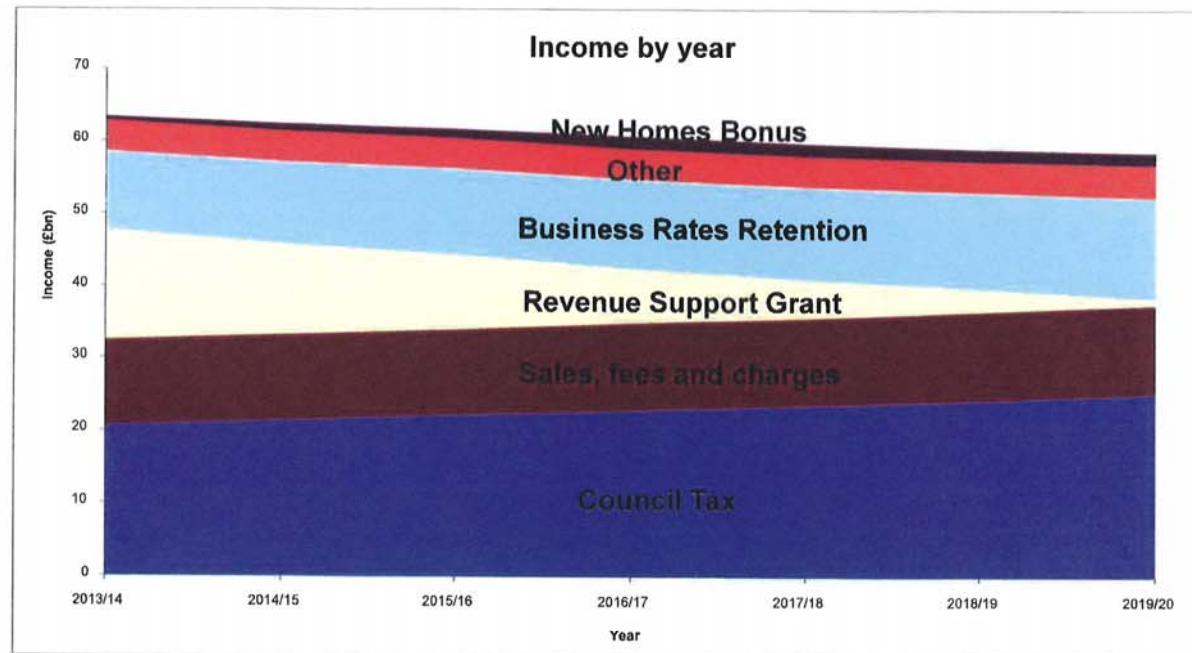
- 7.1 We became aware that EDF are again reviewing their South West Region Office requirements so all options are open again. I have invited their representatives to Taunton and met with them making it absolutely clear we will do all possible to secure their presence in Taunton. I have instructed officers to work with EDF and leave absolutely no stone unturned in smoothing the way to securing their location in Taunton Deane. I wish to assure Members that it is a top priority for us to succeed. This will also need your support should we be able to work the oracle and secure them locally.
- 7.2 There will be considerable challenges for us together with stiff competition from other areas but I have met with their representatives and stressed we will go that extra mile to accommodate them. Also I have made clear that officers have a clear mandate to make this happen. In addition I have written to Mr Caddoux-Hudson, MD – Nuclear New Build, inviting him to visit Taunton and understand what we have to offer or, the Chief Executive and myself, will be more than happy to meet him in a place of his choice.
- 7.3 I have also informed our MP of the latest position with EDF and requested his support for our efforts to secure what would be a great opportunity for Taunton and he has agreed to do all possible to lobby for this on our behalf.

Councillor John Williams
Leader of the Council



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Potential trends



Council Meeting - 23 July 2013

Report of Councillor Jane Warmington (Acting Portfolio Holder) and Councillor Jean Adkins - Housing Services

Councillor Jean Adkins would like to thank other members for all their good wishes, with special thanks to Councillor Jane Warmington for standing in during her recent illness. This report is a collaboration, but responsibility for its content and any decisions made during my absence lies with me.

1. The Advice Services Transition Fund - BIG Lottery Fund

- 1.1 The BIG Lottery launched the Advice Services Transition Fund to enable local not-for-profit providers of advice services in England to continue to give vital help to people and communities.
- 1.2 The Taunton Partnership – Target Taunton – succeeded in its bid and has been awarded £332,000 to fund its project over the next two years. Taunton Deane Borough Council has committed £15,000 a year from its housing funds while social housing landlord Knightstone is contributing £5,000 a year. The new scheme will provide better and more targeted advice to people in Taunton struggling in difficult circumstances.
- 1.3 Taunton and District Citizens Advice Bureau is working closely with Taunton Deane Borough Council, Knightstone Housing and other partners on the project that aims to help those most in need.
- 1.4 Other partners involved are: Mind in Taunton and West Somerset; Somerset Advice Network (SAN); Taunton Association for the Homeless (TAH); Langley House Trust; The Community Council for Somerset; North Taunton Partnership; Somerset County Council and Children’s Centres in Taunton Deane; 10 Communities Youth and Taunton Deane and West Somerset Credit Union.
- 1.5 The Project’s aims include recruiting more volunteers to work with communities, new telephone support services, more support on managing money for the under-25s as well as social housing tenants and other residents especially those in the least advantaged areas.
- 1.6 A Money Matters Team will be set up to work closely with the Credit Union and volunteers will be trained to provide advice on managing money – a vital skill in challenging economic times.

2. Welfare Reform Strategy

- 2.1 Housing Services began working on its Welfare Reform Strategy and Action Plan in the autumn of last year, finalising it in March 2013. The purpose is to help mitigate the impact of welfare reform on Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Services and its tenants. The action plan pulls together activities in relation to benefit and money advice, financial inclusion and affordable warmth.

- 2.2 Several of the action plan objectives relate to: Helping tenants resolve any debt problems they may have; Improving the money management skills of tenants; and ensuring tenants are claiming all of the benefits they are entitled to.
- 2.3 The success of the Target Taunton's bid to the BIG Lottery means we are able to secure the delivery of an advice service on money management for the benefit of those living in Taunton Deane and our housing tenants.

3. Housing Services Digital Inclusion Project

- 3.1 The project group has been convened as a part of the Housing Services' response to the Government's changes to welfare benefit payments.
- 3.2 Parts of Welfare Reform Act 2012 became law in April 2013 and the Universal Credit part of the Act is due to become law in October 2013 in London and then rolled out across the rest of the country. The Government's aim is that 80% of benefit will be claimed on-line.
- 3.3 In respect of digital inclusion the intention is to support our tenants, link up our meeting halls to enable access to an IT system with help and advice available from the Supported Housing Team.
- 3.4 Some of the benefits for tenants include:-
- Enabling them to claim for the benefits that they are entitled to;
 - Enabling tenants to improve their lives;
 - Completing job applications;
 - Completing CV's;
 - Reducing rent arrears to the organisation; and
 - Providing support for other residents in our communities.
- 3.5 The project is expected to be up and running by March 2014.

4. Welfare Reform Visits - Under Occupation

- 4.1 The number of Taunton Deane Housing Service tenants affected by Under Occupation are 458 however this is subject to change on a daily basis as tenants go on and come off benefits (down from 516 in October 2012). 454 have been visited following appointments. Of these:-

235 want to stay and pay
80 want to downsize* (increasing)
143 were not home for the appointment
of these 60 completed 2nd visits (39 more to do)
44 were not at home for 2nd visit
65 are no longer affected by changes or are considering their options

- 4.2 Of the 80 wanting to downsize* we have undertaken:-
- 1 Direct Match approved and completed

16 Successful bids on CBL (Homefinder Somerset) and
3 bids awaiting verification;
7 Mutual Exchanges completed and
1 Mutual Exchange being processed;
Just over one third so far.

- 4.3 Tenants choosing to downsize have been offered help to complete Homefinder Somerset application forms and given advice on how our allocation system works. Tenants have also been assisted to complete financial statements where necessary.
- 4.4 All tenants are being offered advice on Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) and help to complete the application form.
- 4.5 A total of 49 DHP's have been awarded to tenants (for reasons such as a few months off pension age, children nearly old enough, and waiting to downsize); The majority of the DHP's awarded do not cover the full amount tenants have to pay and initially are for six months.
- 4.6 A "Mutual Exchange Day" will be held at Moorland Place meeting hall on Tuesday, 13 August 2013 as a pilot scheme to see if this helps bring tenants together and will be rolled out across Taunton Deane, if successful.

5. Housing Development - Regeneration

- 5.1 Exciting times and good progress for Housing Development.
- 5.2 After extensive engagement with the local community, Tenants Forum, Tenants Services Management Board, Councillors and officers, the Housing Development Team have submitted a planning application to redevelop Creechbarrow Road. We would like to thank James Barrahan and his team for their impressive work.
- 5.3 This is significant for Taunton Deane Borough Council who, in partnership with Knightstone Housing Association, are again investing in affordable housing. The plans are for 92 new dwellings, 60 of which will be Council stock, and a community hub. In total this represents an investment of over £11 million.
- 5.4 In addition to this, three small scale sites have been consulted on for further Council Housing (originally four were being looked at, but difficulties have been encountered with one). Plans for sites in Normandy Drive and Bacon Drive in Taunton along with a small development in West Bagborough have been discussed with the local communities as well as the Tenants Board and Tenants Forum.
- 5.5 In West Bagborough the plans were generally met very favourably. These plans allow for the development of 1x4 bed house, 2x2 bed houses, 2x3 bed houses, and 2x1 bed flats (one of which will be wheelchair suitable). A planning submission for West Bagborough is due for the end of July.
- 5.6 On the Taunton sites some helpful community feedback has led to a review of the original plans. New plans now provide for the building of 4x2 bed houses on Bacon Drive and 8x1 bed flats on Normandy Drive. Further consultation is scheduled for early August.

- 5.7 These smaller sites will again add to the Council's Housing Stock and represent approximately £3 million of investment. We hope the planning applications will be submitted this summer.

6. Moving Out

- 6.1 The decant is progressing well with 24 properties now empty across the Creechbarrow Road site. A further 15 individuals/families are in the process of viewing properties or have accepted properties and are preparing to move. All residents on the Knightstone part of the site have found new homes. So far five existing residents of Creechbarrow Road intend to return to the new development once complete and are being moved to properties temporarily in the meantime.

7. Tailored Support

- 7.1 Moving home is a major upheaval for everyone but even more so if you are elderly or vulnerable. Recognising this, Enabling Officers came up with an innovative scheme to provide a friendly helping hand. The decanting process at Parmin Close has run quite smoothly thanks to the huge support a local agency providing tailored support has given to those tenants who have requested assistance.
- 7.2 Once it is established that help is needed the tenant is visited and helped to sort out all aspects of the move. Removals are booked, post redirected and other kinds of paper work dealt with if required. Possessions are then packed and unpacked under the watchful eye of the tenant.
- 7.3 There have been many phone calls of praise for the work the local agency has done at Parmin Close and it is about to move eleven households at Victoria Gate who have requested help. This is a marvellous service provided by Taunton Deane which is available free to our elderly and more vulnerable tenants and will, of course be available for Creechbarrow Road tenants if required.

8. Affordable Housing completions

- 8.1 There is an update to the total number of completions as reported at year end for 2012/2013, following information received from the Homes and Communities Agency there appear to be eight more Firstbuy Units than previously thought.
- 8.2 Although the target of 200 has not been reached for this financial year, there was a surplus over target in 2011/2012 and a good start has been made to 2013/2014 with 53 homes completed in the first quarter, partly due to slippage from the previous year. We are therefore on course to achieve the overall target of 600 in the three year period 2011/2014, especially as the Government's Help to Buy scheme is reported to be popular.

9. Affordable Housing Open Day

- 9.1 This attracted over 300 visitors, with 24 exhibitors which included plans for the Creechbarrow Road redevelopment, Housing Options, Revenue and Benefits, Somerset West Landlord and Tenant Services teams, CAB, seven housing

associations, several house builders, a firm of architects which have designed a lot of affordable housing, a firm of solicitors and two mortgage providers.

- 9.2 They were able to provide help and advice on a wide range of subjects including affordable rented housing, affordable home ownership and a list of all the properties that could be reserved. This is the eighth time this popular OneStopShop event has been held. Compliments came in from both visitors and exhibitors alike, many of whom have asked to come back next year. Huge thanks to everyone who helped to make this event another great success.

10. Right to Buy Sales

- 10.1 As we are accumulating funds from Right to Buy Sales which have to be spent within three years, in addition to our housebuilding programme, we are considering buying property on the open market which was previously Council stock. Three such properties have been offered to us recently. This will help to keep up our stock of houses as further sales are anticipated.

11. Homefinder Somerset

- 11.1 Home Finder Somerset Annual Activity Summary Report has just been published with yearly statistics for 2012/2013.
- 11.2 The figures for the number of active registered applicants (Table 1) are worth noting. The text in 1.12 explains why the numbers have decreased since 2010.
- 11.3 The age profile of those accepting offers of accommodation (Table 5) is interesting with nearly a fifth aged 24 years or under (the second highest demand).
- 11.4 The number of Taunton Deane Housing Services property advertisements placed was 540 in the year, with 767 property advertisements placed across Taunton Deane by all landlords (Table 8).

12. Rent Arrears

- 12.1 The refreshed Housing Revenue Account Business Plan had included further provision for bad debt, which had been anticipated as a result of changes to the benefit system, especially the introduction of Universal Credit, which has been delayed. Consequently this provision has not been needed and will, therefore, be reviewed in the Autumn.
- 12.2 Overall arrears are reducing, with arrears for those tenants directly affected by changes to Housing Benefit increasing slightly this month to £51,881.25.

Council Meeting - 23 July 2013

Report of Councillor Mrs Vivienne Stock-Williams - Corporate Resources

1. Customer Contact Centre

Service Delivery

- 1.1 April is always a busy month within the Contact Centre, as first payments for the new Council Tax year become due. Precedence also needed to be given to Garden Waste renewals and queries relating to both.
- 1.2 This year we experienced the first of the new arrangements which increased the number of residents liable to pay Council Tax. This change generated over 5,000 reminders in April – the majority to first-time payers.
- 1.3 Staff also achieved an 8% increase in answered calls coming into the service in comparison with the same period in 2012. This high level of recovery was sustained in May. The team was able to cope with the heavy workload during both months by working effectively with the Revenues and Benefits Team to plan the activity in advance.

Staff Development

- 1.4 The Contact Centre held their annual team days in May, which focussed on improving service communication and internal development requirements for both the Staff Forum and the Workforce Planning Group.
- 1.5 Positive and useful feedback was provided at these events, which will enable staff to move forward in both developing the service and understanding how they can best engage in the future.

Customer Access and Accommodation Project

- 1.6 The service has been invited to play an active role in the Customer Access and Accommodation Project. The team is delighted to be able to take part in this exciting project for Taunton Deane, which will help shape the way services are delivered to customers in the future.

Statistical Information – April and May 2013

- 1.7 During April, a total of 1,893 enquiries were dealt with at The Deane House Main, Housing and Planning Receptions. 2,015 people visited Wellington Community Office – 1,071 to make enquiries including THE

Tourist Information Centre and 949 to make a payment through the kiosk. In May, the figures were 1,749 for The Deane House and 1,875 for Wellington Community Office (1,025 enquiries and 850 payments). The team dealt with 591 letter and email enquiries during the period, including Garden Waste renewals.

Service Line	Reporting Authority	KPI No	Performance Measure	Frequency of Reporting	2012/2013 Target	Apr-13	May-13
						QUARTER 1	
Customer Contact	TDBC	1	% of calls answered in 20 secs	Monthly	80%	82%	81.76%
Customer Contact	TDBC	2	% of calls resolved at first point of contact	Monthly	92%	98%	97.57%
Customer Contact	TDBC	3	% of external customers rating the Customer Contact service as Very Good/Good	Annually (monitored quarterly)	75%		
Customer Contact	TDBC	4	Abandoned call rate - less than 5%	Monthly	<5%	2.74%	2.78%

2. Corporate and Client Services

Client Team

- 2.1 The Client Team continues to monitor delivery by the various Southwest One services, which remains broadly on-track.

Southwest One Contract

- 2.2 Following the recent changes to the Southwest One contract agreed between Somerset County Council (SCC) and Southwest One (which saw the return of the Property, Facilities Management and elements of SCC's ICT and Procurement Services) the Client Team is undertaking a review of Taunton Deane's services. This review is ongoing, but we hope to bring the results and any recommendations to Members later in the year.

Minor Changes to Southwest One Contract

- 2.3 Taunton Deane has, however, recently made some minor changes to its contract with Southwest One and brought back in-house both ICT Strategy and the Health and Safety functions.

Procurement

- 2.4 SCC and Southwest One have now resolved their outstanding dispute in relation to procurement and SCC has taken back in-house elements of its Procurement service. The Client Team has, therefore, been working with Southwest One to gain confidence that the remaining Procurement Service will be able to continue to deliver for the Council.
- 2.5 This is work in progress, but we are assured that the Procurement Service will now be able to focus on delivering savings for Taunton Deane. Initial indications suggest that there is now greater capacity within the Procurement Service to focus on the Council's procurement work, which is obviously to our benefit.

Procurement Savings

- 2.6 The savings delivered continue to be short of the original anticipated amount and are likely now to remain so. Nevertheless, savings are being delivered. At 31 May 2013 (latest reported figures) £2,891,000 of savings initiatives had been signed-off. Of this total, £1,704,000 has been delivered to date, with the remainder scheduled for delivery at future periods.

Savings Initiatives

- 2.7 Current savings initiatives are focussing on waste contracts (not the Somerset Waste Partnership) and specific initiatives relating to Deane DLO and Housing Property Services.

Retained Finance and Corporate Insurance

- 2.8 The Retained Finance Team continues to manage the finance functions not provided by Southwest One, provide support to the Section 151 Officer, assist the Client Team in monitoring the Finance Service element of the Southwest One contract and provide support for the retained Parking functions.

Southwest One Contract Review

- 2.9 In addition, a significant amount of work has been undertaken in the past couple of months to assist the Client Team with the review of Southwest One services.

Treasury Management Contract

- 2.10 The new Treasury Management contract has now been completed and signed.

Retained HR

- 2.11 The Retained HR Manager continues to provide strategic HR support to the Authority, manages the HR functions not provided by Southwest One and assists the Client Team in monitoring the HR aspects of the Southwest One contract.

Corporate Projects

- 2.12 In the past quarter, the Retained HR Manager has been heavily involved in supporting key corporate projects such as the Corporate Business Plan, West Somerset Project and the review of Southwest One services.

Strategic and Retained ICT

- 2.13 The responsibility for the ICT Strategy function was returned, by mutual agreement, from Southwest One to the Council in April 2013. Fiona Kirkham (our former ICT Manager) returned with the function.

Corporate Projects

- 2.14 This has allowed Taunton Deane, at no additional cost, to fill the Strategic/Retained ICT role on a permanent, full-time basis. This provides the Authority with the technical expertise to enable us to more fully manage the ICT element of the Southwest One contract, which was a recommendation made during last year's LGA Peer Review. Additionally, this provides in-house, technical expertise to advise on a number of key technology-related projects.

SAP

- 2.15 The new role will also pick up the launch of the remaining elements of the SAP system from the Authority's perspective.

3. Corporate Performance

Outturn Performance

- 3.1 The 2012/2013 outturn Corporate Performance report was considered by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 23 May 2013 and the Executive Committee on 10 July 2013.

Quarterly Performance

- 3.2 The Quarter 1 (2013/2014) performance report is currently being prepared for review by Corporate Management Team (CMT) on 31 July 2013 before being reported to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 15 August 2013 and the Executive on 11 September 2013.

Corporate Performance Scorecard

- 3.3 The Corporate Performance Scorecard (content, measures / performance indicators and targets) has been refreshed and updated to reflect the new Corporate Business Plan (2013/2014 – 2015/2016). The new scorecard will be used from Quarter 1 2013/2014.

Performance Scorecards

- 3.4 Theme and Service Performance Scorecards are also produced quarterly. They include detailed performance information and updates on progress against Theme and Service priorities. These scorecards are available from all Theme Managers.

Risk Management

- 3.5 The Corporate Risk Register was last reviewed by CMT in May 2013 and was reported to the Corporate Governance Committee on 24 June. CMT will conduct a further review of the Corporate Risk Register as part of the Quarter 1 Performance Review (31 July 2013).

Corporate Change Programme

- 3.6 The Council's Corporate Change Programme is overseen by the Strategy and Performance Team. Project Managers for all major corporate projects report monthly to the 'Programme Management Group' (PMG).
- 3.7 There are two distinct 'programmes' that are designed to deliver the Authority's strategic aims: i) Growth and Regeneration, and ii) Corporate Transformation. An overview of the entire programme is provided for Members as part of the Quarterly Performance Monitoring Report.
- 3.8 To further develop the Council's approach to effective programme management, Simon Lewis (Strategy and Performance Manager) and Dan Webb (Performance Lead) are completing an accredited training course in August on 'Managing Successful Programmes'.

Secondment

- 3.9 The Performance Lead (Dan Webb) has recently been seconded for a minimum six month period (3 days per week) to work with the Growth and Regeneration / Project Taunton Team to bring additional project and performance management rigour and capacity to support the delivery of key economic and regeneration initiatives.

4. Legal and Democratic Services

Staff

Legal Services

4.1.1 Sadly, we say goodbye to several staff within Legal and Democratic Services. Judith Jackson retired on 30 June after 24 years with the Council. She was a much valued and highly regarded officer who will be missed. However, Judith's replacement, Roy Pinney, started with us on 1 July and is settling in well.

Building Control

4.1.2 The Authority will also be saying goodbye to Carole Fennell and Jo White, as the Land Charges Service passes to Building Control on 1 September 2013. Carole has been with the council for 27 years and Jo for 9 years. Thus, Judith, Carole and Jo had a total of 60 years of service between them. I should like to wish them well in their retirements.

Democratic Services

4.1.3 I am pleased to say that Tracey Meadows is now back at work and is recovering well from her knee operation. The Corporate Support Unit has coped really well in her absence and I should like to thank them for all their hard work during this time.

Standards Committee

4.2 Since July 2012, when the Standards processes changed, the Committee has only received one complaint. This did not necessitate an investigation and was dealt with adequately by the Monitoring Officer.

The Mayor

4.3 The Mayor is now fully embracing Social Media and has both Twitter and FaceBook accounts. This enables her to engage with people of all ages across Taunton Deane. The Council has received positive comments about her "getting into the 21st Century". This new venture seems to be linking well with the Mayor's stated aim "to reach people that other Mayors have failed to reach".

Mayoral Charities

4.4 The Mayor has begun the Civic Year with a busy schedule. Her two chosen charities have linked up with the Council enthusiastically and have put forward some excellent ideas for helping people in the North Taunton area who are suffering from Alzheimer's disease.

Mayoral Activities

- 4.5 During the Mayor's first week in office, Councillor Ms Lisgo attended the Royal Marines' Homecoming Parade and delivered an excellent speech to everyone in the town centre. She had the privilege of meeting the Duke of Edinburgh at the Medals Parade at Norton Manor Camp that afternoon. Her impression was that he was both charming and seemed genuinely pleased to meet her and Alan.
- 4.6 The Mayor subsequently raised the Armed Forces Flag at The Deane House for the beginning of Armed Forces Week. During her time in office, the Mayor has met with the Royal Marines and the local ex-Service Associations on several occasions, ensuring that the strong relationship the Authority has with the Military continues. This has demonstrated Taunton Deane's commitment to the Somerset Armed Forces Community Covenant.

5. Revenues and Benefits

Return of Service

- 5.1 It is now three months since the Revenues and Benefits Service returned to the Council and I am pleased to report this transition has gone extremely well. Staff are happy to be back and the transfer has had no detrimental effect on our customers.
- 5.2 This is particularly pleasing as the transfer took place at a time of unprecedented demand on the service. On 1 April 2013, the Authority launched its new Council Tax Support scheme (CTS) replacing the national Council Tax Benefit (CTB) scheme. At the same time, it was necessary to implement the removal of the spare room subsidy (commonly referred to as "the bedroom tax").

Discretionary Payments

- 5.3 The demand for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) and Discretionary Council Tax Assistance (DCTA) to help in meeting benefit shortfalls is high. For the period to 30 June 2013, the Council had given extra help to 101 customers, which exceeds DHPs for the whole of last year (82).

Benefit Cap

- 5.4 The Benefit Cap restricting the total amount of benefits that can be received by out-of-work customers will start in Taunton on 15 July 2013. Single people without children will have benefits capped at £350 a week. Couples with or without children and lone parents will have their benefit capped at £500 a week. Any benefit over the cap must be deducted from Housing Benefit entitlement. It is estimated that this will affect 30 households in our area.

Council Tax

- 5.5 Revenues staff have responded to many enquiries from customers who have previously not had to pay Council Tax. Under Taunton Deane's Council Tax Support scheme, the maximum support available is limited to 80% of the weekly liability for people of working age. Whilst many people have made adequate payments, some have struggled.
- 5.6 Arrears of Council Tax in comparison to this time last year have increased. Council Tax collection at the end of Quarter 1 was 34.84%, which was 0.45% below target. Encouragingly, Business Rate Collection was 0.67% ahead of target.

6. Council Accommodation and Customer Access Project

Staff

- 6.1 Kate Owsley has recently been appointed as part-time Project Officer to support Dean Emery, who is Project Manager.

Project Update

- 6.2 The project is now in progress, working from a detailed project plan to achieve a full Business Case ready to present to Full Council on 10 December 2013. Regular project meetings are being arranged and there are agreed Customer Access channels. A FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) document is currently under construction – for consistency, it has been decided to base this initially on the FAQs from the Taunton Deane/West Somerset Project.

Accommodation

- 6.3 A full valuation on The Deane House has been requested. The cost of a new-build at Firepool has also been commissioned via Mark Green. A review is being undertaken of the current accommodation in The Deane House and a report is expected in mid-July.
- 6.4 Dean Emery has recently attended a SCC workshop on shared accommodation. He will both visit and speak to officers in other authorities who have already undertaken shared accommodation projects.

Alignment with West Somerset Project

- 6.5 As Members are aware, the West Somerset Project is progressing alongside this project. The Council Accommodation and Customer Access Project will consider a recommended strategy for Taunton

Deane Borough Council, but which can be scaled to accommodate a shared approach should that be the final outcome.

7. Joint Management and Shared Services Project

Progress

- 7.1 The Joint Management and Shared Services Project between Taunton Deane and West Somerset Council is progressing well.

Transformation Challenge Award

- 7.2 The final draft of a bid to Central Government for the Transformation Challenge Award was shared with the Project Board and the Joint Management Advisory Panel during the week commencing 8 July before its submission on 11 July 2013.

Communication

- 7.3 Regular newsletters for all staff and all Members at both Authorities have been circulated and have been well received. In addition, two sessions for lead officers and two Members Briefing sessions at both Councils have been delivered in order to keep Members and Managers fully up to speed with project progress.

Project Team

- 7.4 The Project Team have held a number of informative joint meetings with some of the Service Managers from both Councils, and more are planned with other service lines.
- 7.5 These meetings have been approached in a very positive manner and have been helpful in understanding the possibility for sharing services between our Councils, and will inform the Business Case.

Timetable

- 7.6 The project remains on track to deliver a detailed a Business Case for joint management to Full Council of both Authorities in October 2013. A high level Business Case for shared services will be delivered to the same time-scale".

Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams

Council Meeting – 23 July 2013

Report of Councillor Mark Edwards - Planning, Transportation and Communications

1. Planning

- 1.1 With work now starting on the Northern Inner Distributor Road (NIDR), the Crest residential development at Firepool Lock is moving on well. The mix of houses and apartments are of a contemporary style and include waterside villas overlooking the canal and river.
- 1.2 Planning permission has recently been granted for the conversion and extension of the Pump House to a restaurant use to enable the current owners to take it to the market and find a prospective purchaser or tenant. The conversion would allow for the renovation of the heritage asset as well as finding a suitable re-use of the building.
- 1.3 A reserved matters application has just been received for 97 homes at The Cades Farm Development in Wellington. Outline planning permission was granted for up to 300 dwellings with a local centre and public open space in July 2012.
- 1.4 The Planning Department has a new Major Applications Officer to replace Anthony Pick, who emigrated to Australia. John Burton has many years experience working as a planner at Torbay Council and joined Taunton Deane on 1 July 2013. John will be dealing with some of the more significant and controversial applications in the Taunton Deane and I welcome him to the Council.

2. Site Allocations and Development Management Plan

- 2.1 Following the 'Issues and Options' consultation in January - March 2013 a total of over 900 responses were received. The Plan will reflect the policies and proposals in the Core Strategy; allocating land to meet the growth requirements set out in the Core Strategy together with detailed development management policies to assess planning applications.
- 2.2 The Council's initial response to the consultation has now been published together with a further consultation document on additional sites available for development and suggested 'tweaks' to settlement limits arising from the consultation.
- 2.3 Copies of both documents are available in public libraries and community offices and all persons / organisations on the Councils Planning Policy database have been informed. Following this further consultation on additional sites, officers propose to publish a 'Preferred

Options' document around October 2013 for further consultation. It is anticipated that the Plan will go to Examination in early 2015 with 'Adoption' in summer 2015.

3. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 3.1 Following publication and receipt of comments on the Charging Schedule an Examination into the Borough Council's proposed CIL will be held on Wednesday, 24 July 2013.
- 3.2 The Examiner is Mr Paul Crysell (MRTPI). It is anticipated that the Council will be in a position to adopt and implement CIL early in 2013.

4. Employment, Retail and Housing Monitors

- 4.1 Officers are completing their suite of annual monitoring reports on Employment, Retail and Leisure and Housing for the period 2012-2013.
- 4.2 Information from these documents are included in the annual Authorities Monitoring Report (published December). They are used to inform future planning policy and decisions on planning applications. When complete copies will be available in the Members room and from the Council's Planning website.

5. Neighbourhood Planning

- 5.1 Residents in Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone Parish have become the Borough's fourth designated Neighbourhood Plan Area. They join Wiveliscombe, Wellington, Trull and Staplehay communities who are all producing the Community Led Plan to shape the future growth and development of the place where they live, work and play.
- 5.2 Trull and Staplehay Neighbourhood Plan Group will launch their Neighbourhood Questionnaire at the end of the month to gather community views on a range of things including future housing and employment, roads and transport, wildlife and green spaces, as well as community assets.
- 5.3 Wiveliscombe Neighbourhood Plan Group are working through their Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire returns, they had over 32% of questionnaires returned.
- 5.4 Planning Aid ran a Policy Writing workshop with the four Neighbourhood Plan Groups in March 2013. This practical session covered Policy Writing for Beginners, Evidence Base, Condition Statements, Drafting Tips and Check Lists. Professional input from Planning Aid has been of immense benefit to the Council and the Communities. Planning Aid in partnership with Locality has secured

funding to continue to help communities around the Country. This help will be delivered through the new Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Direct Neighbourhood Plan Funding.

5.5 Neighbourhood Plan Groups can apply for direct funding from the Government to help with the preparation of their Neighbourhood Plans. Support is being offered in two ways:-

- Direct support – advice and support, with an average value of equivalent to £9,500, tailored to meet the needs of supported neighbourhoods – support delivered by organizations such as Planning Aid and Locality;
- Grant payments – up to £7,000 per neighbourhood area, to contribute to costs incurred by the group preparing a neighbourhood plan or order.

5.6 Wiveliscombe have applied for funding and are waiting to hear if they have been successful. The Council is encouraging all its Neighbourhood Plan Groups to apply for this support and will, of course, assist where it can with the applications.

6. Heritage

6.1 Revised applications for the restoration of Sandhill Park have recently been approved by the Planning Committee and work to convert the Grade 2* listed building (a building at risk on English Heritage's register since 2000 and as you will all be aware, the subject of an arson attack), enabling development in the grounds and restoration of the parkland. It is scheduled to commence this autumn.

7. Communications

7.1 Two major events, the Royal Marines Parade in May and Somerfest in June, passed off successfully with excellent support from the local and regional media. In the case of the Parade, national coverage was achieved with a half page in the Daily Telegraph.

7.2 The communications team is now looking at exploring the potential of social media, principally Twitter, to keep the community informed and updated. We will shortly report on progress.

7.3 The launch of two community radio stations – Apple FM and Tone FM – is providing new opportunities for the Council. Both stations are keen to feature Council news. The Community Development Team hosted Apple FM at a community clean-up day in Rockwell Green which resulted in a very positive report in the station's Community Matters slot. Further features are being planned.

- 7.4 As the Council undertakes a number of major projects and explores social media, the Communications Team has been strengthened with the addition of Helen Phillips.

8. Parking

Wellington Free after Three

- 8.1 I was delighted to respond to requests from retailers in Wellington to consider introducing "Free after Three" parking as I had in Taunton last September.
- 8.2 It has been agreed for a period of six weeks starting mid-August that on a Thursday, Friday and Saturday there will be no parking charges in Wellington after three o'clock.
- 8.3 We are working with the Town Council and the Local Business community to assess the impact of this trial over that period and will then consider introducing it on a permanent basis.
- 8.4 We need to do a trial to make sure it has the desired impact of increasing business and does not just change shopping habits and create other challenges within the Town.

Taunton Free after Three

- 8.5 I am presently discussing the repeat of the very successful "Free after Three" scheme in Taunton on Saturdays for the month of September only. I will confirm with Members shortly.

Christmas Parking

- 8.6 I initiated discussions with Somerset County Council and the Town Centre Manager about using the Park and Ride for the late night shopping leading up to Christmas and the Christmas Festival arranged in November for the light switch on.
- 8.7 I will be in a position to make an announcement shortly on the detail and arrangements.

Multi-Storey Lifts

- 8.8 Work on Lift 1 is halfway through its programme and is on schedule for completion later this month which, I understand, is slightly ahead of schedule.
- 8.9 Lifts 2 and 3 have been kept operational whilst Lift 1 is out of action so inconvenience and disruption to our customers has been kept to a minimum. There have been no breakdowns on these two over this period.

- 8.10 The works will be completed by October in time for the Christmas sales period.
- 8.11 We will be giving the stairwells some redecoration and some lighting improvements as the work on the lifts is finished. The stairwells have also recently had a deep clean.

Councillor Mark Edwards

Council Meeting - 23 July 2013

Report of Councillor Jane Warmington - Community Leadership

1. Partnership Working

- 1.1 For several years the core work of the various agencies has gone along in parallel (in partnership) across our priority areas, overlapping mainly through work to develop the communities, supported through the Multi Agency Groups (MAGs) and focused through the two community centres (Priorswood Resource Centre and the Link Centre in Halcon) guided by the original (five year police) action plan updated by the Priority Area Strategy (follow-on action plan) and overseen by the strategic Taunton Deane Partnership.
- 1.2 Agencies and volunteers alike have worked and succeeded in making beneficial, visible changes across these communities alongside daily Police business, housing and tenant issues, family support and continuing community development.
- 1.3 The recently adopted 'One Team' approach in Halcon offers the opportunity for each agency to understand more fully those partners roles across the ward, look at problems together and work out the various ways to best tackle and ultimately solve them. To begin to address underlying problems, not necessarily apparent to all, which persist, often behind closed doors and have resulted in the ward being in the top most deprived 5% in the country.
- 1.4 By regularly sharing information, charting this, using the different threads of expertise across the team, they are able to think differently and work differently, together. This concerted team effort aims to change the lives of the people living there for the better and for good, addressing the root causes of deprivation.
- 1.5 The One Team are well placed to refer families into the developing Family Focus Programme and have made the most referrals to date and both present the opportunity now to start to make a lasting difference
www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/familyfocus

2. Community Development

- 2.1 This continues to support regular ongoing projects mainly in Taunton East and North Taunton across the school summer holidays. These include:-
 - **Halcon Brunch Club** on Monday and Friday late mornings.
 - **Happy Halcon** activity days are on Thursdays.
 - **Graffiti Project** has been extended.
 - **Pride in Priorswood** (PiP) has themed days every week on Tuesdays.
 - **Community Clean Up Days** are across the Borough every Thursday this year.
- 2.2 Several wonderful composite **pick-up-after-your-dog** campaign posters have been produced from all the competition entries from local schools in North Taunton to

draw attention to the new bins being provided there and in Taunton East to try and reduce the problem. Look out for them, they are charming.

3. Police Report

3.1 Presented to Community Scrutiny on 2 July 2013 by the Sector Inspector Stuart Bell. This was the first report since the end of the Police crime year (31/03/13) and includes the headline crime figures for the Taunton Policing Area.

3.2 Total crime – Reduction of 11.9% - 851 fewer victims of crime. Detection rate of 45.2% - up 5.8% in the year (this is one of the highest in the Country).

3.3 Crime figures per main crime type:-

Dwelling burglaries	reduction of 8.4%	(-20)	
Non-dwelling burglaries	reduction of 37.9%	(-236)	
Theft of motor vehicle	reduction of 39%	(-38)	
Theft from motor vehicle	reduction of 16.3%	(-84)	
Robbery	reduction of 33%	(-9)	(very small numbers)
Criminal damage	reduction of 13.7%	(-168)	
Violence	reduction of 11.8%	(-181)	(all violent offences)
Theft of cycle	reduction of 21.8%	(-62)	
Shop theft	increase of 14.7%	(+118)	

3.4 The shop theft crime type is interesting. There has been an increase in the age of first time offenders, traditionally early teenage (girls) stealing small items (make-up). We have now seen a significant rise in middle age/older age persons stealing food items. This is alongside increasing referrals to the Taunton Foodbank (to which the Police have contributed) and demonstrates a real impact on our communities.

3.5 In the first three months of this crime year we have continued to see a reduction in reported crime by a further 18.8% (341 less crimes).

3.6 There has been a change to the Avon and Somerset district Policing boundaries. Six Policing districts, (Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset (BaNES), North Somerset, East Somerset and ourselves in Somerset West have reduced to three districts, so South Gloucestershire and BaNES, Bristol remains and a greater Somerset District (combining the previous East, West and North Somerset districts).

3.7 The new Somerset District is led by Chief Superintendent Nikki Watson, with Chief Inspector Pete Saban responsible for the Policing in the old Somerset West area and Inspector Stuart Bell remains as the local Policing lead for the Taunton Deane Sector.

3.8 Police Sergeant Andy Murphy has received the Queen's Police Medal in Her Majesty's Birthday Honours' List for his services to neighbourhood policing. This is a great honour and well deserved. He will be presented with his medal in October.

3.9 The One Team pilot project in Halcon was nominated for the Tilley Awards, an international problem solving award. This has won the Avon and Somerset award

locally and now goes forward into the national round with an awards event in London, later on in the year. The joint presentation for the local award to the One Team took place yesterday with members of the Police, Taunton Deane staff and other partner agency staff in attendance.

4. Pathways to Independence

- 4.1 P2i (Pathways to Independence) is an innovative partnership project between Somerset County Council, the five District Councils (Sedgemoor, South Somerset, Mendip, Taunton Deane and West Somerset) and a consortium of housing providers including Knightstone Housing, TAH, Bridgwater and Mendip YMCA.
- 4.2 The P2i service offers support for homeless and vulnerable young people aged 16 to 24. The service will cover joint needs assessments, family mediation, housing advice, emergency accommodation, supported housing, floating support and signposting to other services.
- 4.3 Each district has established a P2i 'Hub' providing a single point of access for young people in each local area. This way, they'll be able to access mediation and joint support from relevant agencies to get the best possible help available to them.

5. Youth Forums

- 5.1 The new Taunton Deane Youth Forum, the successor to the Youth Liaison Group met last month for the first time. The forum aims to provide an opportunity for representatives from communities to broaden their networks and meet other organisations to share ideas, good practice, funding advice and other functions to be agreed with forum members as they evolve.
- 5.2 The forums provide space for area based meetings to involve providers, VCS groups, town and parish councils. The Forums are co-ordinated, administered and funded by Somerset County Council.

6. Benefits Welfare Cap

- 6.1 The Benefits Welfare Cap to limit households to no more than the average wage was implemented on 15 July 2013. The aim is to encourage people back into work, to be more fair and affordable.
- 6.2 This is likely to affect 40,000 families across the country.

Councillor Jane Warmington

Council Meeting - 23 July 2013

Report of Councillor Cavill - Economic Development, Asset Management, Arts and Tourism

Culture and Events

The Brewhouse Theatre

- 1.1 There is a Report to this Council which could resolve the purchase of lease and contents of the Brewhouse, from the Administrator.
- 1.2 David Pratley Associates who were appointed in April 2013, started their commission in June to advise this Council on the reestablishment of the Brewhouse. They are currently meeting with key stakeholders (including Taunton Theatre Group, Tone Leisure, Colleges, Cricket Club, Tacchi Morris Arts Centre) to identify interest in operating a new facility. Phase 1 of the commission involves an analysis of the options available to the Council to enable the theatre to be reopened. They will report back to officers before the end of July, and to the Steering Group shortly afterwards.
- 1.3 Phase 2 involves the recommendation of a way forward to the Council for the theatre, which could then mean working with one or more operator on a robust Business Plan.

Somerfest

- 1.4 Somerfest was a successful event on 15 June 2013, involving a celebration of procession, music, sports, and performing arts in Taunton Town Centre. The day saw an uplift in visitors to the town centre of around 15,000 people (25%).
- 1.5 No negative incidents or additional criminal activity, and positive feedback was obtained from town centre businesses and visitors on the day. The event was sponsored by Taunton Deane (£20,000) and delivered by the Taunton Town Centre Company, with support from SuperAct, FUSE, Somerset Sports and Activity Partnership, Tim Hill, and others.

Street Performance

- 1.6 The objective is to have more and better quality street performance in Taunton over the remainder of this Summer. Firstly, to have Our Big Gig on 13 July 2013 which is part of a national event to encourage music in town centres.
- 1.7 We had four performance venues, and music symposium delivered at the Creative Innovation Centre. There is a busking festival being planned, which could be held quarterly and hosted by cafes, restaurants and pubs.

Shakespeare Festival

- 1.8 GB Theatre Company is planning a large event over three days (8-10 August) on Castle Green. Four performances, including a matinee on the Saturday. Includes performances of A Mid-Summer Night's Dream and The Merchant of Venice. Ticket sales going well.
- 1.9 The target is to have around 300 people at each of the performances. Taunton Deane is underwriting the event, to a maximum contribution of £5,000. It is hoped that the event will be successful, in which case the event will generate a net income for the Council, and the event will act as a model for different types of paid performances in future.

Arts Council G4A bid

- 1.10 Working with SuperAct we submitted a bid to the Arts Council for funding to enhance our events in Taunton over this Summer. Regrettably the fund was significantly over subscribed and as a consequence our bid was unsuccessful.

2. Employment land

- 2.1 Following developer moves to bring serviced land to the market, and further enhanced by our own measures to free up our own sites, Taunton Deane now has additional availability of sites to meet businesses' investment requirements. The sites currently either on the market, or progressing to the market, are:-
- Firepool;
 - Land at The Hatcheries at Bathpool (recently bought by a new developer and now being actively marketing by Phil Wade from Katmar). The development will include around 40,000sq ft of speculative development, and the potential for a further 40,000sq ft in response to business need);
 - Thales site, which has been supported by Scrutiny and the Executive, and has the potential to be a major 'high-tech' park;
 - Bindon Road;
 - Westpark at Chelston; and
 - Wiveliscombe Business Park.

3. Business Rates meeting

- 3.1 In response to ongoing concern expressed by businesses over the Non-Domestic Rates system, an event has been arranged for businesses in Taunton on Friday, 19 July 2013. Speakers will include Paul Fitzgerald and Dean Emery from Finance at Taunton Deane, a representative of the Valuation Office and Jeremy Browne MP. The meeting will be held at the CICCIC.

4. Taunton Town Centre Company

- 4.1 A new Board was formed at the end of March, and Guy Bottard, Partner at Future Law, has been elected as Chairman of the Board. The Council is represented by Councillor David Reed.
- 4.2 The Board has recently prepared 'A Plan for Taunton', drawing on the views of businesses in the town centre. The plan sets out an ambitious agenda to improve the business environment in the town, drawing upon the Council as well as its own activities and services. The Plan will underpin a debate around whether the company should proceed to ballot businesses on a further BID programme in 2014.
- 4.3 Having held a successful Family Fun Day at the end of May, the Town Centre Company is currently planning the Christmas event, comprising a Christmas Fair, lights and a lights switch on event. The event will be held on Sunday 17 November 2013.
- 4.4 Councillor Kelly Durdan is again involved in the fundraising for the Christmas Lights. All risk analyses for a safe and successful event will of course be overseen by Graham Love who will be working with her.

5. Inward Investment and Jobs Clubs

Inward Investment

- 5.1 We are currently in discussion with inward investors in the fields of ICT/Telecoms, electric vehicles, insurance and logistics, and assisting with locating suitable premises.

Employment and Skills Board

- 5.2 A partnership of Somerset Colleges and Sixth Forms has been formed to promote Higher Level Apprenticeships (Level 3 and 4). A website is to be launched this month to promote the opportunities to employers, young people and parents.

Jobs Clubs

- 5.3 Vista has just been awarded a further contract for the delivery of Jobs Clubs in Halcon, Priorswood and Wellington.
- 5.4 During the past year the Jobs Clubs have advised and assisted 198 people, helped 50 to return to work and created 139 opportunities for work experience/informal learning/social action.

Taunton Means Business /Website

- 5.5 The Taunton Means Business (TMB) website is currently being updated and will now carry the strapline 'Growing for the Future'. All related publications will also carry the same strapline.

- 5.6 A new Inward Investment Prospectus is being prepared which will include a stock of case studies for prospective investors.
- 5.7 As there were problems with the data feedback from the previous train campaign which promoted the TMB video, Volo TV has agreed to re-run the campaign, free of charge. It will be interesting to see the feedback we receive from this, and the data received will be closely monitored.

Planning Liaison

- 5.8 We are currently liaising with two companies with planning issues regarding their potential moves. In addition our officers have regular liaison meetings with the developers of Westpark at Wellington, the Wiveliscombe Business Park and units at Monkton Heathfield.

Vacant Unit Monitoring

- 5.9 The vacancy monitor was updated in June. This demonstrated a reduction of 2.5% in empty retail units. It is now 8.5% against the national average of 14.1%.
- 5.10 We now have confirmation for occupation of five more units that are presently with planning. An additional four further units are under offer and another one on an edge of town site.

6. Business support

- 6.1 We have just awarded 10 businesses in this first round of applications to:-
- A & S County sports - towards costs of a secure gun room
 - Matilda Gibbs, Bishops Hull towards setting up a forest school
 - Paul Black, Wiveliscombe towards outdoor education
 - Francesca Dillon, baby shop in Crown Walk, Taunton
 - John McCarthy, Norton Fitzwarren, NHS consultant
 - Mohamed Kouki, Creperie business in East Reach
 - George Ackroyd, Wiveliscombe towards marketing campaign
 - Kerri-Ann Lloyd, Imagine Design Creation in Bath Place towards costs of creating a creative centre for artists
 - Nick Harvey, Rockwell Green towards costs of a mobile DJ and Disco business
 - Ruth Streeter, Trull towards setting up an Employment Law practice.
- 6.2 The total of these 10 awards is £5000 and each of the above will be used as a case study that will appear on our website.
- 6.3 A summary sheet of last year's awards has been circulated to all Councillors.
- 6.4 We are working with Wellington Business Association to see if we can add value to the National Small Business Saturday campaign. Preliminary discussions are to be held within the next few weeks.

- 6.5 Similarly, with Wiveliscombe Business Group, we are helping them to organise a business fair in October. Sally (our new apprentice) has completed an audit of their business database that can be used as a marketing tool.
- 6.6 Discussions have been initiated and we are working with private sector partners to enable a Thursday Market on Castle Green. It is hoped this will begin in the next few weeks.

7. Asset Management

- 7.1 An Option Appraisal on Surplus assets is being prepared. It is a non-operational asset review – A suitability scoring matrix is being developed, which will enable us to assess the value/cost and return from individual properties.
- 7.2 The Chestnut Tree Club demolition will see demolition to slab level. The Car Parking service will then be responsible for further works to create new parking spaces.
- 7.3 Matt Parr is currently assisting Project Taunton with various projects including the sale of the former Taunton Youth and Community Centre site, which has now been agreed by the Board of Lidl; the possibility of relocating the Tourist Information Centre and the Town Centre Company to a more central location; and the Church floodlighting project (ongoing)

Councillor Norman Cavill

Council Meeting – 23 July 2013

Report of Councillor Ken Hayward – Environmental Services

1. Environmental Health

Food

- 1.1 The Food Standards Agency is running a consultation on changes to the Food Law Code of Practice. The aim is to gain more consistency in the risk rating of premises and clarifying how the risk scores are made up. Further, to improve the effectiveness of enforcement by making visits to lower risk, compliant businesses less frequent to allow focus on businesses that are non compliant with food law.
- 1.2 The catch up programme for food inspections is starting to take effect and this means that there are now fewer businesses that are overdue an inspection. This then lessens the likelihood and risk of problems at those premises - or if problems are found, then remedial action can be taken to lower the risk to public health.
- 1.3 The team has assisted Public Health England in investigating an EColi case within a family. This meant liaison with a small nursery as well as a voluntary closure whilst the investigation took place.

Health and Safety

- 1.4 Catrin Brown has continued to assist with the corporate Health and Safety role. This has meant a reduction in Environmental Health capacity but has undoubtedly improved the corporate position in relation to Health and Safety.
- 1.5 The M5 investigation continues to take a considerable amount of resource, but is hopefully moving towards a conclusion.

Environmental Protection Team

- 1.6 The team continues to receive a high number of Public Health funerals. These can again be very resource intensive as information relating to the individual and the estate is sought as well as ensuring that an individual has a respectful service and committal.
- 1.7 After the wash out of 2012, the Wasp season is coming into swing. Numbers are still down on previous years but certainly improved on 2012. The service has been offered to West Somerset on the same charging basis as those for Taunton Deane as we continue to seek improved service. West Somerset currently signposts to other commercial providers so this is a potential source of revenue to Taunton Deane.
- 1.8 The replacement of Gulls' eggs with plastic ones has now been completed and continues to be successful in keeping Gull numbers down.

- 1.9 The Air Quality Monitoring report is nearing its completion. This work is being carried out by the University of West of England, and will imminently be submitted to the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Licensing

- 1.10 The Financial Auditor's report relating to an objection to account has been returned. This related to the level of taxi fees in 2011/2012 and whether or not they were set in excess of costs and further were excessive. The Auditor has concluded that because the Council was unable to demonstrate the details of how the costs were originally set, this was an unlawful item of account but that the fees were - or appeared to be - reasonable. He has acknowledged that much work has been done to reconcile costs and recommended further work to clarify these. The Council is currently considering its position in relation to these findings.
- 1.11 There has been a change in the law on regulated entertainment which will mean that less issue of Licence is required for items such as performing of plays or live music between 8am and 11pm. It is unclear what effect this will have at this stage but will be discussed at the Licensing Committee.
- 1.12 The Council is working with Okoko Nightclub on Bridge Street in Taunton as well as local residents in relation to concerns raised. Productive meetings have been held and through further liaison with other responsible bodies, it is hoped that an acceptable way forward can be agreed.

2. Crematorium

- 2.1 The new cremators are installed and will be independently tested within the next couple of weeks.

3. Waste Management

- 3.1 The Anaerobic Digestion plant at Walpole has now been completed by Somerset Waste Partnership's (SWP) partners – Viridor. Dry waste trials are well underway with wet waste trials starting imminently. It is planned therefore that it will be fully operational within 2-3 months.
- 3.2 The plant will be able to process up to 30,000 tonnes of food waste per annum, 20,000 tonnes of which will be provided by SWP. If demand is sufficient, its planning consent allows the facility to be expanded by a further 15,000 tonnes pa.
- 3.3 The new facility will save Somerset Council Tax Payers £200,000 a year over current arrangements to recycle the County's food waste. In addition, SWP have a profit share arrangement to allow tax payers to benefit from additional income above a base level earned from the sale of energy as well as the digestate.

- 3.4 Once operational, gas from the plant will be used initially to generate electricity. It will have a generating capacity of 1MW and should generate about 9,500 MWh a year, with about a fifth of this used within the plant and nearly four-fifths (78%) exported to the Grid, which is enough to power more than 1,700 homes.
- 3.5 Viridor are also evaluating the potential to instead scrub or clean the biogas, either for injection directly into the National Gas Grid or use to power Somerset's recycling and refuse collection fleets. This has even greater benefits in energy and environmental terms than generating electricity and so would make the process even more sustainable.

Councillor Ken Hayward

Council Meeting – 23 July 2013

Report of Councillor Mrs Catherine Herbert – Sports, Parks and Leisure

1. Parks

- 1.1 The best time of the year is here and the floral displays are looking great in all our parks. Our thanks go out to all the staff involved with making the displays spectacular year after year.
- 1.2 Taunton In Bloom have been preparing for judging which has been moved slightly later than expected on Thursday, 25 July 2013. This year it has been decided to enter a new category which limits the area judged to the town centre and awards pennant's rather than medals.
- 1.3 Work is continuing to repair the bridge in Vivary that was recently vandalised, and also to replace the bridge at the far end of the golf course. Pumps in Vivary Park have caused us no end of angst lately but I am pleased to say they are all being sorted out - repair of the pump on the old fountain, repair to the pump in the Sensory Garden and replacement of the pump in the children's play area.
- 1.4 The planters have now been removed from Castle Green and I hope that the public will now respect the area as an open space to be enjoyed by all.

2. Community Leisure and Play

- 2.1 Wellington Cricket Pavilion should be totally finished by the time we meet - the major part of the building was handed back to the club on Friday, 12 July 2013 and I am sure they will be enjoying their great new home already.
- 2.2 Work is progressing very well on the Station Road Pool refurbishment with a project team now in place and all working together to achieve the tight timescales.
- 2.3 You will have all seen the update sheet and will have seen within that there will be various methods employed to keep users and others up to date with the project as it progresses. Obviously an important issue for the public is the availability of water time during the unavoidable closure. This has been worked on by Tone to achieve some public swimming at various times of day throughout the week.

3. Tone Leisure (Taunton Deane) Limited Activities

Community, Sports and Health Development

Tone continues to work hard to develop a number of community outreach programmes:-

3. Health Development

3.1 Weight Management

3.1.1 The Community Pounds project has been extended to another area, with additional funding which has been agreed, and will launch in Wellington in September, based at the Wellington Children's Centre. It will run until Christmas 2013 and look to continue a weight management programme into the New Year.

3.2 NHS Health Checks

3.2.1 Health Checks are being conducted in Priorswood and Halcon and placing a new focus on Wellington. To date, Tone has delivered over 300 NHS Health Checks in the Taunton Deane area.

3.3 Market Segmentation - Older Men

3.3.1 A new initiative was launched in May to provide activities and social inclusion for older men who may be experiencing isolation. A 12 week indoor golf and boccia initiative was set up targeting this demographic in Taunton.

3.4 Children's Centres

3.4.1 Tone continues to support Galmington Pre-School in their Sports Skills activities for the children. Talks, health checks and a drop-in service are also taking place at a young parents group at The Hollies Children's Centre.

3.5 Sportivate Funded Programme - Spring Sisters Running Group

3.5.1 In March Tone successfully applied for funding to Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership (SASP) to start up a beginners running group for women aged 18-25 in North Taunton. Eight women have taken part in the sessions which started in May on Wednesday evenings, and have been led by a volunteer Running Leader.

3.5.2 The aim was to encourage young women to become more active and improve their fitness through running. Participants were incentivised to take part regularly with an offer of paying their entry fee into the Race for Life (5K run) in Taunton on Sunday, 14th July 2013 once they had completed six sessions. The project plans to continue by training volunteers to become Running Leaders via a course provided by England Athletics, to help sustain the group.

4. Facility News

Somerfest

- 4.1 Tone's Leisure Centres were very well represented at this year's Somerfest in Goodland Gardens. This promotional event gave Tone a fantastic opportunity to showcase its portfolio of activities on offer and generated over 750 customer leads.

Wellington Sports Centre

- 4.2 With assistance from the Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership (SASP), Wellington has launched two ladies' netball sessions. In just six weeks there are already two regular training sessions held at the centre and lots more ladies interested.
- 4.3 The newly refurbished family changing rooms are now open and providing the customer with a much improved experience.

Wellsprings Leisure Centre

- 4.4 Wellsprings are working with the Youth Service to redevelop the VIBE youth sessions on a Friday night for a re-launch in the autumn.
- 4.5 Following continued damage to the plastered walls in Wellsprings' free weight area, Tone has fixed checker plating to this area to prevent this damage recurring and ensure the facility looks presentable at all times.

Blackbrook Pavilion

- 4.6 Blackbrook Pavilion has started work on adopting Tone's Community Hub Strategy and is working closely with the community in a number of different ways to increase footfall at the site, while offering the community something different:-

Free craft sessions for under 5s at Halloween, Christmas and Easter with a view to holding these sessions every three months.

Free room hire to local charities – The National Childcare Trust held their annual meeting at Blackbrook and Millie's Charity are running a first aid course.

Free room hire for new groups – Baby Sing and Sign were looking for a new location to run their sessions.

Tennis Centre

- 4.7 The solar PV installation is now complete on the Tennis Centre roof. Commissioning took place in early July and the centre will soon benefit from up to 50Kw per hour of reduced cost electricity.

Taunton Pool

4.8 *Swimathon 26-28 April*

4.8.1 This proved a great success with 64 swimmers taking part, either individually or in teams, and they raised over £4,000 for Marie Curie Cancer Care.

4.8.2 Taunton Pool has recently benefitted from the installation of cavity wall insulation and Phase 2 of the replacement windows has also commenced at site and will be complete in July. Both will positively help reduce carbon emissions in the facility.

4.8.3 In an effort to increase junior participation in swimming, Tone has increased its pool time made available for the midweek "Fun Float" sessions during school holidays. These will now run from 2.15 pm-4.00 pm Monday to Friday, starting on 24 July 2013.

St. James Street Baths

4.9 During the May half term St. James Street programmed its first Scuba session for children. The course was extremely popular and a creative programme has now been launched for the summer holidays.

4.10 The learner pool at St. James Street has been closed for five weeks while essential maintenance was completed. The pool re-opened on 26 June 2013. Despite this closure lessons were accommodated in the main pool and there was no loss of business. Swimskool numbers at this site remain strong and above budget.

Vivary Adventure Centre

4.11 *High Ropes*

4.11.1 Business is growing on the High Ropes and a company called Aspect Marketing have been working with Tone to help with this. Group bookings in June were especially strong in the education sector, when over 800 school children used this facility.

4.11.2 There is an Open Day planned for Sunday, 14 July 2013 at Vivary Park on the same day as Race For Life.

4.12 *Golf*

4.12.1 The usage of the course has been improving, although it is clear that pricing sensitivity is an issue for golfers, with season ticket sales in particular remaining challenging.

4.12.1 The delay in replacement of the bridge from the 4th green to the 5th tee is causing golfers concern and it is understood that a structural engineer will be surveying early in July to progress plans for this urgent work.

4.13 *Café*

4.13.1 New equipment has recently been purchased for the café, including a new fresh bean coffee machine and a new soft ice cream machine.

4.13.2 The Edge Café menu was re-launched in early July and it is hoped that this will see a further lift in usage and revenue.

Councillor Catherine Herbert.