

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 10 December 2013 at 18:30.

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## **Agenda**

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

- 1 To receive the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 18 November 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 Order 16 and 17.
- 7 Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control. Report of the Strategy and Performance Manager (attached).
- 8 Monkton Heathfield Capacity Funding. Report of the Planning and Development Manager (attached).
- 9 Members' Allowances 2014/2015. Recommendations from the Members' Allowances Panel (attached).
- 10 Part I - To deal with written questions to, and receive the following recommendations from, the Executive:-
  - (i) Councillor John Williams - Recommendations relating to:-
    - (a) Earmarked Reserves Review (attached);

(b) Revised Capital Programme Budget Estimates 2013/2014 – 2017/2018 (attached);

(c) Fees and Charges 2014/2015 (attached);

(ii) Councillor Edwards - Recommendations relating to:-

(a) Local Development Scheme 2013 (attached);

(b) Introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy in Taunton Deane – Examiner's Report and Adoption (attached);

(iii) Councillor Mrs Vivienne Stock-Williams - Recommendations relating to:-

(a) Review of Council Tax Support Scheme for 2014/2015 (attached);

(b) Customer Access Strategy (attached);

(iv) Councillor Norman Cavill - Recommendations relating to the Asset Strategy (attached)

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

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

(b) Councillor Ken Hayward - Environmental Services and Climate Change - No report;

(c) Councillor Catherine Herbert - Sports, Parks and Leisure;

(d) Councillor Jean Adkins - Housing Services;

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

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

(g) Councillor Jane Warmington - Community Development;

(h) Councillor Norman Cavill - Economic Development, Asset Management, Arts and Tourism.

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](http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk)



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



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

**For further information about the meeting, please contact the Corporate Support Unit on 01823 356414 or email [r.bryant@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto: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 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 Miss F Smith  
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 a meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council held in the John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton on 12 November 2013 at 6.30 pm.

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

### 1. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council held on 1 August 2013, copies having been sent to each Member, were signed by the Mayor.

### 2. **Apologies**

Councillors Bishop and Hayward.

### 3. **Public Question Time**

- (a) Mr Orr stated that this evening the Council would witness the sunset of shared services with IBM in South West One and the dawning of a new adventure in shared services with West Somerset Council

Back in 2007, we were confidently told that Somerset would collectively receive "assured savings" of £192,000,000 from Southwest One.

In 2013, Somerset had collectively paid out £50,000,000 more to IBM, than had been saved through Southwest One.

In this Council, the six year old debt for a £3,000,000 share of the SAP IT system in Southwest One was still not fully repaid.

Southwest One promised:-

- massive efficiency savings for the taxpayer;
- the economic regeneration of Taunton Deane and Somerset;
- new jobs in a shared service centre; and

- an iconic building on the derelict Firepool site.

None of these things had come to pass and the economic downturn could not be used to explain them all away.

Tonight, the latest shared service proposal, with the smallest District Council in Britain, West Somerset, is before us. Nothing new. Nothing innovative.

If Sedgemoor was to somehow join you at a later date, without being a founder partner, would Penny James remain Chief Executive or would Kerry Rickards compete for the post against her?

Would the proposed and mainly Taunton Deane Senior Management Team be set in stone now or will further upheavals be required, to accommodate Sedgemoor's highly successful management team, in an open competition for posts?

If you pass the Business Case with just West Somerset tonight, you will be shutting the door on Sedgemoor Council joining as a founder partner and enjoying an equal and equitable footing.

I am in favour of public partnerships, so, why do I not support your proposal for shared services with just West Somerset as a founder partner?

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Williams, thanked Mr Orr for his statement and questions. He would arrange a written response to Mr Orr.

- (b) Mr Doug Lowe, Chairman of Ruishton and Thornfalcon Parish Council stated that he was very frustrated and was not sure the Council knew what was going on after sending out five Consultations at once.

In the Statement of Community Involvement reference was made to the Council:-

- Aiming for the highest standard of consultation practice;
- Seeking the community's views as an essential part of the evidence base for its decision making; and
- Working towards full involvement of all elements of the community and recognising different viewpoints via appropriate consultation techniques;

Mr Lowe thought that this should have been in place before doing anything else.

With regard to the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan – Preferred Options it seemed no one thought that it was worth putting in the large development at Henlade – 25 hectares – in its own right rather than burying it within the Taunton information which is over 100 pages in length. Why was there originally no proposal to undertake a consultation on this site at the Ruishton Village Hall?

Thankfully one had now been arranged but only after e-mail exchanges with Councillor Mark Edwards. Who was running this Council.....which was aiming for the highest standard of consultation practice!

The other consultations in respect of Policy Guidance for the change of use of rural service provision and conversion of existing buildings, the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document Consultation 2013 and the Taunton Deane Site Allocations and Development Management Plan Preferred Options - draft Sustainability Appraisal Volumes 1 and 2 were referred to. Mr Lowe wondered how many Councillors would read all these?

These consultations would shape the way Taunton grew in the future. In the past Hankridge and Blackbrook Business Park had been built with no thought to over a 1000 cars going into Blackbrook each day.

The Ruishton and Thornfalcon Parish Council – like many others – only met once a month. So how were we all supposed to give these Consultations our full attention and undertake the rest of the parish business too?

Mr Lowe also felt it was the officers who had driven the proposed allocation at Henlade as a response to all the new building going on at Junctions 24 and 23.

Last but not least, Henlade needed a bypass first before any further major development with the A358 having 36,000 users daily going through it and spending up to an hour some mornings going into the County Town of Somerset. So I wonder what visitors would think about a further 25 hectares of massive warehouses on this road which was the gateway to Taunton. Would you still want to go there or maybe carry on to Exeter?

In response, Councillor Edwards confirmed that he had agreed to a consultation event being held at Ruishton Village Hall. A written response to the other points raised by Mr Lowe would also be arranged.

(c) Mrs Dorothea Bradley raised the following questions:-

- In view of the changing circumstances of the C21st what brain storming sessions were taking place with Councillors on the future direction of Taunton Deane?
- Were discussions taking place at Councillor level between Taunton Deane, West Somerset and Sedgemoor? If not why not?
- What training sessions were taking place for Councillors and officers jointly on communication and promotion of Taunton Deane and its future direction?
- In the last ten years how many of the Planning Committee Councillors have taken themselves off to the Summer Planning School organised I believe by the Town and Country Planning Association/Local Government Association given that they received a four figure allowance to include such activities?
- Why had the idea of a new settlement not been pursued given that such an idea/policy would absorb future requirements for new houses and thus effectively block any opportunistic applications for prime sites by developers? It would fit in nicely with the new bottom up/localist approach that focuses on identity, community links and quality of life.



The Leader of the Council, Councillor Williams, thanked Mrs Bradley for her questions. He would arrange a written response to Mrs Bradley.

#### **4. Declaration of Interests**

Councillors Mrs Baker, Coles, A Govier, Hunt, Prior-Sankey, A Wedderkopp and D Wedderkopp declared personal interests as Members of Somerset County Council. Councillor Henley declared personal interests both as a Member of Somerset County Council and as an employee of Job Centre Plus. Councillors Mrs Hill and Stone declared personal interests as employees of Somerset County Council. Councillor T Slattery declared a personal interest as an employee of Sedgemoor District Council. Councillor Tooze declared a personal interest as an employee of the UK Hydrographic Office. Councillor Wren declared personal interests as an employee of Natural England and as Clerk to Milverton Parish Council. Councillor Ross declared a personal interest as one of 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. Councillor Swaine declared a personal interest as a part-time swimming instructor. Councillors D Durdan and Stone declared prejudicial interests as Tone Leisure Board representatives. Councillor Gill Slattery declared personal interests as a member of the Board of Governors at Somerset College and as 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.

#### **5. Borough Council By-Election – 3 October 2013**

The Democratic Services Manager and Corporate Support Lead, on behalf of the Returning Officer, reported that Federica Roberta Diana Smith of 8 Bourne Grove, Taunton had been elected as a Councillor at the By-Election held on 3 October 2013 to fill the vacancy in the Halcon Ward of Taunton.

#### **6. Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council – Joint Management and Shared Services Business Case**

Prior to the presentation of the report, proposed by Councillor Horsley, seconded by Councillor Coles, that Standing Orders be suspended for the duration of the meeting.

The motion was put and was lost.

Considered report previously circulated that detailed the Business Case for Joint Management and Shared Services for Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) and West Somerset Council (WSC).

The financial position of both Councils was well documented with both

Councils presenting Medium Term Financial Plans that showed significant financial challenges ahead.

In February/March 2013, both Councils had agreed to mandate a project to review the potential to deliver joint management and shared services arrangements. The key driver for this was the need to find savings.

A Project Team was formed to ensure a Business Case was developed safely, and asked that this came back to Members in October 2013. Over the summer both Councils agreed to move to a shared Chief Executive who took up post with effect from 24 October, 2013.

More recently, both Councils had updated their Medium Term Financial Plans to reflect the reductions now forecast in Central Government funding over the next few years. As a result, the context in which this project was originally commissioned was still very relevant and perhaps more pressing than ever.

The Business Case considered the case for creating a single officer management and staffing structure (with associated budgets) to provide services to 147,000 residents and 5,600 businesses located in, and thousands of visitors to, the areas governed by TDBC and WSC.

The proposal was to permanently change the officer structures. It did not alter the ability of the 84 Members of the two Councils to play their full representational and leadership roles on behalf of their communities. It did however propose joint Member arrangements to govern the implementation of the Business Case.

By joining up management and service delivery it was envisaged that both Councils could benefit from financial savings and increased service resilience together with more effective, efficient and affordable service delivery. The ambition was to help deliver a sustainable financial future for both democratically independent organisations. By reducing the overall cost of senior management and by sharing service delivery, both Councils could mitigate the impact of Government funding cuts on their front-line services.

The ambition was to deliver a single, fully integrated affordable Officer structure serving two separate, sovereign Councils.

If implemented, the Business Case highlighted a number of key decisions that would affect the 637 FTE staff currently employed by the two Councils. It identified further work that needed to be carried out to ensure this was implemented smoothly, and work that needed to take place in the longer term to harmonise terms and conditions.

Both Councils had recognised that the Business Case alone would not resolve the entirety of the financial challenges ahead. This project needed to be seen in the wider context of each Council's Corporate Business Plans and ambitions.

The detailed Business Case for Joint Management and Shared Services had

previously been circulated to all Councillors for consideration in advance of the various meetings and briefings that had been arranged prior to the meeting of Full Council.

The governance arrangements for the project had required the Joint Project Board (officers) and Joint Member Advisory Panel to meet monthly to review project progress and discuss the detail of the project. Representatives from the UNISON branches of the Councils had also been meeting jointly (Joint UNISON Board) to engage on key staffing matters on the project.

The Joint Project Board had had representation from other Councils in Somerset too. Mendip had progressed political approval for work with TDBC and WSC on “shared service” options in July 2013.

Sedgemoor (SDC) had recently reviewed its interest in the project to the extent that the Leaders of the three Council had met to discuss the project in depth. As a consequence, the Leader of SDC had been invited to seek a formal mandate from that Council to demonstrate SDC’s express desire to explore a Business Case for the three Councils for Joint Management and Shared Services. To date this mandate had not been forthcoming.

TDBC and WSC had learnt from other Councils who had progressed similar shared service arrangements. This learning had been significant to the project and provided some comfort that the proposal set out in the Business Case was reasonable in both approach and assumptions, and importantly, was deliverable.

The Business Case did not set out a detailed staffing structure and service delivery solutions for each service. However it did offer a framework for delivering the overall joint staffing arrangements and the reduced budget position that would operate within.

The implementation of this proposal would progress the detailed arrangements for each service. The simple “joining up” would be progressed at pace if the Business Case was approved. That task would be driven by a new Joint Management Team to ensure the Business Case savings were delivered.

A Joint Partnership Advisory Group (JPAG) would be established to oversee this and ensure the intended outcomes were delivered from a Member perspective. The final phase of this project – the transformation phase – was where further detailed Member involvement would be required. This is where each service was reviewed and challenged on the most appropriate service delivery solution moving forward. Member Working Groups would be set up to support this.

The Business Case sought to achieve broadly the same level of service at less cost because:-

- Both Councils’ Medium Term Financial Plans showed funding gaps in the years ahead;

- Government funding in future years was being cut, and there were limits on our tax raising powers; and
- Costs were already under pressure in each Council but, by joining together, savings could be made that could not be achieved on our own.

The Business Case was based on:-

- A single, new shared officer structure;
- Two separate sovereign Councils – each responsible for the Government of their areas;
- A JPAG being set up to monitor the delivery of the Business Case and help shape future policies on shared arrangements;
- A collective will to consider different ways of working to achieve efficiencies; and
- No detriment to the local tax payers of either authority.

The impact on staff was:-

- New Joint Management arrangements would be implemented quickly;
- A single officer structure, hosted by TDBC, with pay and terms and conditions harmonised on a cost neutral basis; and
- There would be less staff employed in the future than at present.

The financial headlines were:-

- Minimum annual savings of £1,889,000 from 2015/2016 (£1,582,000 for TDBC and £307,000 for WSC);
- Further savings would be delivered during the “transformation” of services to improve this position; and
- One-off Transition Costs of £2,716,000 (£2,002,000 for TDBC and £714,000 for WSC). These can be funded by the Councils.

The main risks detailed in the Business Case were:-

- The Councils did not deliver on the savings projections or timeline;
- Insufficient management resource to run the new structure effectively;
- Lack of flexibility in existing key contracts and arrangements; and
- Existing projects and priorities were impacted by shared services implementation.

A full Implementation Risk Assessment and mitigation of the above main risks were set out within the Business Case.

Further reported that the Councils had submitted a bid to the Government for a Transformation Challenge Award Grant. It was disappointing that the application for the Joint Management and Shared Services Project was not among the successful bids. In total, 140 bids had been submitted and awards had been made to only 18 projects.

This funding would have been very welcome but it did not detract from the potential savings that this project could deliver. The Business Case stacked-up financially without external funding and had been drafted on the basis of no external funding being received.

The key decisions emerging from supporting the proposals were that:-

- On the basis of the potential savings contained within the Business Case, the two Councils support the Business Case for the Joint Management and Shared Service arrangements and that officers were tasked with delivering on time and to the financial targets;
- These arrangements were progressed under the host employer model, with TDBC as the host employer. The detailed planning for this would be overseen by the JPAG with appropriate consultation undertaken with staff and UNISON;
- A common set of employment terms and conditions were developed for approval by both Councils;
- The necessary financial approvals were made to fund the Transition (one-off) costs;
- The inter-authority agreement was approved, including the establishment of a JPAG, and operated in the spirit of the Business Case;
- The proposal for Joint Management arrangements supporting the operation of this Business Case be considered; and
- The proposals for the creation of a shared workforce and a Transition Redundancy Policy be adopted.

Submitted for the information of Councillors the comments on the Business Case made at the meetings of WSC's Scrutiny Committee and the Council's Corporate Scrutiny Committee which had both met on 24 October 2013.

Although the Corporate Scrutiny Committee had made no formal recommendations for consideration by Full Council, details were requested of the method used for calculating the split of ICT costs between WSC and TDBC. A briefing note regarding the Leader of the Council's recent meeting in London with the Secretary of State and Local Government Minister was also requested.

Moved by Councillor Horsley that all the recommendations in the report be deleted and replaced with the following:-

"We ask the officers to devote a further three months to examining in greater detail:-

- (a) The possibility of joining a three way management structure with SDC or another suitable District Council;
- (b) Greater clarity on the integration of the IT systems which would have to be brought together between WSC, TDBC and Southwest One;

- (c) A re-examination of TDBC's Corporate Priorities to identify more clearly if enough emphasis had been given to Economic Regeneration and Growth to meet the £3,000,000 hole which the Medium Term Financial Plan showed would still remain after implementation of the Business Case so far developed; and
- (d) A rethink on the revised proposed Joint Structure to accommodate concerns about its suitability to achieve the Corporate Priorities of the Council."

The proposed amendment was ruled out of order by the Mayor on the basis that it would negate the recommendations in the report.

Before the Mayor called for the vote on the recommendations Councillor Horsley, in accordance with Standing Order 18(2)(b) requested that a Recorded Vote be taken. This request was supported by the votes of at least a quarter of the Councillors present.

**Resolved that:-**

- (a) On the basis of the potential savings contained within the Business Case, the implementation of the Joint Management and Shared Services arrangements, delivering a single officer structure providing a shared workforce to support both Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council, be supported;
- (b) Officers be authorised to implement the proposals in accordance with the financial targets and timeline as set out within the Business Case, with the financial targets to be included in the Council's Budgets for 2014/2015 and Medium Term Financial Plans for later years;
- (c) Consideration be given to establishing new governance arrangements to safely manage the implementation phase of the Business Case. Such arrangements to include a framework to support the proposed Service Transformation Phase;
- (d) The shared workforce arrangements be progressed under the host employer model, with Taunton Deane Borough Council as the host employer, with the detailed planning being overseen by the proposed new governance arrangements referred to in (c) above together with appropriate consultation undertaken with staff and UNISON;
- (e) A common set of employment terms and conditions be developed for approval by both Councils in consultation and negotiation with UNISON;
- (f) The necessary respective financial approvals be hereby agreed to fund the Transition (one-off) costs:-
  - (i) For Taunton Deane Borough Council to fund their share of the transition costs (£2,002,000) by

- a supplementary estimate from General Fund Reserves of £900,000; plus
- by using unallocated Capital Resources of £800,000; plus
- by using £302,000 of 2014/2015 New Homes Bonus allocation.

(ii) For West Somerset Council to fund their share of the transition costs (£714,000) by

- A transfer of £358,000 from the Sustainability Earmarked Reserve; plus
- By using unallocated Capital Receipts of £356,000.

The recommendations were carried with 30 Councillors voting in favour, 22 voting against, with two abstentions, as follows:-

<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
Councillor Mrs Adkins	Councillor Coles	Councillor Mrs Baker
Councillor Mrs Allgrove	Councillor Farbahi	Councillor Miss James
Councillor Beaven	Councillor Mrs Floyd	
Councillor Bowrah	Councillor Mrs Gaden	
Councillor Cavill	Councillor Henley	
Councillor Denington	Councillor Mrs Hill	
Councillor D Durdan	Councillor Horsley	
Councillor Miss Durdan	Councillor R Lees	
Councillor Edwards	Councillor Mrs Lees	
Councillor Gaines	Councillor Mrs Messenger	
Councillor A Govier	Councillor Morrell	
Councillor Mrs Govier	Councillor Prior-Sankey	
Councillor Hall	Councillor Gill Slattery	
Councillor Mrs Herbert	Councillor T Slattery	
Councillor C Hill	Councillor Miss Smith	
Councillor Hunt	Councillor Mrs Smith	
Councillor Ms Lisgo	Councillor P Smith	
Councillor Meikle	Councillor Stone	
Councillor Nottrodt	Councillor Swaine	
Councillor Ms Palmer	Councillor Tooze	
Councillor D Reed	Councillor A Wedderkopp	
Councillor Mrs Reed	Councillor D Wedderkopp	
Councillor Ross		
Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams		
Councillor Mrs Warmington		
Councillor Watson		
Councillor Mrs Waymouth		
Councillor Ms Webber		
Councillor Williams		
Councillor Wren		

**7. Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council - Proposed Governance Arrangements – Inter Authority Agreement**

Considered report previously circulated, that outlined the proposed inter authority agreement setting out the governance arrangements to be put in place in the event of the Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) and West Somerset Council (WSC) agreeing to approve the Business Case for Joint Management and Shared Services.

As part of the project mandate agreed by both Councils in early 2013 it had been agreed to establish a Joint Members Advisory Panel (JMAP) consisting of four Members from each Council to ensure close democratic involvement in the project development.

The Business Case for shared Management and Services was predicated on the two councils remaining as separate entities and retaining their existing democratic structures and processes. Nevertheless experience from elsewhere had demonstrated that clear governance was vital to maintain the momentum, focus and commitment to delivering the improvements sought by the Councils involved.

If the Business Case was approved, it would represent a significant step forward in the joint working relationship between the two Councils and it was recommended that this was reflected by the adoption of an Inter Authority Agreement. This would be the overarching document that enshrined the principles under which the joint arrangements would operate for the Councils going forward. A draft of the document was submitted for the information of Members.

The document made reference to the legal basis for any joint arrangements including the Section 113 (of the Local Government Act 1972) Agreement relating to the sharing of a Chief Executive. It set out the context for the joint arrangements including the key principles that would underpin implementation and delivery of the joint arrangements between the two Councils.

The key element in terms of continuing Member engagement was set out in the Business Case. In recognition of the vital role that JMAP had provided to date it was proposed that a Joint Partnership Advisory Group (JPAG) be established to supplement the existing democratic structures. Its main roles would be to:-

- Oversee the delivery of the approved Business Case ensuring that all Members of both Councils were kept informed of progress;
- Make comments on detailed Business Cases for joint services and/or proposals for the involvement of other Councils in the shared joint arrangements; and
- Attempt to resolve any issues/concerns raised by either Council or in respect of the joint arrangements.



The JPAG was 'advisory' and so was a non decision making body which would report to both Councils ensuring that the wider membership of the Councils retained ultimate decision making power.

One of the strengths of the existing JMAP process was the ability to discuss issues frankly in private and the proposal as drafted would enable this level of discretion to be maintained. Nevertheless, any key notes and comments/suggestions emerging from the JPAG would be made available to all Members of both authorities to ensure transparency internally.

For the implementation phase to be successfully delivered it was considered essential that the two Leaders were central to the process. It was therefore proposed that the composition of the group should specify that both Leaders should be core members of the JPAG plus four additional Members from each Council to be appointed annually.

This would provide each Council with the freedom to appoint its representatives without it necessarily needing to be politically proportional. The intention was that the venue for meetings of the JPAG would alternate between the authorities' offices with the Leader of the host authority chairing each meeting.

JPAG meetings would be considered quorate if at least three Members from each authority were present including at least one of the two Leaders, with substitutes being permitted by clear prior arrangement.

Submitted for the information of Councillors the comments on the Inter Authority Agreement made at the meetings of WSC's Scrutiny Committee and the Council's Corporate Scrutiny Committee which had both met on 24 October 2013.

**Resolved** that:-

- (1) Subject to both Councils agreeing to approve the Business Case for Joint Management and Shared Services, the Inter Authority Agreement - attached as an Appendix to the report - be adopted by both authorities to provide the governance framework for implementing the joint arrangements between Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Councils; and
- (2) Each Council be requested to nominate its four Members to serve on the Joint Partnership Advisory Group with the two Leaders of Council.

**8. Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council - Creating a Shared Workforce and Transition Redundancy Policy**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the creation of a Shared Workforce and Transition Redundancy Policy.

As part of the Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) and West Somerset

Council (WSC) Shared Services Project, there was a proposal put forward in the Business Case to use the 'host employer' model and create 'one team' delivering services for the benefits of customers in both Councils.

The 'host employer' model had been considered by the Joint Project Board, Joint Member Advisory Panel and the Joint UNISON Board.

The responses from UNISON had included:-

- i) the need for staff to have clarity on pay scales at the appropriate time so that they could make informed decisions;
- ii) the need to avoid significant upheaval for staff with a new job evaluation scheme;
- iii) the need for changes to be made within a reasonable timescale without this taking too long;

The proposals had also been influenced by the need to maintain control over affordability and negotiations with UNISON on the Transition Redundancy Policy on matters such as pay protection and 'trickle down'.

A copy of a negotiated Collective Agreement developed in consultation with UNISON which covered the creation of the shared workforce, the Transition Redundancy Policy and the review of terms and conditions of employment was submitted for the information of Members.

The proposal put forward provided clarity on how the structure of the shared services would be implemented and had been developed in consultation with UNISON and after negotiations to ensure that staff views were taken into account.

Noted that the process set out would run alongside the review of terms and conditions of employment and staff would need to be made fully aware of this. UNISON had already agreed to engage positively with this process and it was expected that this would be completed by 1 April 2015.

In addition to this, consultation and negotiation had been taking place on a Transition Redundancy Policy that would be applied throughout this process and was now contained within the overarching collective agreement as a final version for Member consideration.

The implementation of the Policy would be in four phases, as follows:-

#### **Phase 1 – from 1 January 2014**

- Directors and Assistant Directors in post.
- Requirement for Directors and Assistant Directors to draw up 4<sup>th</sup> tier management structures for their services.
- Requirements for overall affordability envelope to be mapped for Assistant Director service areas with identification of posts included in each Council.

- Requirement for Job Descriptions, Person Specifications and Job Evaluation forms to be done where required and where the jobs were not substantially the same as posts already evaluated under the TDBC Job Evaluation Scheme.
- All posts within this phase to be checked for consistency across the organisation before being finalised and released. This stage to be completed by 31 January 2014.
- 'At risk' and consultation with affected staff during February 2014.
- Appointments/slot-ins confirmed by 31 March 2014.
- New posts in place by 1 April 2014 and all posts to be employed by TDBC as the 'host employer'.
- This meant that the TDBC Job Evaluation Scheme would be used alongside the TDBC pay scales.

### **Phase 2 – from 1 April 2014**

- Assistant Directors and 4<sup>th</sup> Tier Managers required to draw up structures for Lead, Supervisors etc by 31 May 2014.
- Requirements for overall affordability envelope to be mapped for Assistant Director service areas with identification of posts included in each Council.
- Requirement for Job Descriptions, Person Specifications and Job Evaluation forms to be done where required and where the jobs were not substantially the same as posts already evaluated under the TDBC Job Evaluation Scheme.
- All posts within this phase to be checked for consistency across the organisation before being finalised and released. This stage to be completed by 31 May 2014.
- 'At risk' and consultation with affected staff during June 2014.
- Appointments/slot-ins confirmed by 31 July 2014.
- New posts in place by 1 August 2014 and all posts to be employed by TDBC as the 'host employer'.

### **Phase 3 – from 1 August 2014**

- Assistant Directors, 4<sup>th</sup> Tier Managers and Leads/Supervisors required to draw up structures for teams/services by 31 October 2014.
- Requirements for overall affordability envelope to be mapped for Assistant Director service areas with identification of posts included in each Council.
- Requirement for Job Descriptions, Person Specifications and Job Evaluation forms to be done where required and where the jobs were not substantially the same as posts already evaluated under the TDBC Job Evaluation Scheme.
- All posts within this phase to be checked for consistency across the organisation before being finalised and released. This stage to be completed by 31 October 2014.
- 'At risk' and consultation with affected staff during November 2014.
- Appointments/slot-ins and any final TUPE transfers from WSC to be confirmed by 31 January 2015.
- Complete structure, all new posts and final TUPE transfers in place by 1 February 2015 with all staff employed by TDBC as the 'host employer'.

#### **Phase 4 – from 1 April 2014 until 31 March 2015**

Terms and Conditions review completed and implemented on 1 April 2015.

The Advantages and Disadvantages of the proposal were outlined in the report.

Further reported that as part of the proposal Grade A of the TDBC pay scales would be deleted as well as the first three increments of Grade B would also be deleted.

What was now the fourth point of Grade B would be recalculated to match the 'living wage' of £14,420pa and this first grade would have only two points.

There would be no change to the maximum salary level on the TDBC pay scales.

Across both authorities there was only one employee who would be affected by these proposed changes to Grades and therefore the additional cost, when weighed up against the benefits was manageable.

Submitted for the information of Councillors the comments on Creating a Shared Workforce and Transition Redundancy Policy made at the meetings of WSC's Scrutiny Committee and the Council's Corporate Scrutiny Committee which had both met on 24 October 2013.

**Resolved** that:-

- (1) The negotiated overarching Collective Agreement with UNISON, which was set out as Appendix A to the report, be noted;
- (2) The Redundancy and Redeployment (transition) Policy as set out in Appendix 3 of the Collective Agreement be approved; and
- (3) the process and methodology for the creation of the Shared Workforce be approved, in particular that:-
  - Taunton Deane Borough Council would be the host employer;
  - The Taunton Deane Borough Council Job Evaluation Scheme would be used to assess grades of any revised or new posts; and
  - Grade A and the first three points of Grade B of the current Taunton Deane Borough Council pay structure would be deleted and that the fourth point of Grade B would be increased to £14,420 per annum to provide for the 'Living Wage'.

#### **9. Taunton Deane and West Somerset Joint Management Proposal**

Considered report previously circulated, which built upon the original report on the proposed Joint Management Structure for Taunton Deane Borough

Council (TDBC) and West Somerset Council (WSC) presented to both Councils' Scrutiny meetings on 24 October 2013.

The report reflected feedback from Scrutiny, UNISON and staff. This was fully detailed for the information of Members.

The Joint Chief Executive's response to the feedback was as follows:-

1. Following the recommendation from the WSC Scrutiny meeting it was proposed that a new post of "New Nuclear Programme Manager" be created. This post would not be a part of the Joint Management Team and would, therefore, not have corporate responsibilities. It was, however, a very important role and would report directly to the Chief Executive. On a day-to-day basis the post would need to integrate with the work planning of the Director - Growth and Development and the other teams.
2. The proposed structure chart had been amended to show how this post would fit into the structure. The post would need to be job evaluated and made available to internal applicants who met the essential criteria. The post would be funded by WSC from the Tier 4 affordability envelope and/or specific Hinkley Point or National Grid funding.
3. As a result of the discussions that took place at TDBC's Corporate Scrutiny Committee on the principle of slot-ins, the Joint Chief Executive had taken formal written advice from the Retained HR Manager and Legal Services Manager. This clearly set out the risks involved in departing from the "slot-in" recommendations in the original report to Scrutiny. In summary these were:-
  - Failure to follow agreed policies and procedures would give rise to a significant risk of legal challenge;
  - Failure to follow agreed policies and procedure would damage UNISON and staff confidence in the project;
  - Material changes made to the original proposals would give rise to a significant risk of legal challenge unless further consultation took place on these changes with UNISON and affected staff;
  - Failure to adopt the proposals might increase the costs assumed within the Business Case;
  - A possible impact on the timetable for the delivery of the shared service project; and
  - The process impact – it was impossible to ever get to a situation where the postholders recommended for "slot-in" were not treated as "at risk" and, therefore, given a priority interview. If they proved they were competent (against the agreed job description and person specification) and they were not appointed, the Councils would be at significant risk of breaching their own policy and of legal challenge.

4. In addition HR staff at TDBC and WSC had reviewed all of the slot-ins against the job criteria and competencies and confirmed that the original “slot-in” recommendations were sound.
5. A “match” of 80% or above between the existing post and the new post was the figure required for a “slot in” match in the Councils’ Redundancy Policy. The proposed slot-ins ranged from a 89% to 97% match.
6. On the basis of above it was not intended to make any changes to the original proposal with respect to the 4 “slot ins” that were included for Member consideration.
7. The Councils needed to have a qualified planner as part of the Joint Management Team, especially given the size of the growth agenda at TDBC and the importance of infrastructure delivery at both Councils. It was not, therefore, intended to make any changes to the original proposal.
8. The original proposals suggested that three posts – including the Assistant Director – Resources specifically mentioned by UNISON – should go immediately to external recruitment. The original proposals were based on an assessment of existing posts and postholders covered by the ringfences. This assessment had been reviewed by HR staff at TDBC/WSC.
9. Based on these assessments the Joint Chief Executive remained confident in the Councils’ ability to propose that certain posts could be advertised externally as these were new posts and the experience and skill set was not completely available within the ring fence or the wider Council.
10. However, it was accepted that there might be staff within the ring fence who possessed some of the skills and experience to do parts of each job. There might also be some staff outside of the ring fences who had the relevant qualifications to apply for posts where there was no one qualified within the ring fence to apply or where no one in the ring fence chose to apply.
11. On this basis – and – in response to Scrutiny, UNISON and the staff consultation feedback, it was now recommended that all of the non slot-in posts be offered as internal appointments in the first instance.
13. Where there was no expression of interest from “at risk” employees it would then be possible to ask TDBC or WSC employees to express an interest in these jobs. This might also assist in reducing any future severance costs as the Shared Services were developed. If no expression of interest or internal appointment was made the post(s) would then be advertised externally.

14. Finally, HR staff at TDBC and WSC had reviewed the post of Assistant Director – Property and Development and Assistant Director – Business Development. Based on this assessment the Joint Chief Executive continued to be satisfied that there were no suitable existing postholders in the ringfence for “slot-in” to either roles. The “match” for both posts was under 65% with the requirement for a “slot in” match being 80%. However, given the revised proposal set out above, the two individual postholders who had challenged the fact that they had not been “slotted-in” to posts originally proposed for external recruitment would now be able to apply for these roles in the first instance as they were all “at risk” of redundancy.

Further reported that the financial impacts would remain the same as the “New Nuclear Programme Manager” role would be funded from the Tier 4 affordability envelope / dedicated WSC resources.

The cost of the new Joint Management Team comfortably fitted within the affordability envelope for the combined General Funds of the Councils. There was an additional cost to the TDBC Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the strengthened housing management structure.

All other aspects of the report to Scrutiny remained unchanged.

**Resolved** that:-

- (a) The original Joint Management Team proposal – as amended by the inclusion of a “New Nuclear Programme Manager” be approved;
- (b) The Joint Chief Executive be authorised to implement the Proposals;
- (c) Group Leaders be requested to nominate representatives to attend the South West Councils’ Recruitment and Selection Training to allow them to then be available for the Member Appointments Panels;
- (d) The Pay Policy Statement of each Council be amended to reflect the recommendations of South West Councils as set out in the report; and
- (e) The Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Revenue Account Budget be increased by £77,600 to fund the enhanced management capacity in the Housing Service.

## 10. **Suspension of Standing Order**

**Resolved** that Standing Order 28, Time limits for all meetings be suspended to enable the meeting to continue for a further half an hour.

## 11. **Recommendation to Council from the Executive – South West One Service Review**

Earlier in the year the Corporate Scrutiny Committee received details of a review to be undertaken by the Corporate and Client Services Team of the services provided by Southwest One (SWO).

The review followed the SWO contract changes made by Somerset County Council (SCC), as well as the Avon and Somerset Police (ASP), taking back their Property Service.

The review had largely focused on those services and areas of services, which SCC (and ASP in the case of the Property Service) had taken back in-house.

Detailed discussions had taken place with SWO to understand the financial, operational and staffing implications of the services considered for return.

The review considered the following in detail for each service:-

- The benefits expected;
- Financial Assessment;
- Operational Assessment;
- Contractual Issues;
- Other options; and
- Risks.

The review has concluded that there was an overall business case to transfer back the following services to Taunton Deane:-

- (1) Property;
- (2) HR Advisory (including Learning and Development);
- (3) Finance Advisory;
- (4) Facilities Management;
- (5) Design and Print; and
- (6) Corporate Administration.

In addition the Council also needed to make changes to the performance mechanism within the contract resulting from changes agreed by SCC and to ensure it remained fit for purpose.

The main rationale for returning the services selected was that Taunton Deane was no longer benefiting from a shared services environment in wider expertise and resilience. The changes would also realign Taunton Deane's contract with SWO so that it was broadly for the same services as SWO's contract with SCC.

The final list of services had been arrived at following discussions with SWO and reflected both the Council's and SWO's priorities for service return.

The Council would be taking back financial risk in some areas, but believed



that this was outweighed by the overall benefits of the agreement.

If it was decided to terminate the services, the Council would need to finalise and agree the contract and financial changes with SWO.

The provisional high level timetable for exit would be:-

- November 2013 to January 2014– preparation for service transfer;
- December 2013 - complete commercial and contractual negotiations;
- 1 February 2014 – service transfer date;
- February to April 2014 – service integration.

A full change and transition plan would be developed in conjunction with SWO to support staff during the transfer.

The SWO Review report and recommendations were considered by the Corporate Scrutiny on 22 October 2013. Although Members recommended that the report and proposals for the return of further services should be referred to Full Council for a decision on 12 November 2013, an amendment to the recommendation to Full Council was requested which was shown in Confidential Appendix E to the report.

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

**Resolved** that:-

- (1) The Corporate Administration, Design and Print, Facilities Management, Finance Advisory, HR Advisory and Property Services elements of the Southwest One Contract be terminated and returned to the Council;
- (2) The use of funding as set out in the Confidential Appendix B to the report considered by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee to meet the one-off costs be authorised; and
- (3) Authority be delegated to the Corporate and Client Services Manager, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Chairman of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee (or nominated substitutes), to complete the necessary contractual discussions and agreement with Southwest One to facilitate the return of the above services, subject to the forecast budget requirement set out in the Confidential Appendix E to the report considered by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee.

## 12. **Motion - The Impact of Borrowing through High Cost Lenders**

Moved by Councillor Coles, seconded by Councillor A Wedderkopp.

“Taunton Deane Borough Council expresses deep concern about both the proliferation of high cost, short term lenders on our high streets and the

increasing number of people becoming trapped in a cycle of long-term debt due to extortionate interest rates charged by these companies.

Members reiterate their commitment to work to tackle this problem in Taunton and welcome the recent move to block access to websites of pay day and high interest lenders via the Council network.

However, with an estimated one million families a month taking out pay day loans, including many families in Taunton Deane, Council instructs the Chief Executive to lobby the Coalition Government to:-

- Look again at introducing a cap on interest rates charged by high cost, short term lenders;
- Introduce restrictions around the practice of 'rolling over' loans given the Office of Fair Trading's recent findings regarding the proportion of revenue generated through charges associated with this practice; and
- Re-designate such lenders with the Town and Country Planning Act so as to require planning permission to be granted before certain establishments can be converted into pay day or high interest loan shops.

Council further requests that officers produce a report for consideration by the Executive which explores the possibility of working with our partners to restrict the advertising of high interest or pay day lenders in public spaces – for example, on billboards and in bus stops.

This Council commits to extending its current activity in order to increase awareness of the potential impact of borrowing through high costs lenders. Council also reiterates its commitment to work with partner organisations to increase the accessibility and visibility of alternative mainstream financial institutions such as the Credit Union.”

The motion was put and was carried.

**13. Business requiring to be considered as a matter of urgency**

The Mayor certified that the item of business covered by Minute No.14 below was urgent and required a decision before the next scheduled meeting of the Council.

**14. Somerset County Council Area 1 Education Grounds Maintenance Contract**

Deane DLO currently carried out grounds maintenance works for Somerset County Council (SCC) in Area Two. This contract covered educational sites in Bridgwater, Burnham on Sea, Cheddar, Wells, Glastonbury, Frome, Wincanton, Yeovil and many of the surrounding villages.

This work was won under tender conditions and commenced on 1 January

2013. It was a five year contract with the possibility of a two year extension. Within the Area Two contract there was an option that Area One could be added when its current contract expired.

The Area One contract covered grounds maintenance within Taunton, Chard, Wellington and West Somerset. Deane DLO was operating this contract until it lost it under tender to an external contractor in January 2012. Due to the loss of this contract seven DLO employees were transferred to the other contractor under TUPE conditions. The contract was awarded for two years with the possibility of a one year extension.

The initial two year contract expired on the 31 December 2013 and was not being extended. Therefore SCC had asked whether Deane DLO would add this contract to the Area Two contract.

TUPE conditions would apply to any transfer/amalgamation of contracts. This would require Deane DLO to transfer in any employees associated with the delivery of this contract, estimated at up to seven. There was also a need to allocate a contract support officer to this large area of work. This was a role that could be allocated within current resources.

Since the transfer out of employees, the Terms and Conditions for everyone at Deane DLO had been changed. This would mean that employees being transferred into Taunton Deane would potentially be on different terms and conditions than our existing work force. Work would be undertaken with the HR Team to manage these changes and with a view to looking to standardise terms and conditions where possible across all DLO services.

The benefits of taking on the Area One contract were:-

- (a) It would bring in additional income, not just from the contracted routine maintenance work but other additional non tender work that would come to Deane DLO as the resident contractor;
- (b) It would increase staff results in fixed overheads/recharges being spread Across a wider employee base, which would benefit Deane DLO and Taunton Deane;
- (c) Deane DLO's position in Somerset would be consolidated; and
- (d) The possibility of creating shared services with West Somerset Council would be increased.

As this was a TUPE contract the Council was not able to accept the work without taking back the workforce. This meant that Deane DLO would have the employees ready to deliver the contract from day one.

**Resolved** that the increase in establishment required to take back the Somerset County Council Area 1 Education Grounds Maintenance Contract be approved.

(Councillors Mrs Baker, Ross and Stone left the meeting at 8.55 p.m.)

(The meeting ended at 9.43 p.m.)

## **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 - 10 December 2013

### Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control

(This matter is the responsibility of Vivienne Stock-Williams,  
Health and Wellbeing Board Representative)

#### 1. Executive Summary

That the Council endorses the Health and Wellbeing Board recommendations that:-

- The Council signs the Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control; and
- The Council supports the Somerset County Council (SCC) request to the Pensions Committee to reconsider its investment policy in relation to the tobacco industry.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1 Smoking is the single greatest cause of premature death and disease in Somerset, and the single largest factor in health inequalities. It is also a major driver of poverty. The move of public health to local government presents an opportunity for local authorities to lead local action to tackle smoking, and to ensure that the tobacco industry is not able to influence local tobacco control policy.
- 2.2 Every year in England more than 80,000 people die from smoking related diseases. This is more than the combined total of the next six causes of preventable deaths, including alcohol and drugs misuse. Smoking accounts for one third of all deaths from respiratory disease, over one quarter of all deaths from cancer, and about one seventh of all deaths from heart disease. On average a smoker loses 10 years of life. The earlier you stop, the less life you lose.
- 2.3 **Reducing smoking in our communities significantly increases household incomes and benefits the local economy.** The annual cost of smoking to the United Kingdom (UK) national economy has been estimated at £13.7 billion. A smoker consuming a pack of twenty cigarettes a day will spend around £2,500 a year on their habit. Based on 2009 prices, poorer smokers proportionately spend five times as much of their weekly household budget on smoking than do richer smokers. If poorer smokers quit they are more likely to spend the money they save in their local communities

- 2.4 **Reducing smoking amongst the most disadvantaged in our communities is the single most important means of reducing health inequalities.** About half of all smokers in England work in routine and manual occupations. Workers in manual and routine jobs are twice as likely to smoke as those in managerial and professional roles. The poorer and more disadvantaged you are, the more likely you are to smoke and as a result to suffer smoking-related disease. Ill-health caused by smoking is therefore much more common amongst the poorest and most disadvantaged in society.
- 2.5 **Smoking is an addiction largely taken up by children and young people.** Two thirds of smokers start before the age of 18, and across the UK more than 200,000 children aged between 11 and 15 start to smoke every year, even though it is illegal to sell cigarettes to anyone below the age of 18. Two thirds of smokers say they began before they were legally old enough to buy cigarettes. Research shows that by the age of 20, four fifths of smokers regret they ever started. Growing up around smoke puts children at a major health disadvantage in life. Children exposed to tobacco smoke are at much greater risk of cot death, meningitis, lung infections and ear disease, resulting in around 10,000 hospital admissions each year.
- 2.6 **The smoking epidemic.** The tobacco industry needs to recruit 200,000 smokers a year in the UK to maintain current levels of consumption, replacing those smokers who have stopped or who have died from diseases related to their addiction. The great majority of these new smokers will be under 18 years old. Although tobacco advertising is now banned in the UK, the tobacco multinationals use packaging of their products to try to attract young people in general, with specific brands aimed at target groups such as young women.
- 2.7 **The illicit trade in tobacco funds the activities of organised criminal gangs and gives children access to cheap tobacco.** HM Revenue and Customs estimate that in 2010/2011, the illicit market in cigarettes accounted for about 9% of the UK market, and the illicit market in hand-rolled tobacco accounted for about 38% of the UK market. The total amount of revenue lost to the Exchequer was estimated at £1.20 billion for cigarettes and £0.66 billion for hand-rolled tobacco. (All figures are mid-range estimates).

### **3. Framework Convention on Tobacco Control**

- 3.1 The Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) is the World's first Public Health Treaty, negotiated through the World Health Organisation. It has been ratified by more than 170 countries, including the UK. Key provisions include support for price and tax measures to reduce the demand for tobacco products; public protection from exposure to tobacco smoke; regulation of the contents of tobacco products; controlling tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship; measures to reduce tobacco dependence and promote cessation;



tackle licit trade in tobacco products; and end sales to children. Article 5.3 commits Parties to protecting their public health policies from the commercial and vested interests of the tobacco industry and the UK has explicitly committed to live up to this obligation in Chapter 10 of the Tobacco Control Plan for England.

- 3.2 The FCTC is binding on all levels of Government, including local government. The national tobacco control plan aims to reduce smoking prevalence, in line with the FCTC commitment “to reduce continually and substantially the prevalence of tobacco use.” Specifically, the national plan is to cut the number of smokers by 210,000 every year. Guidelines on compliance for the Parties to article 5.3 of the Convention include the following provisions:-

*“Government institutions and their bodies should not have any financial interest in the tobacco industry....”*

*“Parties that do not have a State-owned tobacco industry should not invest in the tobacco industry and related ventures....”*

- 3.3 The Somerset County Pension Fund, administered by the County Council through the Pensions Committee, invests in tobacco companies as part of its portfolio of investments. Approximately 1.4% of the fund is currently invested directly in tobacco stocks, amounting to some £19,200,000, producing around £800,000 per annum income.
- 3.4 Since the turn of the century there has been substantial investment in smoking cessation within the NHS, a service that is now commissioned by local authorities. The Government has also invested heavily in mass media campaigns to both reduce uptake and encourage cessation. Currently Somerset spends about the equivalent of two packs of cigarettes per smoker in the County on tobacco control and smoking cessation. Return on investment calculations show this spending is highly cost-effective for the local economy.
- 3.5 The Health and Social Care Act 2012, which transferred public health duties to local authorities includes this wording:-

*“Each local authority must take such steps as it considers appropriate for improving the health of the people in its area.*

- 3.6 The Health and Wellbeing Board, at its meeting on 26 September 2013, agreed that it is appropriate for improving public health in Somerset to divest from tobacco, and to ask SCC Full Council to request the Pensions Committee to reconsider its investment policy accordingly. The Board also asked the District Councils to seek a review of the investment policy.

#### **4. Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control**

4.1 The Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control (Appendix A) is a response to the enormous and on-going damage smoking does to our communities. It is a commitment to take action and a statement about a local authority's dedication to protecting local communities from the harm caused by smoking.

4.2 Further, it is an opportunity for local leadership. The best way to tackle smoking is through a comprehensive approach working with all partners. The Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control can be a catalyst for local action showing the way for partners both inside and outside the local councils.

4.3 This is a cross-party Declaration built on the same principles as the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change which is now endorsed by over 300 Councils across the country. At the time of writing the declaration has been signed by the following ten Councils:-

Somerset County Council  
Newcastle City Council,  
Manchester City Council  
Salford City Council  
Warwickshire County Council  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council  
Liverpool City Council  
Swindon Borough Council  
Bath and North East Somerset Council  
Bristol City Council

4.4 There is strong cross party consensus on tobacco control with every major party signed up to a comprehensive approach to reduce smoking. Everything contained in the Declaration has previously been committed to at a national level by all political parties. The Declaration is also strongly supported by the wider public health community including The Trading Standards Association, Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and the Association of Directors of Public Health as well as Public Health England, the Public Health Minister and the Chief Medical Officer.

4.5 The FCTC is binding on local government, so strictly speaking there is no need for Full Council to explicitly sign up to the Declaration which makes that commitment explicit. This option was rejected because the binding commitments are little known within local government. Signing the Declaration and the actions that follow will raise awareness and thus limit the likelihood of Taunton Deane Borough Council breaching UK Treaty obligations. Signing the Declaration will also show strong leadership on a key public health issue in the County.

- 4.6 The Pensions Committee has considered tobacco investments in the past, but not in the context of FCTC obligations. Given the conflicting objectives involved, it would be perverse not to ask the Pensions Committee to review its position in the light of the Council signing the Declaration.

## **5. Link to Corporate Aims**

- 5.1 As part of the Council's corporate aim to have a vibrant Social, Cultural and Leisure Environment, it includes an action to "Reduce health inequalities in Taunton Deane and address agreed health issues".

## **6. Finance Comments**

- 6.1 The declaration has been shared with the TDBC Financial Services Manager and there are no adverse financial impacts
- 6.2 SCC administers the pension fund on behalf of all the member employers, so the Pension Committee is quasi-autonomous. Following the SCC recommendation to support the declaration, the Pensions Committee will seek both professional and legal advice before taking any decision to divest. It is important to note that any decision to divest would not result in the loss of £800,000 of income to the SCC Pension Fund, but the marginal difference, if any, between dividends from tobacco and other investments.

## **7. Legal Comments**

- 7.1 Guidelines have been agreed which (while not binding in themselves) reflect the signing parties consolidated views of how best to implement the FCTC. The Guidelines draw on evidence and the practical experience of the Parties in handling tobacco industry tactics, and aim to ensure that efforts to protect tobacco control from the commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry are comprehensive and effective.
- 7.2 All Parties to the FCTC, including the UK, agreed the text of the Guidelines through consensus and that they should be implemented by all relevant branches of government. The agreed position is set out in paragraph 10 which states –

*"The guidelines are applicable to government officials, representatives and employees of any national, state, municipal, local or other public or semi/quasi-public institution or body within the jurisdiction of a Party, and to any person acting on their behalf. Any government branch (executive, legislative and judiciary) responsible for setting and implementing tobacco control policies and for protecting those policies against tobacco industry interests should be accountable."*

- 7.3 The guidelines to the FCTC can be found through the following link:-

[http://www.who.int/fctc/text\\_download/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/fctc/text_download/en/index.html)

- 7.4 Councils which sign up to the Declaration are committing to taking action on smoking, and will develop plans in partnership to reduce smoking prevalence, monitor progress and publish the results. They will also need to take steps to counter the influence exerted by the tobacco industry. This will require reviews of any relevant work programmes in which the tobacco industry has an involvement, such as the Keep Britain Tidy Group's 'Love Where You Live' campaign, sponsored by Imperial Tobacco, and any involvement with the tobacco industry by Trading Standards in relation to the illegal trade, as well as ensuring there are safeguards against direct or indirect tobacco company influence through lobbying or other means. These reviews will be undertaken by the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 7.5 If Full Council signs the declaration, we shall look at smoke-free play areas in Taunton Deane on a pilot basis - as successfully implemented in Sedgemoor. A modest amount of money is available through the HWBB tobacco workstream to provide signage and cover some costs of installation as well as undertake an analysis of the outcomes.

## **8. Environmental and Community Safety Implications**

- 8.1 There have been a number of studies that show links between smoking and alcohol and drug abuse both of which have further links to crime and antisocial behaviour. Smoking also presents a fire hazard with careless disposal of cigarettes being cited as the single biggest killer in house fires.

## **9. Equalities**

- 9.1 There is no negative equalities impact from signing the declaration. There will be a positive impact for people in communities who either stop or reduce smoking as a result of actions taken by TDBC and other parties to the agreement in Somerset. Statistics indicate that smoking prevalence is relatively high for people with severe mental illness, lower socio-economic groups, LGBT people and younger adults

## **10. Risk Management**

- 10.1 Any breach of Treaty obligations by the Council would not be actionable in the English courts, but would be a matter for resolution through Treaty mechanisms by the Parties to the Treaty. The risk of action is very low, but would be potentially damaging to the reputation of the Council and the UK. More likely is that civil society organisations would raise any breaches with central government, and the latter would seek assurances from the Council to prevent any further breaches.

## **11. Partnership Implications**

- 11.1 The County Council has now signed up to this and the Somerset Districts Councils present at the Health and Wellbeing Board (28 November 2013) indicated their intention to do the same. The stronger the partnership working on this, the greater the potential positive impact on local communities.

## **12. Recommendations**

- 12.1 The Council is requested to sign the Government Declaration on Tobacco Control.
- 12.2 The Council supports Somerset County Council's request to the Pensions Committee to reconsider its investment policy in relation to the tobacco industry.

### **Contact:**

Simon Lewis, Strategy and Performance Manager, TDBC

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01823 356397



# Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control

## We acknowledge that:

- Smoking is the single greatest cause of premature death and disease in our communities;
- Reducing smoking in our communities significantly increases household incomes and benefits the local economy;
- Reducing smoking amongst the most disadvantaged in our communities is the single most important means of reducing health inequalities;
- Smoking is an addiction largely taken up by children and young people, two thirds of smokers start before the age of 18;
- Smoking is an epidemic created and sustained by the tobacco industry, which promotes uptake of smoking to replace the 80,000 people its products kill in England every year; and
- The illicit trade in tobacco funds the activities of organised criminal gangs and gives children access to cheap tobacco.

## As local leaders in public health we welcome the:

- Opportunity for local government to lead local action to tackle smoking and secure the health, welfare, social, economic and environmental benefits that come from reducing smoking prevalence;
- Commitment by the government to live up to its obligations as a party to the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and in particular to protect the development of public health policy from the vested interests of the tobacco industry; and
- Endorsement of this declaration by the Department of Health, Public Health England and professional bodies.

## We commit our Council from this date .....to:

- Act at a local level to reduce smoking prevalence and health inequalities and to raise the profile of the harm caused by smoking to our communities;
- Develop plans with our partners and local communities to address the causes and impacts of tobacco use;
- Participate in local and regional networks for support;
- Support the government in taking action at national level to help local authorities reduce smoking prevalence and health inequalities in our communities;
- Protect our tobacco control work from the commercial and vested interests of the tobacco industry by not accepting any partnerships, payments, gifts and services, monetary or in kind or research funding offered by the tobacco industry to officials or employees;
- Monitor the progress of our plans against our commitments and publish the results; and
- Publicly declare our commitment to reducing smoking in our communities by joining the Smokefree Action Coalition, the alliance of organisations working to reduce the harm caused by tobacco.

## Signatories

Leader of Council

Chief Executive

Director of Public Health

## Endorsed by

Anna Soubry, Public Health Minister,  
Department of Health

Duncan Selbie, Chief Executive,  
Public Health England

Professor Dame Sally Davies, Chief Medical  
Officer, Department of Health

Dr Janet Atherton, President, Association  
of Directors of Public Health

Dr Lindsey Davies, President, UK Faculty  
of Public Health

Graham Jukes, Chief Executive, Chartered  
Institute of Environmental Health

Leon Livermore, Chief Executive, Trading  
Standards Institute



# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Full Council - 10 December 2013

### Monkton Heathfield Capacity Funding

#### Report of the Planning and Development Manager

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Mark Edwards)

#### 1. Executive Summary

In July 2013 The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) made available up to £500,000 to the Council through the Large Sites Programme Capacity Fund. Whilst the money is not ring fenced, the award was made on the basis that it is intended to support the development of the Monkton Heathfield housing development. The initial payment of £300,000 has been received with the additional payment being received at the start of the next financial year on the basis that satisfactory progress has been made. The purpose of this report is to seek Full Council's approval to spend the award in accordance with the key objectives that formed the basis of the Council's bid.

#### 2. Background

2.1 The urban extension at Monkton Heathfield comprises mixed use development including 1000 dwellings identified in the Taunton Deane Local Plan with a further 3500 in the period up until 2026 allocated in the Core Strategy. Whilst planning permission has been granted for the first phases and dwellings are now occupied, there remains considerable work and a number of issues that need to be overcome in order to ensure that delivery is provided at a rate that will make a substantial contribution to the Council's housing land supply in years to come, as well as bringing forward much needed employment land.

2.2 Capacity support has therefore been sought from DCLG to assist in unblocking potential hurdles to delivery. The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) are monitoring the award and support is also being received from the Advisory Team for Large Applications (ATLAS). This funding, as the name suggests, is aimed and providing the authority with additional capacity to tackle issues. It is not intended to deliver hard infrastructure.

#### 3. The Large Scale Programme Capacity Fund Award

3.1 The Capacity Fund bid was based upon five work streams:-

- Specialist valuation advice to support negotiations with landowners and developers to deliver the Western Relief Road;

- Specialist legal and CPO (compulsory purchase) advice to support negotiations with landowners and developers to deliver the Western Relief Road;
- Assessment of options for the design and alignment of the Western Relief Road and submission of a detailed planning application for the preferred option;
- Assessment by the Local Planning Authority of urban design and wider master planning issues (building on the work previously done by Urban Initiatives); and
- To retain specialist consultants to work with the Environment Agency and the developers to ensure that an appropriate and deliverable solution to providing replacement flood storage capacity and mitigating run off back to 'green field' is found.

3.2 Whilst the award is not ring fenced, progress will be monitored against these objectives and receipt of the second tranche will be dependant upon satisfactory progress being made. A sub-group of the Taunton Economic Advisory Board is being set up to oversee this project. It will comprise representatives from Taunton Deane Borough Council (Councillor Mark Edwards and Tim Burton), Somerset County Council, the HCA, the Environment Agency, the Local Enterprise Partnership and the developers

#### **4. Approval to spend based upon objectives**

4.1 As the award is not ring fenced, approval from Taunton Deane Members is required in order to spend this money in accordance with the various work streams identified. It is therefore suggested that Full Council authorises that the Large Sites Programme Capacity Fund money be spent on progressing the five work streams identified in paragraph 3.1 above. Briefs for the various pieces of work have been prepared. Any variation would require a further Full Council resolution.

#### **5. Finance Comments**

5.1 The funding of £300,000 has been received following a bid exercise based on the objective set out in 3.1. These objectives support the Quality and Sustainable Growth and Development aim. Should DCLG be happy that we have spent this funding according to the objectives then this will enable us to receive a further £200,000.

5.2 We do have a choice on how to spend this funding. Financially, given that the objectives support one of the Corporate Aims and could release further funding, the proposal to spend this funding on the objectives in 3.1 is sound and the recommendation is supported.

#### **6. Legal Comments**

6.1 No legal implications

#### **7. Links to Corporate Aims**



7.1 The successful delivery of the Monkton Heathfield development is critical to the Council's growth agenda.

## **8. Environmental and Community Safety Implications**

8.1 None

## **9. Equalities Impact**

9.1 This decision will not disproportionately effect any group or individual

## **10. Risk Management**

10.1 As stated above, failure to deliver the Monkton Heathfield urban extension would have a huge adverse impact the future growth of Taunton. More specifically, if the Council fails to spend the Large Sites Programme Capacity Funding appropriately, it will not have access to the additional £200,000 allocated.

## **11. Partnership Implications**

11.1 Delivery of this development will only be successful with input from other key agencies such as the Somerset County Council and the Environment Agency.

## **12. Recommendation**

Full Council is **recommended** to approve a supplementary estimate of £300,000, funded by the grant received from the Department of Communities and Local Government, for the spending of the Large Sites Capacity Fund award on progressing the five work streams identified in the bid and as set out in paragraph 3.1 of this report.

**Contact:** Tim Burton  
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# **Council Meeting – 10 December 2013**

## **Recommendations to Council from Tony Brown, Chairman, Independent Members' Allowances Panel**

### **Members' Allowances 2014/2015**

#### **Recommendations from the Members' Allowances Panel**

- 1.1 It has been a requirement of the Council's Constitution since 2001 for Members' Allowances to be independently reviewed on an annual basis.
- 1.2 The Members' Allowances Panel, currently comprises three independent members appointed following public advertisement.
- 1.3 The Panel has recently completed its annual review and now submits its report for consideration by Full Council.
- 1.4 From the research we have undertaken and from the information provided to us we feel we have a good understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the modern day Councillor.
- 1.5 The comparative data received this year has confirmed that many Councils in the South West, particularly those in Somerset have, like Taunton Deane, been reluctant to increase allowances by any great margin due to the financial conditions that continue to exist on a national basis.
- 1.6 As well as the comparative information on the level of allowances paid, we also obtained information regarding payment of the Carer's Allowance, and levels of travel and subsistence allowances.
- 1.7 We reached the following conclusions:-

#### **Carers Allowance**

- 2.1 There is little evidence that this is an issue with many of the current Members of the Council. However, we are firmly of the view that every opportunity should be given to any individual who might want to stand as a candidate. We are therefore recommending that the Carer's Allowance continues to reflect the National Minimum Wage.
- 2.2 Last year Full Council decided to increase the hourly rate to £6.19 which was the national rate payable from October 2012.
- 2.3 The rate has been increased again in recent months to the sum of £6.31 per hour. The Panel is therefore of the view that any claims made by Councillors for this allowance ought to again be paid at the current national rate.

## **Affordability**

3.1 We did not see it as part of our remit to consider the affordability of our recommendations. We have deliberately not received any advice on the financial implications of our recommendations, as it was felt that this was a consideration to be made solely by the Council itself.

## **Basic Allowances**

- 4.1 We would like to emphasise that in our opinion the Basic Allowance is not a full and proper recompense for the duties performed by a Councillor. It does not reflect a similar level of responsibility in the private sector. The recommendations reflect the fact that a proportion of any Councillor's work continues to be voluntary.
- 4.2 We believe that the Basic Allowance should continue to reflect the commitment in time necessary to be an effective local Councillor. We feel that the level of increase made five years ago resulted in a Basic Allowance that, in the main, continues to match that paid by other, similar sized Local Authorities. The average level of Basic Allowance paid to a Councillor in a local authority banded as a "District Council with Executive" is £4,474 compared to the £4,301 paid to the Taunton Deane Members.
- 4.3 We are very mindful of the requirement for Councillors to work in their communities and spend less time in formal meeting situations. However, as in previous years, we have also been mindful of the economic conditions that exist within the country. After five years of extremely pessimistic economic news, the news emerging from the Coalition Government since the turn of the year has become increasingly more positive.
- 4.4 In previous years any increase recommended by the Panel also took into account the current Retail Price Index (RPI) rate of inflation towards deciding the level of the Basic Allowance. In November, the RPI stood at 3.2%. It is interesting to note that since the last time Members' Allowances were increased (in 2009) the RPI has increased by well over 30%.
- 4.5 However, given the fact that the economy is beginning to show positive signs of recovery which resulted in a 1% pay award being made to Local Government employees from 1 April 2013, the Panel is of the view that a modest increase to the Basic Allowance for Councillors can be justified. The Panel has therefore decided to recommend a 1% increase for the forthcoming year to match the increase in salary provided to employees in the public services.

## **Special Responsibility Allowances**

- 5.1 The Corporate Scrutiny and Community Scrutiny Committees have an equal standing. The Chairman of each Committee has the same level of responsibility and therefore receives an equal Responsibility Allowance.
- 5.2 Five years ago the Panel set a level of allowance to recognise this level of

responsibility. However, from the comparative data available to the Panel it is apparent (as it was in previous years) that the allowance paid has been set at too low a level. The average paid to Scrutiny Chairmen at similar types of local authorities in the South West is in the region of £4,000. The Panel therefore repeats its previous view that the Responsibility Allowance paid to the Scrutiny Chairmen should be increased.

5.3 We have a good understanding of the responsibilities of those offices that attract Special Responsibility Allowances. The “Cabinet” system has meant greater responsibility and time commitment for those given Executive roles. It is also evident from the figures of the other authorities that there is now a general recognition of the extra responsibilities that such Councillors have. For the same reasons outlined in the previous section of the report concerning Basic Allowances, we feel that the level of Special Responsibility Allowances, other than the Scrutiny Chairmen, should also be increased by 1%.

5.4 We also looked again at the level of allowance for the Chairmen of the Regulatory Committees and feel these too should benefit by a 1% uplift.

### **Mayor and Deputy Mayor Allowance**

6.1 Although it does not form part of the Members’ Allowances Scheme, the Council is entitled by virtue of Sections 3 and 5 of the Local Government Act 1972 to pay an allowance which enables the Mayor to meet the expenses of his/her office.

6.2 The Panel noted the very busy nature of the role of Mayor. With more than three hundred engagements each year, the value of the Mayor representing the ‘public face’ of the Council should not be under-estimated.

6.3 We are satisfied that the overall level of allowance currently paid to the Borough’s First Citizen should fully reflect the duties of those roles. A 1% increase is therefore recommended.

### **Approved Duties**

7.1 We have taken a detailed look at the current list of Approved Duties. We are content that this list which is set out in Appendix A is satisfactory.

### **Parish Council Allowances**

8.1 Existing powers to pay Parish Councillors allowances were repealed at the end of 2003 and replaced with a new system which involves this Panel.

8.2 Under this system, although a Parish Council would determine the level of allowances payable itself, it has to have regard to the advice received from the Panel.

8.3 Allowances payable include a basic ‘participation allowance’ which could be paid to the Chairman only or to all Members and ‘travelling and subsistence allowance’ which can be claimed for duties within the parish as well as those

outside.

- 8.4 As far as the participation allowance was concerned, the general view from Parish Councils nationally was that they wished to retain the existing practice whereby Parish Councillors were 'unpaid'. The advice we have received from the Parish Liaison Officer is that Parish Councils within Taunton Deane are currently not seeking any kind of allowance. We feel therefore, that there is no need to consider the matter until a formal request for advice as to the level of allowance that should be paid is received.
- 8.5 As well as seeking the Panel's views on the level of travelling and subsistence that should be payable to Parish Councillors, we were also previously asked to comment in relation to proposals for Parish Councils to meet the cost of minor expenses incurred by its members, such as the replacement of computer consumables used in respect of parish business
- 8.6 We agreed with the deliberations of the Panel in previous years and have come to the conclusion that:-
- (a) no advice on a level of Participation Allowance for Parish Councils be offered by the Panel until a formal request is received from a Parish Council;
  - (b) allowances for travelling and subsistence should be identical to those payable to Borough Councillors and that the same level of such allowances should apply for all Parishes throughout Taunton Deane; and
  - (c) it would be in order for Parish Councillors to seek the reimbursement of the actual cost of items used for Parish Council business, such as computer consumables, or a nominal sum, provided such payments were approved by the Parish Council.

### **Travel and Subsistence Allowances**

- 9.1 The Regulations allow Local Authorities to determine their own travel and subsistence allowances after having regard to the recommendation of their independent Members' Allowances Panels.
- 9.2 As far as mileage rates are concerned, the Panel considers that car expenses should be limited to the tax free amount allowed by the Inland Revenue which currently stands at 45p per mile which is applicable whatever the size of car engine, because the size of car was a matter for the individual.
- 9.3 With regard to subsistence allowances, the Panel feel that the subsistence rates should be the same as those paid to the Council's officers. These have not recently been reviewed nationally and the Panel is of the view that the level of subsistence allowances payable to Councillors should remain the same.

### **Pensions for Councillors**

- 10.1 The Government has previously given Local Authorities the power to admit Councillors to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

- 10.2 The Regulations require the Members' Allowances Panels to make binding recommendations on which Councillors may be eligible for access to the LGPS.
- 10.3 The independent Panel can make recommendations as to which Members (under 70 years of age) should be entitled to membership of the Scheme and whether the Basic Allowance or the Special Responsibility Allowance or both should be made pensionable.
- 10.4 Our view continues to remain unchanged. We acknowledge that the current level of Basic Allowance might not make membership of the Scheme worthwhile for many Councillors. However, we agree with the principle that all Councillors should be treated equally on this issue. Every opportunity should be taken to encourage individuals to stand as candidates and an enhancement of the overall remuneration package for Councillors will help this aim. We continue to feel, therefore, that the Scheme should be made available to all Councillors who want to take advantage of its benefits. We do not – at this stage – intend to make any change to our previous recommendation, although the situation relating to Pensions for Councillors could well change before the next review of Members' Allowances is undertaken for the reasons set out below.
- 10.5 The Panel was aware last year that the Coalition Government had announced its intention to scrap Pensions for Councillors. If this proposal is introduced, Councillors would not be able to join the scheme after April 2014 and Councillors who were already members would not be able to accrue any further benefits after that date.
- 10.6 The Government conducted a consultation exercise back in April in connection with the proposal to abolish Councillor Pensions. At the time of writing this report, the outcome of the consultation has not been made public and no further announcements from the Government have been received. This issue will therefore be kept under review by the Panel.

### **Renunciation**

- 11.1 The Panel noted that a Member may, by notice in writing, elect to forgo any part of his/her entitlement to an allowance and associated benefits.

### **Time Limit**

- 12.1 As previously, the Panel recommends that Councillors should submit their allowance claims regularly and we suggest a time limit of six months for backdated claims.

### **The New Standards Regime**

- 13.1 On 30 June 2012, following the coming into effect of the Localism Act, the Standards Committee in its former guise comprising Councillors, independent members and parish representatives was abolished.

- 13.2 The Panel noted that the one of the effects of this was that the allowance that had been paid to the independent members had now ceased.
- 13.3 The Panel also noted that since the abolition of the former Committee, the Council had put in place arrangements for a replacement Standards Committee to be formed in accordance with regulations issued by the Coalition Government. The Committee comprised five Councillors from whom the Chairman would be appointed, two non-voting Parish representatives and three independent non-voting co-optees.
- 13.4 It was also noted that an Independent Person had been appointed to advise the Committee on matters relating to any future complaints against Councillors and that at a Full Council meeting in July 2012, the decision had been taken to pay an annual allowance to the Independent Person equivalent to the sum that had been paid per annum (£500) to the former independent Chairman of the Committee.
- 13.5 At the time of last year's review of Members' Allowances the new Standards Committee had yet to meet. Therefore, in the absence of information as to the new Committee's operation and the extent of the responsibilities of the Councillor who would be appointed Chairman, the Panel felt unable to offer any guidance as to whether a Special Responsibility Allowance should be recommended.
- 13.6 However, it was reported to the Panel that the new Standards Committee was now fully operational and that the Chairman of this Committee was undertaking a similar range of responsibilities as the other Committee Chairmen.
- 13.7 The Panel is therefore of the view that a Special Responsibility Allowance is warranted but, due to the limited membership of the Committee and its relatively narrow terms of reference when compared with the other mainstream Committees, an allowance of £600 per annum is felt to be an appropriate sum for the duties involved.

### **Recommendations in full**

- 14.1 The Panel therefore submits the following recommendations for consideration by Full Council. A summary of the proposed changes is set out in bold print at paragraph 15.1.
1. The existing Members' Allowance Scheme be discontinued and replaced with the following scheme with effect from 1 April 2014 (The current scheme for 2013/2014 is in brackets).
- Basic Allowance (payable to all Members) (£4,301)      **£4,344**
  - Leader (£12,098)      **£12,219**
  - Executive Councillors (7) (£4,705)      **£4,752**
  - Chairman, Planning Committee (£4,705)      **£4,752**

• Chairman, Licensing Committee (£1,344)	£1,357
• Chairman, Corporate Governance Committee (£1,344)	£1,357
• Chairman, Corporate Scrutiny Committee (£2,700)	£3,000
• Chairman, Community Scrutiny Committee (£2,700)	£3,000
• Chairman, Standards Committee	£600
• Chairmen of Task and Finish Groups	£250
• Independent Person, Standards Committee	£500
• Mayor (£8,998)	£9,087
• Deputy Mayor (£1,644)	£1,660

2. (i) Travelling and subsistence allowances shall be payable to Councillors when incurred by them in the necessary carrying out of those official activities as a Councillor as appear on the list of “approved duties” set out in Appendix A to this report.
- (ii) The mileage rate for cars to be 45p. The rate for motorcycles to be 24p per mile and bicycles to be 20p per mile.
- (iii) Subsistence rates as set out below:-

Breakfast	£6.72
Lunch	£9.24
Tea	£3.64
Evening Meal	£11.44

3. Payment for the care of Councillors’ dependents be increased to the rate of £6.31 per hour (the current National Minimum Wage) and to be in accordance with the following conditions:-
- (a) Councillors shall be reimbursed, up to a specified maximum limit, for costs actually incurred in providing care for any of the following who are at the time part of the claimant’s household living with him/her and who would normally be looked after by him/her, whilst the claimant is undertaking an “approved duty”.
- i. children under the age of 14;
  - ii. elderly person (aged 60 and over);
  - iii. people with disabilities;
  - iv. people with learning difficulties.
- (b) In addition to living as part of the claimant’s household the dependent must be unable to be left unsupervised by the carer.
- (c) The carer must not be someone who ordinarily lives with the claimant as part of the household.
- (d) For the purposes of (a) above:



- (i) “approved duty” would be a duty under the Council’s scheme;
    - (ii) the maximum hourly rate repayable should be consistent with the statutory minimum wage
  - (e) The claimant must produce a receipt for payments he/she has made to the carer and must sign a certificate which, amongst other things, will state that the costs were properly and necessarily incurred in the course of, or to permit, him/her undertaking his/her duties as a Councillor.
- 4.
- (a) No advice on a level of Participation Allowance for Parish Councillors be offered by the Panel until a formal request be received from a Parish Council;
  - (b) Allowances for travelling and subsistence be identical to those payable to Borough Councillors and the same level of such allowances should apply for all Parishes throughout Taunton Deane;
  - (c) Parish Councillors be permitted to seek reimbursement of the actual cost of items used for Parish Council business, such as computer consumables, or a nominal sum, provided such payments were approved by the Parish Council.
- 5.
- (a) That all Members of the Council be entitled to be members of the Local Government Pension Scheme;
  - (b) Both the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowance be treated as amounts in respect of which such pensions are payable.

### 15.1 Summary of Recommendations

- **A 1% increase to the Basic Allowance;**
- **A 1% increase to the Special Responsibility Allowances except that paid to the two Scrutiny Chairmen;**
- **A £300 increase in the Special Responsibility Allowance paid to the Chairmen of the Community Scrutiny and Corporate Scrutiny Committees;**
- **A 1% increase in the Mayor and Deputy Mayor Allowances;**
- **The introduction of a Special Responsibility Allowance of £600 per annum for the Chairman of the Standards Committee; and**

- **To increase the rate paid to carers of Councillor's dependents from £6.19 per hour to £6.31 per hour, to reflect the National Minimum Wage.**

Tony Brown  
Chairman  
on behalf of the Members' Allowances Panel

# Appendix A

## Recommended List of Approved Duties

Approved duties for the payment of travelling and subsistence allowances:

- (a) meetings of the Council, the Executive, its Boards, Panels, Committees, Working Parties and sub groups;
- (b) meetings of County Council's committees where the Councillor has been appointed by Taunton Deane as a member or representative;
- (c) any national conference authorised by the Council and involving an overnight stay;
- (d) meetings of other bodies to which the Council make appointments (representatives of the Council on outside bodies);
- (e) the following types of meetings:-
  - briefing meetings convened in The Deane House for members by an officer;
  - Council organised induction/training seminars;
  - agenda setting meetings;
  - meetings on Council business with officers, MPs, VIPs and others holding official positions;
  - Informal Council;
  - civic functions (twinning ceremonies, Britain in Bloom awards, Design Awards, etc);
  - meetings of Parish Councils or Community Associations where the Councillor attends as a representative of the Council (not as a member of the Parish Council or Community Association);
  - meetings within a ward, generated by business with a constituent (any such claims be supported by completion of a form indicating the area of the journey and the nature of the business);
  - site visits by members of the Planning Committee
- (f) such other duties approved by the Council.

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Council Meeting – 10 December 2013

### Part I

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

## (i) Councillor John Williams

### (a) Earmarked Reserves Review

As at 31 March 2013, the total of General Fund Revenue Earmarked Reserves was £6,517,000. This is equivalent to 48.8% of the Council's Net Revenue Budget, which is too high and needs to be reduced.

A fundamental review has therefore been undertaken of all General Fund Revenue Earmarked Reserves, with a view to all balances being returned to the General Fund Reserve unless:-

- A clear commitment / obligation exists to spend the money within a defined time period; or
- It is a "trading" reserve – which exists purely to support the requirement for certain trading services to break-even over a three year period.

To identify which General Fund Earmarked Reserves' balances could be returned to the General Fund Reserve, each Reserve holder was interviewed and asked to provide evidence of how the Reserve balance was planned to be used.

These interviews identified that, of the £6,517,000 balance held as at 31 March 2013, all but £3,000,000 of the General Fund Revenue Earmarked Reserves is expected to be spent by 31 March 2014.

Of the £3,000,000 projected balance, it has been agreed with Reserve Holders that £498,100 will be returned to the General Fund Reserve immediately following Council's approval. This £498,100 includes the following amounts over £10,000:-

- £250,000 – Self-Insurance Fund. It has been recommended by the independent broker that the Council only needs a balance of £500,000 rather than £750,000 in its Self-Insurance Fund;
- £117,000 – Core Council Review – Property Services. This Reserve was created to fund an additional £15,000 per annum of pension contributions that arose directly from the restructure of Property Services;
- £45,000 – Energy Efficiency Reserve – This is an historic reserve which

was created as part of an insulation scheme undertaken in 2005, but which has not been spent since;

- £25,000 – Stable Payroll Pension Reserve. Historically, this Reserve has been used to manage the risk on Pension Fund contributions, but it has been agreed that this risk should be managed within the General Fund Reserve;
- £24,000 – Welfare and Finance Reform. This Reserve was created to mitigate against the negative effects of Welfare Reform but is no longer required;
- £12,000 – Healthy Workplace. This Reserve, used to fund initiatives to reduce sickness absence, currently stands at £27,000. It is felt this could be reduced to £15,000.

In addition to the above Earmarked Reserves being returned, the Council has recently received the Council's share of the trading surplus of South West Audit Partnership (SWAP). This will increase the General Fund Reserve by £16,000.

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

- (1) A budget return of £498,100 to the General Fund Reserve of balances currently held in Earmarked Reserves be agreed; and
- (2) A budget return of £16,000 to the General Fund Reserve, relating to the South West Audit Partnership trading surplus, be also agreed.

## **(b) Revised Capital Programme Budget Estimates 2013/2014 – 2017/2018**

The Executive has recently received updated information on the Council's capital investment priorities and funding position.

In February 2013, Full Council approved an interim capital programme pending a more fundamental review of Taunton Deane's capital spending priorities, including infrastructure requirements. This was felt appropriate to ensure the limited amount of funding available to the Council was targeted at the true priority areas. In order to do this, a different approach was needed.

A comprehensive review of the Council's capital spending needs has now been undertaken, taking into account growth agenda projects, the more traditional non growth capital projects and infrastructure needs that will not be met via the Community Infrastructure Levy regime. This has captured the scale of the spending "need" ahead and has provided clarity as to what projects should and should not be progressed in light of the limited amount of funding available.

In recognition of the challenges ahead, the Directors have reviewed and prioritised the entire list of capital schemes within the following categories:-

**Table 1**

Priority	
1	Business Continuity (corporate/organisational)
2	Statutory Service Investment (to get to statutory minimum/contractual/continuity)
3	Growth (Top 5)
4	Transformation
5	Others

This priority list reflects the issues flagged by Members as being important during the Corporate Business Plan review process. In addition to the above prioritisation, the Directors also propose the general principle that schemes will only be supported if they are “invest to save”. This reflects the need for the Council to invest in schemes that will improve the Council’s revenue position in light of the pressure on the General Fund Revenue Budget.

The results of the prioritisation review are shown in the tables below. Tables 2 and 3 show the costs of the continuing non-growth schemes for both general schemes and Deane DLO schemes. These schemes have traditionally been funded from Revenue Contributions to Capital Outlay or Government Grants. For 2013/2014 these schemes have already been approved but there have been no approvals beyond this financial year.

**Table 2: Existing Continuing Non-Growth Schemes**

	Annual £k	Priority				
		1	2	3	4	5
PC Refresh	60	30				
Members IT Equipment	4	4				
Waste Containers (3 years)	50		50			
Grants to Clubs	46					46
Play Equip Grants to Parishes	20					20
Play Equip - Replacement	20		20			
Disabled Facilities Grants	490		310			180
Enabling (affordable housing)	425					425
Taunton & Bridgwater Canal	10					10
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,125</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>681</b>

It is proposed that the Deane DLO schemes should be funded from DLO resources so they effectively become ‘self-financing’. The continuing DLO annual capital requirements are shown below. Funding has already been approved for 2013/2014 but there is currently no funding approved beyond this financial year.

**Table 3: Existing Ongoing Non-Growth DLO Schemes**

	Annu £k	Priority				
		1	2	3	4	5
DLO Vehicles	180		180			
DLO Plant and Equipment	23		23			
<b>Total</b>	<b>203</b>		<b>203</b>			

The following table shows the bids for new non-growth schemes. These span the next five years and include one off schemes and yearly schemes.

**Table 4: New Non-Growth Schemes**

	£k	Priority				
		1	2	3	4	5
Wellington Cemetery	50					50
Taunton Cemetery	100					100
Crematorium Cabinet	15					15
Chapel Roof	180		180			
Private Housing - Landlord Accreditation / Loans etc	1,735					1,735
Private Housing - Category 1 Hazards	130					130
Website Development	30				30	
Cycle Path (Hankridge)	50					50
ICT Infrastructure	?	?				
Customer Access / Accommodation	?				?	
Deane House Improvements	?				?	
B Plan – Trans & Restructuring	?				?	
Gypsy Provision	?					?
West Somerset Project*						
DLO Relocation – subject to BC						
DLO Refurb – subject to BC						
Deane Helpline – subject to BC						
	<b>2,290</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>2,080</b>

Based on the above prioritisation exercise it is suggested that schemes within either Priority 1 or 2 should be funded. This will mean that £180,000 of the £2,081,000 'general' available funding will be used leaving a remaining general funding balance of £1,901,000.

The Council receives funding through Section 106 Agreements that must be spent on Affordable Housing Schemes. Through the prioritisation, affordable housing has been allocated a Priority 5. Nevertheless, it is recommended that Members agree the principal that any funding received for affordable housing shall be approved to spend on affordable housing.

Noted that the growth schemes were overall allocated a Priority 3 – see Table 1 above. Within this priority group a number of potential investment needs have been considered and ranked in order to provide a steer on which schemes should be supported as funds become available. These schemes are set out in the following table:-

**Table 5: Growth Schemes**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>14/15 £k</b>	<b>15/16 £k</b>	<b>16/17 £k</b>	<b>17/18+ £k</b>	<b>Total £k</b>
Firepool Access	1	1,500	0	0	0	1,500
Firepool Infrastructure and Planning	2	0	3,500	0	0	3,500
Toneway Corridor Improvements (incl Creech Castle)	3	23,120	0	0	0	23,120
J25 Improvements	4	0	0	9,240	0	9,240
Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Work	5	0	0	0	15,000	15,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>24,620</b>	<b>3,500</b>	<b>9,240</b>	<b>15,000</b>	<b>52,360</b>

The top Growth priority is Firepool Access as Members have previously expressed a wish to progress this.

Having funded Priority 1 and 2 non-growth schemes, a balance of unallocated general funding of £1,901,000 and £519,000 of Growth Reserve exists.

It is reasonable to assume that the top growth scheme identified above could be progressed within existing funding streams. This will reduce the unallocated general funding to £920,000 and the Growth Reserve to £0 (pending receipt of any 2014/2015 New Homes Bonus).

It is important that this sum is not fully allocated at this point, considering the potential capital investment requirements included in the Joint Management and Shared Services Business Case, and other Priority 1 and 2 Projects from the non-growth area.

If the prioritisation methodology is accepted, the Priority 1 and 2 schemes will be funded along with the Affordable Housing Schemes and the top Growth Scheme. The additions to the capital programme and funding of additions will therefore be as shown in the table below:-

**Table 6: Planned additions to the capital programme**

<b>Project</b>	<b>14/15 £k</b>	<b>15/16 £k</b>	<b>Total £k</b>
Chapel Roof	90	90	180
Affordable Housing (S106 / developer contributions)	450	174	624
Firepool Access	1,500	0	1,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,040</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>2,304</b>
<b>Funded by:</b>			
Capital Receipts	594	90	684
Growth Point Capital	157	0	157
Firepool Receipts	320	0	320
Growth and Regeneration Reserve (NHB)	519	0	519
Affordable Housing Receipts (S106/developer contributions)	450	174	624
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,040</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>2,304</b>



If the schemes proposed are approved, the remaining funding will be as shown in the table below:-

**Table 7: Remaining Funding**

<b>General Fund</b>	<b>Total £k</b>	<b>Funding Used £k</b>	<b>Remaining Total £k</b>
<b>Affordable Housing</b>			
Affordable Housing Receipts (S106 / developer contributions)	<b>624</b>	<b>(624)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>DLO</b>			
DLO Vehicle Sales	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Growth Funding</b>			
Growth and Regeneration Reserve (NHB)	<b>519</b>	<b>(519)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>General Funding</b>			
Capital Reserve	393	0	393
Growth Point Grant	157	(157)	0
Capital Receipts	1,014	(684)	330
General Fund "non additional" RTB	197		197
Firepool Receipts	320	(320)	0
<b>Sub Total: General Funding</b>	<b>2,081</b>	<b>(1,161)</b>	<b>920</b>
<b>TOTAL Remaining Funding</b>	<b>3,231</b>	<b>(2,304)</b>	<b>927</b>

Following the decision of Full Council on 12 November 2013 to proceed with the West Somerset Project, the above total will be reduced by £800,000 to fund the likely transition costs involved. The above balance will therefore be reduced to £127,000.

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

- (1) The Prioritisation Framework set out in this report be supported;
- (2) The Supplementary Budget in the General Fund Capital Programme of £2,304,000 to fund Priority 1 and 2 Non-Growth Schemes, funded Affordable Housing Schemes and the highest ranked Growth Scheme as set out above be approved; and
- (3) The principle that future external funding received specifically for affordable housing should be allocated to affordable housing projects in line with funding conditions and automatically added to the Capital Programme be also approved.

### **(c) Fees and Charges 2014/2015**

The Executive has given consideration to the proposed fees and charges for 2014/2015 for the following services:-

- Cemeteries and Crematorium – It is proposed to increase the main cremation fee by £19 (2.8%) to £627 and make minor increases for other charges within the service. This did not reflect the % increase assumed within the Medium

Term Financial Plan for fees and charges. A lower figure has been used to keep charges competitive in light of the new crematorium that has been constructed in Pawlett;

- Waste Services – The Somerset Waste Partnership proposes to increase only one of its charges - the Garden Waste Service Charge from £45 to £46.50. It is anticipated this would generate additional income of £13,160;
- Land Charges – It is proposed to keep Land Charges fees the same as the current year. The Regulations require local authorities to ensure that the price charged is an accurate reflection of the costs involved in providing the function and not for creating surpluses;
- Housing – The proposal is to increase charges by 3.2% (September Retail Price Index (RPI)) with the following exceptions:-
  - (1) Garage rents for private tenants and owner occupiers to be increased by 5%; and
  - (2) Hire charges for the sheltered scheme meeting halls and hire charges for sheltered scheme guest rooms to remain the same. This is again to increase take up of the facilities.
- Licensing – Fees for applications under the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005 were set by statute so increases under local arrangements were not possible. For those fees where local discretion exists they could not exceed the parameters set out within the appropriate statutes.

Guided by case law and through the results of the costs analysis detailed in the report, suggested fee levels were recommended to achieve, as far as possible, full recovery for the projected costs to the Council of unfettered administration and supervision of the various licensing regimes.

Noted that it would be unlawful for the Council to deliberately set fees to make a profit and any over (or under) recovery would need to be redressed in future fee levels.

In order to ensure fees levied were reasonable and lawful, consideration could only be given to setting fees at the level suggested or at a level lower than those set out within the report thereby subsidising those businesses regulated by the Council's Licensing Service.

- Planning – It was proposed to increase the discretionary pre-application advice and charges by 10%. The majority of authorities now charged for this service, with the income being reinvested in the service. In setting the charges there needed to be a balance set between recouping the full cost of the service provided and encouraging developers to engage with the Council as early as possible. The charges continued to represent a tiny fraction of the cost of carrying out any form of development.

- Environmental Health – It was proposed to increase the charges for Pest Control by 11% to better reflect the costs of providing the service – even though this would still not achieve cost recovery;
- Recovery of Court Costs – Reasonable costs could be added to debts if recovery was assisted through the Magistrate’s Court. The charge for a summons would remain at £63.50 and the charge for a liability order would remain at £10;
- Deane Helpline – It was proposed to increase the current charge for private customers by 10% - from £4.54 to £4.99 per week. The charge to Council Tenants would be frozen until a discount of £1 per week was achieved.
- Building Control - No changes to current charges were proposed for 2014/2015. This will ensure the provision of a price to customers for the Building Regulation Service which is a direct reflection of the Council’s costs.
- Charging for Housing Act Notices and Immigration Visits - The Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership currently charged £131.95 for the service of formal Housing Act 2004 Notices, namely Improvement and Prohibition Notices. The Partnership also charged £129 for Immigration visits to provide evidence that applicants had suitable housing accommodation within the United Kingdom.

No increase in these charges is proposed.

The results of previous public consultation events have clearly indicated that the public prefer to see increases in fees and charges, rather than in Council Tax, as a way for the Council to raise income.

Therefore, where possible, fees have been increased to take these views into account. The Corporate Scrutiny Committee also considered this matter at its meetings on 21 and 25 November 2013 and its comments have been taken into consideration.

It is therefore **recommended** that the fees and charges for 2014/2015 in respect of Cemeteries and Crematorium, Waste Services, Land Charges, Housing, Licensing, Planning, Environmental Health, Recovery of Court Costs, Deane Helpline, Building Control and Housing Act Notices/Immigration Visits be agreed.

## **(ii) Councillor Mark Edwards**

### **(a) Local Development Scheme 2013**

The Executive has recently considered a report concerning the Local Development Scheme (LDS) 2013.

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended by the Localism Act

2011, requires Local Planning Authorities to prepare a LDS and keep it updated.

The LDS is a rolling project management plan for the preparation of planning policy documents – often referred to as Local Development Documents - that will direct future planning decisions in Taunton Deane.

Unlike previous versions of the LDS, the document is no longer required to be submitted to the Secretary of State for approval. It now has to be displayed on the Council's web site following a resolution by Full Council.

When the LDS was considered by the Local Development Framework, Members suggested that, if it is possible to do, any future revisions to the LDS should be agreed by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation following consideration by the Steering Group, rather than taken back each time to Full Council.

The LDS identifies the relevant Development Plan Documents for Taunton Deane, and other related documents such as the Community Infrastructure Levy and the Authorities Monitoring Report and the timescale for their delivery.

**Resolved** that Full Council be recommended to:-

- (a) Adopt the Local Development Scheme and timetable for the preparation of planning documents; and
- (b) Agree that any future changes to the Local Development Scheme be agreed through the Local Development Framework Steering Group and Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation.

## **(b) Introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy in Taunton Deane – Examiner's Report and Adoption**

Consideration has recently been given to the proposed adoption and subsequent introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Following consultation on the Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule, a Draft Charging Schedule was prepared and submitted for independent Examination on 24 July 2013. The draft Instalment Policy was also put forward for comments at the CIL Examination.

Subject to two suggested minor modifications, the Examiner has endorsed the Council's proposals for the levels of CIL within Taunton Deane and the zones within which they will apply. This includes the proposed zero rates for all development in Taunton and Wellington Town Centres and for the wider urban area of Wellington.

Overall, the Examiner concluded that the Council's proposed Charging Schedule provides an appropriate basis for the collection of the levy and the charges were set at a level which would not put the overall development of the area at risk.

It will be important that systems are in place and functioning ahead of CIL implementation. It is therefore proposed to appoint a CIL Administration Officer early in 2014. Members have previously agreed to fund this post for two years on the basis that the costs will be recouped from CIL receipts.

The process of preparing to introduce CIL will take some time – for example, owing to the need to install computer software to issue documents and process information and to train staff in its use. It is therefore proposed that CIL is introduced in Taunton Deane with effect from 1 April 2014. An announcement to this effect will also provide the development industry with time to adapt to this forthcoming change.

**Resolved** that Full Council be recommended to approve:-

- (1) The introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy in Taunton Deane from 1 April 2014;
- (2) The Charging Schedule, set out in the report submitted to the Executive, which incorporates the modifications recommended by the Examiner; and
- (3) The proposed Instalment Policy which is also set out in the report.

### **(iii) Councillor Mrs Vivienne Stock-Williams**

#### **(a) Review of Council Tax Support Scheme for 2014/2015**

On 1 April 2013 Council Tax Benefit (CTB) was abolished and replaced with a locally designed "Council Tax Support Scheme" (CTS). Each billing authority is responsible for designing and approving a CTS scheme for its area.

Only 90% of funding previously granted for CTB was given for localised CTS. However, those of pensionable age were protected from any reduction in support, so cuts could only apply to people of working age.

Last December, Full Council adopted the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for the 2013/2014 financial year. Consideration therefore has to be given to the scheme for the financial year 2014/2015 and that needs to be approved by 31 January 2014.

Central Government has stated that localised CTS funding will be unchanged in cash terms from its 2014/2015 total level. However funding for localised CTS is incorporated in the total Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS) and is not separately identified.

This is the grant Taunton Deane receives from Central Government as a contribution towards the cost of services the Council provides. Indicative figures show that the LGFS will reduce not only in 2014/2015 but in future years too. Therefore, it is possible Councillors might wish to consider applying cuts to localised CTS spending.

A decision not to change the money paid out by CTS will leave a greater cut in the remaining LGFS. A decision to decrease the money paid out by CTS by the same proportion the LGFS is reduced could mean significant cuts in CTS available to working age recipients. For example, the indicative figures show the LGFS will be cut by 14.3% in

2015/2016. If Members decide to decrease the money paid out by the localised CTS at the same level, this will reduce CTS for working age recipients by £876,000.

Such a reduction should be considered against the cuts already applied to people of working age when CTB was replaced with CTS on 1 April 2013.

In 2012/2013, CTB of £3,540,000 was paid to working age recipients. From 1 April 2013, CTS for this group reduced to £2,710,000 - a cut of approximately 23%. Cutting CTS by £876,000 in 2015/2016 will reduce help available to working age recipients to £1,830,000. This equates to a cut of 48% in comparison to help previously available through CTB in 2012/2013.

Such a reduction in support will impact upon working age people already affected by significant cuts through Welfare Reform, for example the overall Benefit Cap and removal of the spare room subsidy ("bedroom tax").

If the Council is to amend localised CTS, public consultation has to be undertaken on any proposed amendments before the scheme can be adopted. No consultation is required if it is decided to retain the existing CTS scheme for 2014/2015.

The funding for CTS within the 2013/2014 LGFS includes a proportion relating to parishes and Special Expenses. The Council has previously decided to pass on a proportion of this funding to parishes to reflect their reduction in funding as a result of CTS. For 2013/2014, a grant was given to parishes based on the tax base reduction attributable to CTS in each parish multiplied by their 2012/2013 Band D Charge.

The Funding Settlement for 2014/2015 and beyond will not separately identify the proportion of funding for CTS for any preceptors. The Council therefore needs to determine the policy for providing any CTS Grant funding to parishes for 2014/2015, and it is recommended this is approved at this stage to give the Council and parishes some certainty for financial planning and budget setting purposes.

For 2014/2015 there are two proposed options, based on available information:-

**Option 1:** Use the same formula that was used for 2013/2014, so each parish grant for CTS will be calculated as CTS Tax Base Adjustment x 2012/2013 Parish Band D Tax rate; and

**Option 2:** Use the same formula that was used for 2013/2014, but apply the same reduction to parish grant funding as that experienced by Taunton Deane in the Funding Settlement. Provisional figures indicate a 14.3% cut in funding for 2014/2015, so each parish grant for CTS will be calculated as CTS Tax Base Adjustment x 2012/2013 Parish Band D Tax rate x [1-0.143].

Although Option 1 was recommended for approval by the Executive - as it would provide protection for parish budgets – it will mean that Taunton Deane will need to find savings from its own service budgets to subsidise CTS costs for parishes.

It is proposed the same funding principle agreed for parishes should be applied to the Council budget for the Unparished Area Fund.

Copies of the Council Tax Support 2014/2015 Policy Document have been placed on the Members' Portal and in the Members' Room for reference purposes.

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

- (a) The current Council Tax Support Scheme be continued from 1 April 2014;
- (b) Option 1 be the preferred route in providing and calculating Council Tax Support Grant funding for Parish Councils in 2014/2015; and
- (c) The Council continues to provide discretionary help through the Discretionary Council Tax Assistance (DCTA) Policy to give extra short-term help towards Council Tax costs for those in hardship.

(Funding of DCTA will be from Council Tax receipts and shared between the various local precepting bodies. The exact amount of the DCTA fund for 2014/2015 has not yet been agreed but is expected to be in the range of £30-£35,000).

## **(b) Customer Access Strategy**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the production of a new Customer Access Strategy for the Council. A copy of the draft strategy has been circulated to Members.

The existing Customer Access Strategy was prepared in 2005. It now needs to be updated in the light of social and technological changes and the Council's current financial position. The updated Strategy proposes a significant shift towards self service and the use of technology for the majority of enquiries, whilst focussing resources for face to face provision on those with the most complex requirements.

It is vital for the Council as it moves forward with less resource at its disposal that technology is used wherever possible to provide access to services. For many of our population this will be an improvement on the current situation as it will enable access to key services on a 24/7 basis. The Council also has to make suitable provision for those who do not have access to technology or have special needs and this was highlighted within the Strategy.

Clearly this change cannot be made without cost and there is a Business Case made within the Strategy for the investment that will be required which includes:-

- The provision of a new, fit for purpose web site to provide full authenticated access to end to end transactional services using mobile devices;
- The ability for staff to access and deliver services while visiting key sites within the community;
- The provision of access points enabling customers to either self serve or interact with a member of staff to receive Council services; and
- The provision of all applicable Council data sets in an open data format.

The total cost of these items is estimated as £320,000 one off investment plus a continuing charge of £40,000 per annum.

There is the requirement for each service, as part of its business re-engineering process, to implement a 'channel shift' process – moving its way of operating wherever possible to self service.

A further cost that needs to be included is to resource the continuing change required to implement the channel shift work. It is therefore suggested that £50,000 should be allocated as a corporate resource to help support this work. Examples of issues that might need to be resourced this way are expert help for services in setting up new systems and support for customers when they access services this way for the first time.

The total investment requirement is therefore £370,000. However, £190,000 of these costs will be covered within the joint services approach with West Somerset Council. Therefore, the Council will only need to find the balance of £180,000.

As approximately 20% of current customer contact costs for telephone and in person were currently funded from the Housing Revenue Account, it is proposed that 20% of the £180,000 (£36,000) should also be funded from the same source.

One of the main purposes of implementing channel shift is to make financial savings for the Council. With this in mind it is estimated that a shift of 25% of both footfall numbers and telephone access numbers to web access and using the Society of Information Technology Management (SOCITM) approximate costs per transaction would bring an indicative saving to the council of approximately £241,000 per annum.

These savings will be made by reduced officer time spent dealing with customers. To achieve these savings will require a rigorous implementation plan including new staffing structures reflecting the reduction in posts. For this reason it is recommended that the implementation occurs at the same time as the transforming of services as the Council moves forward into shared services. This Strategy would form a fundamental enabler to doing this differently in the future.

This 25% shift is conservative and a higher shift could be achieved dependant on how robust the Council wishes to be. In order to realise the savings as 'cashable', the Council will need to reduce staff costs as a result of the time saved and potentially seek to reduce its costs with Southwest One.

Noted that even with only a 25% shift, the payback on the one off investment of £180,000 will be made within one year with a continuing saving of over £200,000 in the years following if all the savings accrue to the Council or, based on a 50/50 split with Southwest One, one and a half years payback with a saving in the region of £80,000 per annum (taking into account the extra £40,000 continuing revenue cost).

In order for the Council to better meet the needs of its residents, to use its resources in a more focused way and to achieve the predicted savings, there was a need to adopt the strategy of moving to digital service delivery wherever possible.

If approved, a detailed Implementation Plan would be drawn up by the end of 2014 to:-

- Agree a joint Implementation Plan with Southwest One;
- Commission and go live with a new transactional web site;
- Draw up a detailed Channel Migration Plan with each service as part of their service transformation planning; and



- Increase the use of automated telephone lines.

And by the end of 2015 to:-

- Provide a postal option but in a limited form;
- Be proactively providing information in a wide range of new ways;
- Up-skill officers to be able to deliver multi-departmental services around Taunton Deane; and
- Ensure all officers know how to use and signpost customers to the simplest and most cost effective route.

At its meeting on 25 November 2013, the Corporate Scrutiny Committee recommended the adoption of the revised Customer Access Strategy to the Executive conditional on an extensive multi-media publicity exercise to enable public understanding and confidence in the new systems which must have provision for all disability needs.

When the Strategy was considered by the Executive on 4 December 2013, the importance of continuing to provide ways of assisting vulnerable residents and those with complex or urgent needs to access services whenever and however they need to was acknowledged.

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

- (1) The revised Customer Access Strategy, appended to the report considered by the Executive, be adopted; and
- (2) The release of £144,000 from General Fund Reserves and £36,000 from the Housing Revenue Account be agreed to enable the Strategy to be implemented. This would include £50,000 to be allocated to revenue costs and £130,000 to be added to the Capital Programme, funded from revenue resources.

## **(iv) Councillor Norman Cavill**

### **Asset Strategy**

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

The Peer Review undertaken during 2012 identified the need for the Council to make better use of its Property assets.

At the beginning of the year the Executive adopted a new Asset Management Plan (AMP) but this was subject to a more detailed and strategic review of the Council's approach to asset management being undertaken.

The approved Corporate Business Plan included an action to commission a review of

Taunton Deane's approach to managing its property assets to identify and implement a new Asset Strategy which would assist the Council in achieving financial sustainability. It was recognised that to achieve this objective specialist external expertise would be needed to assist in developing the new Asset Strategy.

Following a procurement exercise Bob Baber Associates were appointed in August 2013 to develop the new Asset Strategy and Decision Making Framework.

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

Specifically the new Asset Strategy and decision making framework will:-

- i) Ensure the Council makes best use of property assets to deliver our corporate objectives and to help deliver financial sustainability;
- ii) Clearly articulate the balance between financial return and wider objectives;
- iii) Clearly reflect the Council's appetite for risk and reward; and
- iv) Provide a clear framework for future decisions about acquisitions and disposals, with appropriate levels of delegations regarding decisions.

The development of the Strategy by Bob Baber Associates has involved a two stage approach to collect and analyse information from documents and feedback obtained from key stakeholders and Members.

The research undertaken to inform the new Strategy identifies a number of key issues. These are outlined in detail in the draft Strategy document – a copy of which has been circulated to Members – and are summarised below:-

- The acute financial pressures on the Council to which the property portfolio will need to respond;
- The need for improvement in property data, especially financial data, to enable fact based decision making;
- A potential lack of capacity to implement the Asset Strategy;
- A need to re-organise the way property was strategically managed and strategic property recommendations and decisions were made in the Council;
- The need for a more rigorous analysis of the reasons for holding property;
- The need for a more rigorous analysis of the degree to which each property contributes to the Council's objectives;
- The need for a rapid and systematic review of all the Council's property to make the property portfolio more sustainable, to make it more focussed on the Council's priorities and to reduce net revenue expenditure. In particular:-
  - (a) To reduce the size of the operational portfolio, by undertaking service/property reviews of each property category;
  - (b) To dispose of property for which there is no clear reason for holding it or where its contribution to corporate objectives is insufficient; and

- (c) To increase income (or reduce costs) from income producing property.

The Council's gross spend on General Fund assets is in excess of £1,500,000 per annum. Consequently even a conservative savings target of 10% could yield minimum savings of £150,000 per annum.

The delivery of some of these savings are already being progressed through the implementation of projects such as the Customer Access and Accommodation Projects. However, to maximise the potential savings a rigorous and continuing review process across all of the Council's assets is required. These reviews need to be undertaken quickly to help plug the budget gap. However, to enable this to be done it is imperative that accurate and detailed data about costs per property are available in order to focus efforts to enable fact based decisions to be made.

The strategy development process, undertaken by Bob Baber Associates, has identified some fundamental areas where improvements are essential. Key amongst these are:-

- i) Council assets managed strategically and ideally by a single Property Team;
- ii) Adequate, appropriately skilled resource to implement the Strategy; and
- iii) Detailed cost and income data on an asset by asset basis to enable the prioritisation of assets for review and to facilitate accurate, fact based decision making.

The creation of a single Property Team is in progress following the decisions recently made at Full Council in connection with the West Somerset Project. However, it is important to understand that implementing the Strategy will require additional staff resource and expertise, compared with the current situation.

Additionally, it is vital that action is taken now to provide for the provision of accurate property cost and income data in the future. This is vital for identifying priorities and accurate, fact based decision making.

Consequently it is recommended that £90,000 from General Fund Reserves be set aside to fund an additional specialist Estates Surveyor for a period of two years. This funding will be on an 'invest to save' basis.

Additionally, it is anticipated that the Head of the Property Service will also need to be significantly involved in this project. This will need to be factored into the current restructure process.

There will also potentially be additional costs for legal support during the implementation of the review process should this result in a significant number of property disposals. However, it is not realistic to estimate these costs at this stage.

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee has considered this matter at its meeting on 25 November 2013 and endorsed the proposed new Strategy and the recommendation for funding.

When the Executive considered the Strategy at its meeting on 4 December 2013, it

was agreed that the wording of part of the Executive Summary and the sub-section titled 'Governance of the asset base' should be amended.

It is **recommended** that:-

- (a) Subject to the incorporation of the revised wording referred to above, the new Asset Strategy and Decision Making Framework be approved; and
- (b) £90,000 be allocated from General Fund Reserves to fund an additional specialist Estates Surveyor for a period of two years.

# **Full Council Meeting – 10 December 2013**

## **Report of Councillor John Williams – Leader of the Council**

### **1. Taunton Town Centre Rethink**

- 1.1 I attended a special meeting of the Project Taunton Steering Group on 28 November 2013, to which all Members were invited, to hear the ideas emerging from the 'rethink' of plans for Taunton Town Centre.
- 1.2 The rethink has been refreshingly 'short and sharp', led by an independent consultancy team with a strong commercial perspective. It was clear from their presentation that much has been delivered, but that ten years on from the original 'Vision for Taunton' we need to be prepared to change our assumptions for the town centre, in light of current market realities.
- 1.3 Members offered valuable feedback to the consultants and it was encouraging to be part of a healthy debate on how we can make our County Town an even greater place. Feedback ranged from the need to create a better 'after work' and evening economy, making more use of the River Tone as the 'blue corridor' through the town, reviving plans for pedestrianising key areas, making the town centre friendlier for families and people of all ages and boosting the idea of town centre living. As the County Town we need to 'think big' – there was a definite appetite to have a 'city mindset' and culture, and perhaps city status itself. The general consensus of the meeting was that the 'market town' brand no longer captured the spirit of our future ambitions for Taunton.
- 1.4 Rethink proposals will be presented to the Taunton Economic Advisory Board on 9 December 2013, before coming to the Community Scrutiny Committee and Executive in January 2014. If the final report is accepted by the Executive, we will need to refocus efforts with all parties to deliver changes on an ambitious but realistic timetable.
- 1.5 There is little doubt in my mind that the rethink proposals will challenge the status quo in a number of ways. I believe this is necessary and that as a Council we need to 'grasp the nettle' offered by the rethink to ensure Taunton is a successful centre long into the future.

### **2. Shared Management and Services with West Somerset Council (WSC)**

- 2.1 Following the important decision at Full Council 12 November 2013 to

proceed with this project, work is well in hand to implement staff changes and recruitment. The interview panels have now been appointed and recruitment to the new staffing structure will have commenced by the time of our meeting.

- 2.2 I do not underestimate the change this will bring for officers, Members and the way services will be delivered in future, but, it is a necessary change to ensure we remain a viable and sustainable Council now and into the future. The changes we are implementing will protect most front line services but allow us to continue delivering those most demanded by the community we serve.
- 2.3 I am pleased to say these changes will deliver a major saving of near £1,600,000 per year with the same saving every year after that. It will require investment in new ways of working and technology costing a one-off £2,200,000 but as can be seen the pay back is rapid so as an organisation we will benefit tremendously from this saving.
- 2.4 I can also assure Members that even though we have reached agreement with WSC to share one Management Team and services across the two Councils this in no way inhibits or prevents us seeking to widen this alliance across other authorities. We will be constantly seeking opportunities to widen the scope of service delivery or management where it has mutual benefit to all concerned. In the meantime, let us proceed apace to take advantage of the near £1,600,000 annual savings as the Business Case presently approved. Why wouldn't we do this? It has to be a "no brainer" that we take the substantial savings now whilst still looking for greater benefits in the future!

### **3. The Brewhouse Theatre and Arts Centre**

- 3.1 Members will know that I view culture as a vital ingredient in Taunton's success both in economic and cultural terms. It is therefore particularly heartening to see the groundswell of community support behind Taunton Theatre Association's plans for the revival of The Brewhouse. I am very pleased that the Executive will be considering the proposals on 4 December 2013.
- 3.2 Taunton School's production of "Cats" at The Brewhouse has provided our community with a brief taste of what we have all been missing since the closure of the venue in February, and I am delighted we were able to accommodate the School's request for temporary use. This has also had the additional benefit of hastening the venue's readiness hopefully for permanent use in the near future.
- 3.3 Much has been said about the need for a large multi-use venue of up to 1,000 seats but we have to approach this with pragmatism and realism!

3.4 In broad terms:-

- To bring the Mecca building back into use in the order of £13,500,000 (as a cinema it was about 1,750 seats but there is no indication it will become available in the foreseeable future).
- New 1,000 seat facility in the order of £25,000,000.
- Extend the existing Brewhouse with new 650 seat auditorium in the order of £8-£9,000,000 (the present 352 seat auditorium will be retained)

3.5 Please bear in mind all of these budgets were prepared in 2008 or 2009 so are likely to be now on the low side.

3.6 Although I am as committed as anybody to improved and increased theatre and arts provision in Taunton I have to be pragmatic and acknowledge we just do not have the available funds for this type of development. However by bringing The Brewhouse back into permanent use (hopefully shortly) we can maintain the provision of performing arts and culture in Taunton. As the economy changes the Arts Council and others will, also hopefully, see that we are a worthy cause for investment to expand our provision through larger and better facilities. This unless a wealthy benefactor steps forward in the interim!

3.7 Finally, I would encourage all members to see Taunton Theatre Association's 'Christmas Gift to Taunton' - An outdoor 'promenade' performance of the magical fairytale 'Hansel and Gretel', starting at Castle Green and flowing into the Somerset Museum in the early evenings of 19, 20 and 21 December 2013.

#### **4. Economic Growth Prospectus for Taunton**

4.1 The emerging Growth Prospectus takes a wider geographic focus and sets the direction for Taunton's economic growth over the period to 2028 (the Core Strategy timetable). I am delighted we are working so closely with Somerset County Council (SCC) on this initiative – it is essential for both local tiers of government to be working as one to ensure that the County Town is playing its full part in delivering wider growth in the region and nationally.

4.2 A key message within the emerging prospectus will be the role of both the County and Borough Council in creating the best possible conditions for economic growth. The prospectus document will include a number of economic sector priorities and a list of key infrastructure projects needed to unlock Taunton's full growth potential, providing an important catalyst for securing external funding support and building upon our status as a Principal Urban area.

- 4.3 I was privileged to introduce, together with Councillor Richard Brown of SCC, a very well attended business consultation event on 25 October 2013 on the ambitions contained within the prospectus. Councillor Cavill's report provides additional detail on this event, feedback from which will inform a draft document to be presented to the Community Scrutiny Committee and Executive in January 2014. This will become an extremely key document as it will determine where scarce resources are best directed in the future to best facilitate the growth and economic development we all seek and support.

## **5. Taunton Town Centre Fun Day and Lights Switch On**

- 5.1 This was an incredible day for Taunton. I do not believe I have ever seen the streets as crowded as they were that day and all thanks to the size and variety of events and attractions that were provided. Also, obviously, the good publicity promoting Taunton as "the place to visit". In all it was estimated that 96,000 visitors came to Taunton to enjoy the event and go shopping, a fantastic achievement.
- 5.2 Credit must go to the Taunton Town Centre Company and their team, the Make Taunton Sparkle organisation who have yet again delivered splendid illuminations for Christmas, the Market Stalls organisers - as I have never seen as many stalls in Taunton previously - and last, but not least, our own officers and Deane DLO who worked so tirelessly to deliver such a smooth running event.
- 5.3 My sincere thanks to you all as it was truly a credit to all and more importantly, it delivered its aim of crowded streets in Taunton that brings potential shoppers for retailers.
- 5.4 Having the ability to organise an event such as this and build upon it in the future reinforces the need for adequate funding through a successful BID (Business Improvement District) process which, if approved by the Council, will see the ballot held next February. I do hope this will be supported by all businesses as without the funding, events as above will just not be possible through lack of resource to organise and funds to pay for it all.

## **6. Budget Setting**

- 6.1 At previous meetings we have presented and agreed high level terms to guide future budget setting. This has now culminated in a report to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee to be considered shortly.
- 6.2 These are proposals as to how we can achieve a balanced budget but at this point I stress, they are only proposals. Please do engage in the process and if you wish to change any of the savings please let us know together with where you would prefer equivalent savings made. The bottom line is that we have to set a balanced budget so due to the



prevailing economic conditions we have to make savings to achieve this.

- 6.3 From Corporate Scrutiny any comments will feed into the Christmas Budget Pack for consideration in January at individual Group Meetings supported by officers to discuss and answer queries. This is an important part of the budget setting process and it allows all Members the opportunity to participate in its formation, please do take this opportunity.

## **7. Employment Land at Bathpool**

- 7.1 The Council has re-submitted a bid (subject to formal approval of Full Council) to purchase an area of employment land at Bathpool, following its withdrawal from the market earlier this year. Ownership of employment land gives a greater degree of control to the Council in creating the conditions needed for economic growth, and I am therefore fully behind the proposal to acquire this site.
- 7.2 This in no way diminishes or dilutes our efforts to deliver a further strategic employment site as proposed east of the M5 Motorway. We regard this as vital to the future economic development of Taunton but we have to accept there are major infrastructure problems to overcome. These are such that realistically I would not see them being addressed within the next five years so the proposed employment site at Bathpool to Langaller becomes very important for early enablement of site availability and choice.

## **8. National Citizens Service Graduation Ceremony**

- 8.1 I was honoured to be invited to participate in the above which is the culmination of about a month's concentrated hard work and commitment to team building and delivering for good causes by young people.
- 8.2 The course starts with challenging events - in this case at a venue in North Devon with various extreme activities to create team spirit and leadership.
- 8.3 This is followed by more team working back at base in Somerset College and the following projects were agreed and delivered:-
- Elderly people's tea party in the Wellesley Community Centre (Saturday, 30 November 2013)
  - Clean-up of Jubilee Garden's Priorswood (completed Saturday, 16 November 2013)
  - Sports and activity day at Viridor Park (Saturday, 30 November 2013)

- Halcon – ‘A day in the life’ community photo project (completed Saturday, 16 November 2013)
- Fundraising for Escape support group (Saturday, 30 November 2013)

8.4 It was great to see so many enthusiastic young people with the commitment and dedication to work on such good causes and I applaud them for their efforts. I would also commend Will Taunton-Burnet, the Project Lead for National Citizens Service in Taunton, and his team for organising and delivering such good work for our community. Congratulations to all.

Councillor John Williams  
Leader of the Council

## **Council Meeting – 10 December 2013**

### **Councillor Ken Hayward – Environmental Services**

I am in the unusual position of saying that I have nothing to report to Full Council that has not either been published through one media stream or another. There seems little point in taking up time unnecessarily by repeating news that has already been dispensed.

Councillor Ken Hayward

# **Council Meeting – 10 December 2013**

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

### **1. Parks**

- 1.1 A relatively quiet time in the parks now, but we were pleased to host the Taunton Harvest Festival in October in Vivary Park. We also look forward to Santa on the Run on the 15 December 2013 which is raising money for the Children's Hospice South West.
- 1.2 I did a tour of the parks with the Open Spaces Manager recently and was especially pleased to meet up with The Friends of Swains Lane Nature Reserve and Friends of Wellington Park. It was most helpful to discuss their ideas and issues to feed in to our maintenance plans for the forthcoming year.
- 1.3 I was glad to attend Friends of Wellington Park Annual General Meeting recently and very pleased to hear their report of the year in Wellington Park and meet some of their supporters.

### **2. Community Leisure and Play**

- 2.1 Station Road Swimming Pool Refurbishment – Work is now underway and you will have seen the newsletters and press releases about the project. Following some feedback from users in the increased size classes at Wellington Pool we have arranged for the aqua-aerobic equipment to be moved across to Wellington to better support the larger numbers.
- 2.2 Blackbrook Pool and Spa – Work continues on this project.

### **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:-

#### **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 has been launched at Wellington Children's Centre with over 20 sign ups in the first week.

3.1.2 The initiative will benefit from weight management courses, weekly weigh ins, a funded weekly physical activity session and health, lifestyle and nutritional advice. The Children's Centre will take the lead on the project with Tone delivering the weight management, weigh ins and physical activity sessions and offering support and advice.

### 3.2 Memory Walk

3.2.1 Tone Leisure hosted the Alzheimer's Society Memory Walk on Sunday, 29 September 2013 in Vivary Park, Taunton. A total of 179 walkers and 19 volunteers took part. The walk was a huge success, with three times more walkers than 2012.

### 3.3 Healthy Workplaces

3.3.1 Tone Leisure has linked with Somerset County Council (SCC) to launch the county wide Healthy Workplace programme. A Healthy Workplaces membership has been agreed and launched from Wednesday, 9 October until the end of March 2014.

3.3.2 Tone are the main deliverer for physical activity for SCC and have launched a Trim Trail around County Hall for the Stop Smoking and increased physical activity campaign Stoptober.

### 3.4 Hearts and Soles Nordic Walking

3.4.1 Tone's Nordic Walking programme has been running for one year in Taunton Deane and has generated interest from around 150 people.

3.4.2 The programme, which has been part-funded by the British Heart Foundation, aims to increase the number of older adults taking part in moderate intensity physical activity, particularly heart patients and their family members.

3.4.3 Of those that took part, 62% were aged 61-75 years old; 75% were female; 29% of participants were heart patients and/or a family member of a heart patient. A small team of volunteers have been trained as Leaders and are working towards helping to lead the Adventure Walks.

### 3.5 Play and Funding

3.5.1 Tone Leisure has recruited a new Play Development Worker on behalf of Somerset Play Forum. He is working 16 hours a week and focusing on encouraging parish councils to provide local community play days.

3.5.2 Alison Cottey, in her role as Funding Officer, is continuing to develop reports on the Social Return on Investment to demonstrate the effectiveness of projects delivered by Tone.

Seasons greetings,

Councillor Catherine Herbert



# **Council Meeting – 10 December 2013**

## **Report of Councillor Mrs Jean Adkins – Housing Services**

### **1. Housing Enabling**

#### **1.1 Priorswood Place, Taunton**

Six units built for Curo were handed over recently and the development was officially opened by the Mayor last week.

#### **1.2 Cheddon Road, Taunton**

A start has now been made on site for this scheme of discounted and low cost housing which is being funded without subsidy. A publicity campaign on the theme of “a first step on the housing ladder” has been launched and the units are being advertised as “coming soon” on Homefinder Somerset.

### **2. Affordable Housing Target**

2.1 Completions to 31 October are 124. With units in the “pipeline” standing at 68 we are on course for 192 completions for the year, but still hoping to hit the target of 200.

### **3. Council House Building**

3.1 The planning applications for Creechbarrow Road, Taunton came to Committee on 25 September 2013 and received conditional approval.

3.2 We will shortly be able to announce the contractor for this project as the tendering process is complete and we are now in the “Alcatel” period.

3.3 The decanting is complete, so a start on site in the New Year is hoped for and should be possible, despite the best efforts of the slowworms to thwart us by going into hibernation before their decant was completed to the ecologist’s satisfaction.

3.4 Subsequently the Phase 1 sites came to the next Planning Committee and were subject to very late objections from Highways, which resulted in one being withdrawn and then resubmitted. It was intended that the Normandy Drive and Bacon Drive sites should be tendered together,

so the issue of tender documents will be prepared ready for the hoped for approval shortly.

3.5 Vale View, West Bagborough was also granted permission.

#### **4. Estates Management – Welfare Reform**

4.1 This is the subject of a full report to the Community Scrutiny Committee on 3 December 2013 by Simon Lewis.

4.2 Updated figures as at 11 October 2013:-

- 23 moves on Choice Based Lettings (CBL) have completed;
- 1 bid was pending on CBL;
- 1 direct match had completed;
- 11 mutual exchanges had completed; and
- 5 mutual exchanges were being processed.

#### **5. Estates Management – Rent Arrears**

5.1 In my last report I stated that as anticipated the Welfare Reforms have had an effect on tenant arrears which rose from £32,094 in April (for the affected tenants) to £51,881 in July, but, happily are now decreasing, down to £46,860 in August.

5.2 There was a further reduction as at 1 September 2013 to £43,996.60 and then a slight increase at 1 October to £44,197.68

5.3 82 tenants have been awarded Discretionary Housing Payments, some of which were backdated, helping to reduce arrears.

5.4 Overall rent arrears remain below last year's level standing at £360,000 approximately.

#### **6. Estates Management - Voids**

6.1 I am very pleased to report a decrease in the Void turnaround time to just over 12 days: a remarkable achievement. This has led, however, together with the higher level of voids partly due to downsizing, to an increase in the cost of voids and pressure on the budget. This is partly offset by the increase in rents received.

Councillor Mrs Jean Adkins



# **Council Meeting - 10 December 2013**

## **Report of Councillor Mrs Vivienne Stock-Williams - Corporate Resources**

### **1. Corporate and Client Services**

#### **Client Team**

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

#### **Southwest One Contract**

- 1.2 The current key focus for the team is finalising the detailed contract changes necessary to facilitate the return of further services agreed by Full Council on 12 November 2013. We anticipate these changes being completed by mid December 2013.

#### **Southwest One Update**

- 1.3 Additionally, the team is working closely with Southwest One to understand the potential implications of IBM's deal with SYNEX. However, as yet, the detailed implications are not clear.

#### **Procurement**

- 1.4 We continue to monitor the delivery of the Procurement Transformation Project and day-to-day procurement service by Southwest One. As at 31 October 2013, in excess of £1,842,000 savings have been delivered to the Council through the signed-off procurement related initiatives. A further £1,336,000 of savings are scheduled to be delivered from these signed-off initiatives during the remainder of the Southwest One contract.

#### **Savings Initiatives**

- 1.5 The Strategic Procurement Service is working on a number of additional projects and savings initiatives, which should increase the value of savings delivered. A tender to procure a new commercial waste contractor for the Council's premises will be issued shortly.

#### **Retained Finance and Corporate Insurance**

- 1.6 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.

### **Fees and Charges**

- 1.7 The Strategic Finance Officer has recently completed the Fees and Charges report for 2014/2015 and is heavily involved in supporting the financial elements of the Southwest One Review.

### **Retained HR**

- 1.8 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.

### **HR Support for Corporate Projects**

- 1.9 The retained HR Manager continues to be heavily involved in supporting key corporate projects and, in particular, the West Somerset Shared Services Project and Southwest One Review.

### **Strategic and Retained ICT**

- 1.10 The Retained Strategic ICT Officer continues to provide strategic ICT support to the Authority, manage the ICT functions not provided by Southwest One and to assist in monitoring the ICT element of the Southwest One contract.

### **Public Services Network (PSN) Audit**

- 1.11 Work has been undertaken over the past couple of months to resubmit our Public Services Network (PSN) Audit to ensure that we comply with the increasingly stringent Central Government security standards and can remain connected to the Government's secure ICT network. We will also shortly commence the rollout of the Windows 7 upgrade to all computers.

### **ICT Support for Corporate Projects**

- 1.12 The Retained ICT Officer is also heavily focused on supporting the ICT elements of key corporate projects and, in particular, the Customer Access and Accommodation and West Somerset Shared Service projects.

## **2. Corporate Health and Safety**

### **Review of Computer Display Equipment**

- 2.1 A review of the policy on use of Display Screen (computer) Equipment for the organisation has been carried out. Eleven volunteers from across all Themes have been trained to carry out the assessments to ensure consistency of approach and advice. This will also ensure flexibility and resilience with more assessors able to provide the information without delay.

### **Accidental Asbestos Exposure**

- 2.2 An in-depth report was produced following an accidental asbestos exposure within a void Council property. Substantial positive steps have now been put in place to prevent a recurrence.

### **Brewhouse Production**

- 2.3 The Health and Safety Team has had a significant involvement in providing Taunton School and contractors with health and safety information and monitoring safety measures relating to the use of the Brewhouse Theatre for the pre-Christmas performance.

### **Depot and Crematorium Inspections**

- 2.4 Inspections of the mechanics' and carpenters' workshops at the Depot and Crematorium have been undertaken with remedial works carried out where necessary. Good standards were found at the Crematorium and advice was given about the inclusion of accident data within the Council's overall statistics.

### **Risk Assessment Advice**

- 2.5 Assistance has also been provided to Managers at Deane DLO on risk assessments and monitoring is taking place with programmed meetings for review.

### **Accident Data**

- 2.6 Accident data from 2009 to present have been sorted and entered into a database. Analysis has been carried out to identify trends and subsequently training (e.g. manual handling training) has been put in place and delivered to all Deane DLO employees.

## **3. Corporate Performance**

### **Quarterly Performance**

- 3.1 The Quarter 2 (2013/2014) corporate performance report was considered by the Executive on 4 December 2013. The 'Health & Housing' theme was featured as part of this report.

## **Theme and Service Performance Scorecards**

- 3.2 Theme and Service Performance Scorecards are also produced quarterly. They include detailed performance information and updates on progress against theme and service priorities – these are available from all Theme Managers and are published on the Members' Portal

## **Performance Monitoring Framework**

- 3.3 A new Performance Monitoring Framework is currently being developed for the Taunton Deane Partnership, as well as for our Service Level Agreements with voluntary sector grant recipients (for monitoring by the Grants Panel).

## **Benchmarking**

- 3.4 The Performance and Finance Teams are currently working together to consider how benchmarking analysis can be used better (to compare performance and costs data relative to other similar Authorities and pinpoint areas of good or poor performance). This will start to be introduced as part of the continuing performance monitoring and reporting framework in 2014.

## **Risk Management**

- 3.5 The Corporate Risk Register is reviewed quarterly by CMT as part of the quarterly performance review process (most recently mid November 2013). A refreshed Corporate Risk Register will be reported to the Corporate Governance Committee in March 2014.

## **Risk Registers**

- 3.6 Risk registers for Themes/Services and projects continue to be developed and are reviewed regularly, with risk response actions actively routinely planned and implemented. Key risks are also included in Theme 'Exception/Highlight' reports which are appended to the Corporate Performance report.

## **Programme and Project Management**

- 3.7 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).
- 3.8 There are two distinct 'programmes' that are designed to deliver the Council's strategic aims: i) Growth & Regeneration, and ii) Corporate Transformation. An overview of the entire programme is provided for Members as part of the Quarterly Performance Monitoring report.

## **4. Customer Contact Centre**

### **Achievement of all performance indicators**

4.1 The service has continued to perform well with no KPI (Key Performance Indicator) failures to report during the last quarter. These are Southwest One's contractual deliverables for the authorities. For Taunton Deane they are:-

1. % of calls answered within 20 seconds
2. % of abandoned calls
3. % of calls answered at first point of contact
4. Quality of service,

### **New Telephony Technology**

4.2 The service has been implementing new technology as part of the Customer Contact Telephony Refresh Programme. The new core telephony system supplied by Siemens is now fully implemented after a smooth transition.

### **Overview of New Technology**

4.3 The ageing Macfarlane Callplus ACD (Automated Call Distributor) system has been replaced with Siemens OpenScape Contact Centre Enterprise V8. ACD is a core Contact Centre system providing the intelligence behind the scenes. For example, it will route specific calls to specific people based on what number the customer has dialled or option they have chosen and based on the skill sets of the advisor.

### **Interactive Voice Recognition**

4.4 In our Contact Centre, we use push button menus. The acquisition of the newly enhanced technology, however, will allow us to explore true voice recognition services.

### **Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS)**

4.5 This is a standard which all Contact Centres need to adhere to. In order to be comprehensively compliant, organisations must ensure that payment card details are not recorded or stored. Our current procedures give us part compliance as our Advisors are able to pause manually and resume calls. The new system automatically detects when card details are being processed, automatically stops the call being recorded and resumes recording afterwards.

### **Enhancements from new system**

4.6 Enhancements provided by the new Siemens system include:  
- More intuitive administration

- More detailed queue management information (i.e. can dynamically advise callers of current wait time etc)
- New contact centre channels (email, social media, web collaboration, chat)
- Increased resilience
- High definition voice quality
- Enhanced real time management information
- Increased business continuity options.

### **Replacement of Workforce Management System**

4.6 The ageing Qmax workforce management system (purchased in 2009) has been replaced by Southwest One with NICE IEX. The Contact Centre WFM (Workforce Management) principle covers rostering, scheduling, contact trend analysis, demand forecasting and intra-day optimisation.

### **Our World at Work**

4.7 A new staff forum has been started and consists of colleagues from each Customer Contact Team. The initiative is designed to improve engagement and empowerment within the wider Customer Contact Team. The group will retain a key focus on staff satisfaction and will be encouraged to propose solutions to problems experienced within the workplace through consultation with the wider Customer Contact Team.

### **Customer Service Excellence Training**

4.8 Customer Contact has continued to invest in the training and development of its teams, recognising that it is imperative that customer service professionals are provided with first class training opportunities to develop existing skills and learn new techniques for delivering excellence first time, every time.

### **Cross Skilling**

4.9 Customer Contact has continued to invest in new technologies to support the delivery of excellent customer services. Thus, investment has been made in a new e-learning tool which has helped with the cross-skilling of our multi-disciplined teams. There are now an increasing number of Customer Advisors who can handle customer enquiries for both Taunton Deane and Somerset County Council. This ensures that customers are benefitting from a more seamless and holistic customer experience.

### **Customer Contact Association (CCA) Accreditation**

4.10 The Customer Contact Centre was assessed against the Customer Contact Association Global Standard for the second year running and

was re-accredited with no non-conformities. I should like to congratulate staff for their ongoing commitment to a high standard of service.

## **5. Legal and Democratic Services**

### **Legal Shared Services**

- 5.1 Mendip District Council has formally agreed their involvement in the legal shared services project. Mendip's Solicitor to the Council will carry out that role for all three Councils, if Taunton Deane and West Somerset Council are happy for her to do so.
- 5.2 The draft Business Case is almost ready to be shared with the Project Team. However, Sedgemoor District Council has now shown an interest in being part of the initial set up. Enquiries are being made, therefore, as to the remit in which they want to be a part of the project - in order for a suitable structure to be developed together with a re-calculation of the figures.
- 5.3 At the time of writing, we are still aiming for an implementation date of 1 April 2014.

### **Elections**

- 5.4 We currently have Jonathan Kilby working with us to help keep the service running following Craig Morse's untimely death. He will be working on the canvass to ensure that we can publish the register in February 2014, which we are legally obliged to do.

### **European Elections**

- 5.5 Bruce Lang is currently working on the future of the service, in order that more permanent arrangements can be put in place at the earliest opportunity - given the pending European Parliamentary Elections.

### **Deputy Monitoring Officer**

- 5.6 Due to Tonya's unexpected illness, it has been decided to make Richard Bryant a Deputy Monitoring Officer to support both Roy Pinney and also Tonya whilst she is away from the office. This will be with immediate effect. Richard's new role will continue in 2014.

### **Standards**

- 5.7 There are some processes and procedures that need to be finalised for publication. In addition, the Register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests needs to be published on the website.

## **Complaint**

- 5.8 In addition there is a complaint that will be heading for a Hearings Panel in the next few weeks.

## **Tonya Meers**

- 5.9 I am sure all Members join me in wishing Tonya a full recovery from her unexpected illness. She will be working predominately at home during her treatment over the coming months, but will be in the office at times. During this period, there are a number of tasks she will be finishing off as planned

## **Audit and Constitutional Tasks**

- 5.10 There are some outstanding audit recommendations, changes to RIPA processes and procedures, and constitutional changes that need to be completed. Tonya will be doing a review to make sure that all is up to date and also working with Bruce Lang to see where the two Councils' constitutions can be aligned.

## **6. Revenues and Benefits**

### **Customer Service Excellence Re-Certification**

- 6.1 At the end of September 2013, the service received re-certification for Customer Service Excellence - the Government's National Standard for Excellence in customer service. The feedback provided in the report by the independent inspector stated:

- *"The Revenues and Benefits Service provides an excellent example of a service that is totally focused on providing high standards in customer delivery.*
- *A strong feature of the service is the attention given to future planning. This is being undertaken at a time of significant changes and demands on service requirements as a result of national priorities.*
- *The service is to be commended for the foresight shown in achieving active partnership arrangements that will be of benefit to customers.*
- *Staff carry out their duties with professionalism and shared values."*

I should like to congratulate all members of the Revenues and Benefits Team on their continued commitment to providing an excellent service to our customers.

### **Customer Satisfaction Survey**



- 6.2 We have preliminary results from the service's annual Customer Satisfaction Survey. Overall satisfaction with the Benefits Service has increased to 91%. This was a surprising result given that many customers received reduced benefit through the Welfare Reforms implemented from April 2013. Detailed comments provided in the responses show understanding that officers must implement these changes, but the manner in which we deal with implementation has a significant impact on customers' views.

### **Council Tax and Business Rates**

- 6.3 Council Tax and Business Rate customers have recorded satisfaction at 82% - the same level as achieved last year. A full report on the survey will be presented to Members in early 2014.

### **Website**

- 6.4 Following recent approval of the Council's revised Discretionary Rate Relief Policy, website information on Business Rates has been updated. There is now a factsheet and a claim form for rate relief on: [www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/raterelief](http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/raterelief).

Finally, I wish you and your families a Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams

# **Council Meeting – 10 December 2013**

## **Report of Councillor Mark Edwards - Planning, Transportation and Communications**

### **1. Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP)**

- 1.1 The Council will shortly complete public consultation on the Preferred Options Site Allocations and Development Management Plan. This has included a number of public exhibitions - these events have generally been well-attended.
- 1.2 Following closure of the consultation, officers will consider the responses made by communities and key stakeholders before publishing a report summarising its key messages in Spring 2014.

### **2. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**

- 2.1 The Council's CIL Charging Schedule has now been through Community Scrutiny and Executive. The CIL Charging Schedule will be taken to Full Council for formal adoption shortly. Independent of this work, officers are developing proposed governance and monitoring measures.
- 2.2 In early 2014 officers will present the Council's proposed first draft Regulation 123 List. This list will identify the sort of schemes likely to be funded in whole or part by CIL over the short term. A separate review of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan is anticipated to commence in late 2013 / early 2014.

### **3. Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)**

- 3.1 The 2013 SHLAA will also be finalised shortly and be published in mid December.
- 3.2 The SHLAA will provide an update on the five year land supply position. The document is built upon the extensive involvement of the housebuilding industry and will be presented through the Local Development Framework Steering Group in early 2014.

### **4. Authorities Monitoring Report**

- 4.1 The Authorities Monitoring Report will be published on the Council's website within the next month. It provides an annual snapshot of progress in meeting the Core Strategy Objectives monitoring targets, progress on Plan preparation and CIL.
- 4.2 Regular monitoring is vital to establish trends to establish whether policies and objectives are delivering sustainable development.

## **5. Routes to the River Tone**

- 5.1 The Council's Landscape and Parks Teams have been working closely with colleagues at the Somerset Wildlife Trust to secure a grant of £494,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the 'Routes to the River Tone' Project and in early October were given the 'green light'.
- 5.2 The three year project aims to engage local people with the wildlife on their doorstep and, with their help, to improve the town's green spaces and waterways protecting rare species like water vole and four species of bat including brown long-eared and lesser horseshoe bats.
- 5.3 More details can be found on the SWT website by following the link. [http://www.somersetwildlife.org/hlf\\_grant\\_for\\_taunton](http://www.somersetwildlife.org/hlf_grant_for_taunton)

## **6. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plans**

- 6.1 The Quantock and Blackdown Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are, on behalf of their local authority partners, preparing five year Management Plans to guide the work of their teams and wider partnerships.
- 6.2 The plans have been through public consultation, the results of which are now being assessed. It is expected that the plans will be approved by funding partners by the Spring of 2014.

## **7. Communications**

- 7.1 It has been an exceptionally busy time for communications, both internal and external, due to the number of major projects that have reached key milestones.
- 7.2 The decision on joint management and shared services with West Somerset generated considerable interest, particularly in the "trade press" including the Local Government Chronicle and the Municipal Journal.
- 7.3 A special newsletter for staff and members was also issued following the decision and communications remains an important factor in the

implementation of the project.

- 7.4 A regular, monthly column is issued to the Gazette on the refurbishment of the Station Road Swimming Pool to ensure customers are kept up to date on progress.
- 7.5 Deane Dispatch has covered a number of themes, including inward investment, housing initiatives and the environment. The publication remains an important way of communicating with residents.
- 7.6 Looking ahead, we are working on ways to introduce social media into communications, principally through the use of Twitter. If successful, the use of social media will be rolled out incrementally.

## **8. Car Parking**

- 8.1 Refurbishment of all three lifts at the Orchard Multi-Storey Car Park was completed in time for the Christmas Fair Sunday and the busy trading days thereafter. Our investment here shows the Council's commitment to supporting shoppers and visitors to the town.
- 8.2 Our "Free after 3" joint promotion with the Taunton Town Centre Company has ended and we will be looking at the outcome to see what benefits there were for both the Council and the traders.
- 8.3 The analysis of the campaign in Wellington during August and September showed there were some limited benefits but identified more work was needed with the business community to maximise this.

Councillor Mark Edwards

# Council Meeting - 10 December 2013

## Report of Councillor Jane Warmington - Community Leadership

### 1. Efficient and effective delivery of services with better outcomes

- 1.1 With government grants continuing to reduce for the next few years, the main public sector service providers have less to spend, so it is important that expensive statutory services are not considered in isolation and that planning ahead together starts in earnest.
- 1.2 Shared accommodation is being considered (ourselves with the Police at one time and just now with the County Council) and shared management and services have been agreed between the two districts Taunton Deane and West Somerset. We have some established successful shared services already (eg South West Private Sector Housing Partnership and Building Control).
- 1.3 Each organisation is restructuring and looking at what it does, how it does it, where it does it from and whether or not it still needs to. This is to continue to deliver essential services to our communities, but more efficiently to make the necessary savings, and more effectively with better outcomes to be sustainable into the future.
- 1.4 Roughly the following services are delivered by those listed below:

#### SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL

Waste  
Highways  
Education  
Social Care  
Mental Health  
Public Health  
Property Services  
District Youth Fora  
Libraries  
Waterways  
Economic Development  
Civil Contingency Planning  
Community Safety

#### HEALTH SERVICE

GPs (Federation & Commissioning)  
Dentists  
Hospitals  
Accident & Emergency  
Health Visitors  
Midwives  
Ambulance Service

#### D&S FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Prevention (Advice, Alarms)  
Putting out fires  
Rescue  
Cause Investigation

#### AVON & SOMERSET POLICE

Serious & Organised Crime  
Public Protection  
Safeguarding  
Crime Detection  
Crime Reduction  
Community Safety

#### TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Social Housing (and affordable)  
Housing Advice Private Rented Sector  
Homelessness  
Direct Labour Organisation  
Revenues & Benefits,  
Licensing  
Planning  
Environmental Health, Food Safety,  
Health & Safety Monitoring  
Sports & Leisure  
Community Safety (CCTV)  
Taunton Deane Partnership  
Community Development  
Economic Development  
Voluntary Sector Support  
Public Health & Wellbeing  
Family Focus (with WSD & SCC)  
Gypsy & traveller pitch provision  
Asset Management  
Civil Contingencies

- 1.5 There is a significant amount of overlap although a statutory duty may lie with one or other particular organisation. So to be truly effective, where the demand for certain services is high and there is overlap, these need to be identified and a more joined up approach put in place.
- 1.6 Overlap is most evident and the need most acute in our priority areas (areas of high deprivation). Most problems underlying the deprivation have been identified, the challenge lies in tackling these to start to make those peoples lives better, reduce the demand on many services which are expensive, difficult to budget for and most agree are not sustainable as they are.
- 1.7 The Taunton Deane Partnership is the local strategic group which meets four times a year and concentrates on the priority areas (Priority Areas Strategy 2012-2017) which have their own Multi Agency Groups (North Taunton MAG and Halcon MAG). The rural areas are now covered by the Community Planning Working Group (CPWG) where access to services and fuel poverty are key concerns. These groups are fora, well attended and pull what's going on together.
- 1.8 However, the need is now to be joined up at the frontline. This has started already in Taunton Deane with the Halcon One Team Project and in the five districts with Family Focus (Central Government's Troubled Families Programme). Family Focus is part of the One Team in Halcon but also has it's own practitioner meetings to discuss signed up individual families and has its own governance.
- 1.9 For instance the make up of the One Team is the core of professional frontline staff from partner agencies already working in Halcon meeting together first thing three mornings a week (with a view to a shared work-base) with occasional input from others:

One Team Coordinator- Police Sergeant  
 Police Officers x 4 (subject to Force abstractions)  
 Police Community Support Officers x 3 (as above & one post seconded to community mapping)  
 District Council Community Development Officers x 2,  
 Housing Estate Officers x 2, Temporary Accommodation & Lettings Officer x 1 &  
 Anti-Social Behaviour Officer x 1  
 Children's Centre Family Support Workers x 2  
 Family Focus Workers x 2 (not wholly dedicated in the area)  
 Taunton Association for the Homeless x 1  
 Local Vicar x 1  
 Citizen's Advice Bureau x 1 (money management)

Occasional (less than once a week) attendance from:

Sheltered Housing x 1  
 Work Academy Somerset College x 1 (education & training)  
 District Council Benefits Officer x 1  
 Women's Aid x 1 (domestic abuse support)  
 Chapter 1 x 1 (County Council commissioned service for domestic abuse support)  
 Parent Family Support Adviser (PFSA) x 1  
 Housing Association x 1 (Knightstone)

- 1.10 Shared information and intelligence is also mapped (adapted from the police system used for organised crime) providing an up to date reference which then highlights problems, their scale, any links, any progress and any gaps. Individual Family Plans are drawn up from this to manage change and plan ahead. (Data is sensitive, shared but restricted and a protocol drawn up and agreed).
- 1.11 Operating as One Team has changed the way that staff from individual organisations work together in the most challenging ward in the district. Communication is paramount. It has become easier to deal with problems early on before they escalate which is more effective and more efficient. The work is demanding but shared and for most if not all now, it is better being part of a team. Many problems are longstanding and entrenched. There are few if any quick fixes, but already there are improvements for individuals, families and the community.
- 1.12 Special thanks should go to our Housing Services, those frontline and senior Officers involved and the Portfolio Holder, for listening, understanding and following this with an innovative and pragmatic approach to problem solving. Commendable.
- 1.13 The project started from the bottom up so the governance (Silver and Gold Groups) came afterwards. Their role is important with strong links between the three levels (delivery, tactical and strategic) and with other organisations. They support and intervene on behalf of the One Team when sensible actions are curtailed in some way (gaps, resources, sign off, liaison, links) and make things happen. Progress can be monitored and high level decisions taken (for example to continue to resource the project). The great value of this project is that it is driven from the bottom up and supported in this way.
- 1.14 With better outcomes there should soon be evidence of significant savings and the beginnings of long term change. The project is being written up as an operating model which the Police are interested in trying out in other high demand areas across Avon and Somerset. Sector Inspector Stuart Bell has just been asked up to Police Headquarters for twelve months to build this into the proposed new Police Operating Model the Force would like to introduce.
- 1.15 So the time is now appropriate for joint planning of services and service delivery where there are overlaps with the Constabulary and Somerset County Council in particular. This will enable both officers and members to collectively forward plan, ensuring cost effectiveness and sustainability throughout this difficult period. Government tells us that each Troubled Family is estimated to cost on average 75K a year and that in Taunton Deane and West Somerset we have 262 (this adds up to a massive probable cost of over £19 million a year). Significant savings can be made in improving the lives of these families through Family Focus and the One Team way of working.
- 1.16 Aligning services should improve all areas of business. This does not mean a unitary authority (unsuited to Somerset in my view) but we might start by sharing a building, which is being offered and is the most cost effective practical solution for both local authorities (and the most sensible from the public's point of view, most of whom think we are one and the same anyway).

Cllr Jane Warmington

# Council Meeting – 10 December 2013

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

### 1. Business Support and Networking

- 1.1 The Economic Development Team has supported and worked with at least 20 businesses on a 1:1 basis over the last three months to assist their growth and investment. These have ranged from small, start up enterprises to some of the Borough's largest employers.
- 1.2 **Advanced Manufacturers' Forum** - Working alongside Somerset College the Council introduced a new Taunton Deane Advanced Manufacturers' Forum in early December. The Forum pulled together some of the larger manufacturers in Taunton Deane that are involved in research, development and innovation. Senior representatives of five large businesses attended the breakfast event and discussed skills, graduate recruitment and the other issues they face operating in the area. It is hoped that the Forum will continue, drawing upon additional, similar employers.
- 1.3 **Inward investment enquiries** - We have recently received ten enquiries to relocate to the Borough.
- 1.4 **Retail** - In Taunton two new shops have opened in The Orchard Centre - Game and Romans Originals. Planning is going through on 4 East Street and 45 Bridge Street (change to restaurant) in Taunton. Planning permission was also granted to the proposed Go Outdoors retailer on the edge of Taunton, which will create around 40 jobs in the first instant. A new modern style Indian Restaurant, Tamarind Bay, has opened in Wellington
- 1.5 **Somerset Work Hubs** - Somerset County Council (SCC) has recently invited bids from property owners to develop work hubs in the County. Funding is available in rural parts of the County towards the development of up to three work hubs that will provide flexible, informal space for businesses. Our Economic Development Team pulled together an event in October with four providers of rural workspace and the SCC to discuss the programme. Bids have yet to be submitted but it is anticipated that three schemes will be submitted from within Taunton Deane.
- 1.6 **Castle Green Business Group** - A first meeting of the businesses and organisations surrounding Castle Green was held in October, coordinated by the Economic Development Team. With a primary focus on delivering events in the area, the group is an effective forum to communicate with the businesses, to encourage collaboration, and to try to address their concerns.



## **2. Business Grants**

2.1 New business grants awarded in the past three months total £3,147.38. A further £2,000 has been awarded from the Rural Services Grant. The grants awarded have been to:-

- Brendan Orchards Cooperative, Wiveliscombe towards the cost of a market wagon and a gazebo in connection with a fruit juice business;
- Integrated Training SW Limited of Hillcommon towards the cost of purchasing equipment for providing First Aid training to the community and private business;
- Oake and District Community Shop and Post Office towards the cost of the installation of a shop security system and EPOS system;
- Country Town Lettings Limited, Staplegrove towards the cost of a network attached storage facility;
- TwoTon Cross Fit, Staplegrove towards specialist gym flooring and equipment;
- Rowles Davis Limited of Taunton towards the cost of marketing their new Planning and Highways Law business. Costs covered will be a website, logo design and business cards;
- JP Rata Limited of Taunton towards the cost of a laptop, Microsoft Office and promotional literature for a new accountancy company
- Snappy Surfer, based in Wellington, towards equipment to set up their new photography company

## **3. Taunton Town Centre Company and BID (Business Improvement District)**

3.1 The proposal for a new BID in Taunton Town Centre has made significant progress in recent months, the company having consulted extensively with businesses over the priorities for the town and the need for a BID. The company has formally asked the Council to furnish it with the necessary information to hold the BID ballot, and is aiming for a ballot date at the end of February 2014. If approved the BID would commence early in the following financial year.

3.2 The company has introduced on a pilot basis a weekly street market on a Friday and Saturday. The pilot was carried out over a six week period in October and November and was very well received by visitors, the market traders and many retailers. The Council is hoping to support the markets through the purchase of market stalls, which will enable the introduction of

new, specialist markets in other spaces in the town centre, such as Castle Green and Somerset Square.

- 3.3 Working alongside Councillor Kelly Durdan the Town Centre Company delivered the annual Christmas celebrations in the town centre, commencing with the Lights Switch on event and Street Market on Sunday, 17 November 2013. The event was very well attended by the public with an estimated 96,000 footfall in the town for the occasion and well supported by businesses.
- 3.4 Fund raising under the 'Make Taunton Sparkle' campaign proved difficult, although many businesses generously contributed prizes to the raffle and gave sponsorship donations. I thank Councillor Durdan for undertaking the challenge again and congratulate her for raising around £4,000 towards the lights and the switch-on event. Also her last year's list of companies and private contributors was of great use to the Town Centre Company in raising funds for this season. The Council contributed £10,000 towards the project.

#### **4. The Brewhouse Theatre**

- 4.1 Since the Council agreed to the purchase of the contents and the remainder of the lease of The Brewhouse, significant progress has been made alongside the Taunton Theatre Association to reopen the theatre in 2014.
- 4.2 Invitations were issued in September to organisations that wished to be considered to operate the theatre. One proposal was received, that being from the Taunton Theatre Association (TTA). Over the past two months, and drawing upon the advice of the Council's expert consultant, David Pratley Associates, the Brewhouse Steering Group has received and considered the TTA's proposed Business Plan.
- 4.3 The Steering Group will meet one more time and I hope to sign off a lease on the property and a Service Level Agreement on our financial contribution at the earliest opportunity. All things being equal the TTA hopes to launch the new theatre in April followed by a more formal opening ceremony later in the summer.
- 4.4 Maintenance work on the Brewhouse, to make it fit for use, has been undertaken and is on schedule to be completed at the beginning of December. The work is expected to be completed within the budget.
- 4.5 An approach was made by Taunton School requesting the use of the theatre for their end of term production, which is 'Cats'. Taunton School has taken the property on a short term tenancy arrangement during early December to enable it to perform its annual production.

#### **5. Taunton Growth Prospectus**

- 5.1 The Council is currently preparing a Growth Prospectus for Taunton, which presents our vision for the town's growth over the next 15 years. It outlines

the strategic schemes needed to deliver Taunton's economic potential in order to generate commitment and secure the necessary investment from key partners locally, nationally and internationally.

- 5.2 At a consultation event on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2013, 40 local businesses heard about the Prospectus and were invited to offer their views on Taunton's future economic growth to inform the document.
- 5.3 The final version of the Prospectus will be produced in the New Year, and will also form part of the County Council's Growth Plan.

## **6. Small Business Saturday**

- 6.1 The Economic Development Team has been working with local traders to create events across Taunton Deane to dovetail the national Small Business Saturday Scheme that is happening on the 7 December 2013. Detail below:-

Taunton: We have partnered with Santander plc and the Gazette to hold a competition to promote independent shops. Retailers will be nominated and voted for to win a cash prize of £2,500 plus two days of free business advice and a years advertising in the Gazette. The event was held in the Taunton branch of Santander on 4 December 2013.

Wellington: Production of four information boards that will be placed in the towns car parks to promote the town's retailers. During November 55 shops were involved in a programme of promotions/ discounts for customers (each shop offering something different). If green and red balloons are displayed outside the shop is participating in the initiative!

Wiveliscombe: Led by the Wiveliscombe Business Association, 7 December will see a day of activities, including the unveiling of a 'mock up' traders board in each of the towns car parks to promote the towns retailers. The boards will be replaced in the New Year by permanent boards (subject to Planning). Other activities and celebrations will include Puppet shows, an Art and Craft Fair and an event at Cotleigh Brewery.

## **7. Job Clubs**

- 7.1 In June 2013 the contract for the delivery of Job Clubs in Halcon, Priorswood and Wellington was awarded again to Vista for 12 months. 18 people into work has been achieved over the past three months, with a further 30 people undertaking training or a work placement.

## **8. Business Advice Workshops**

- 8.1 Following a tendering process in September we appointed the Somerset Business Agency to deliver a programme of workshops to provide start up and business advice to small businesses in Taunton Deane. The six month

programme commenced in October and already 73 businesses have attended and received support.

## **9. Land for Business Investment**

- 9.1 Over recent months significant progress has been on a number of fronts to bring new employment land to the market, demonstrating significant optimism and faith in Taunton Deane's future economic prospects. All of the following are receiving active support from officers:-

**Westpark, Wellington** - Summerfield Developments continues to invest in speculative as well as bespoke buildings on the business park. It is currently nearing completion of the development of Block C comprising 14 small units for local and inward investors. Already one has been sold and a further six are committed to occupants. The company has recently submitted a planning application to enable the expansion of the site, and is in advanced discussions with two further investors, including involving a 100,000 sq ft development. .

**Wiveliscombe Business Park** - CMS Developments secured Planning Permission in October for the development of a 24 bed low security health facility. A developer is on board, which will enable the commencement of the development of the whole business park, opening it up to other business investment.

**Land East of Junction 25, Taunton** - The Council has appointed Peter Brett Associates to carry out an Economic Demand Assessment in relation to the potential employment site at the rear of the Park and Ride Scheme. If appropriate, the site would form a vital element of Taunton's land supply in the medium to long term.

**Land at Monkton Heathfield** - In partnership with the developer we have expressed interest in purchasing this land, to the agents. We await their response. Any deal will have to come back to be considered by Full Council.

## **10. Regeneration and development**

- 10.1 LHC, in carrying out the Rethink Project, has recently held a briefing meeting with all Councillors as part of their final consultation. They are now working on the final draft which should be presented to the Taunton Economic Advisory Board (TEAB) on 9 December 2013.
- 10.2 A new directional monolith and sign post has been installed at the top of the High Street. Work continues on installing the twig benches and outstanding repairs are being completed, all of which should be in place before Christmas. In January, the remaining drainage work is planned to be completed. The budget for these works will come from the capital budget and from the maintenance budget. Presently, Taunton Deane owns the drains.

Completion of this work is essential as it will enable their adoption by the Highways Department.

- 10.3 There is also a directional signpost adjacent to County Stores, which directs people to Castle Green and other places.
- 10.4 The deal on the Thales site is about to be completed. Hopefully I can update Councillors at the meeting.
- 10.5 Flood risk assessment - Further work on the modelling of the Tone Catchment Basin has now concluded that Taunton's flood protection system is at a level to cope with the 1:100 year storm. Further work is still required upstream to offset the effects of climate change.
- 10.6 Work on the Northern Inner Distributor Road is progressing well, and at the moment is on schedule.
- 10.7 The Asset Management Strategy report has been completed by the consultants, Bob Baber. It will be considered by Executive prior to this Council Meeting, so there may be some amendments to the paper.

## **11. Taunton Tourist Information, Ticket and Travel Centre (TIC) Update**

### **11.1 Visitor Numbers and Spend**

The TIC has continued to have a busy autumn. The location of the Cards for Good Causes Charity Christmas Card pop-up shop within the office has boosted throughput and sales (this will remain in the TIC until the 23 December). Increased interest in the Tacchi Morris Arts Centre and other cultural venues in the area have also seen a significant upturn in event ticket sales over the same period.

### **11.2 Tourism Update and Business Support**

The TIC Lead and Economic Development Project Officer continue to work with the Somerset Tourism Association (STA) attending board meetings and assisting with their promotional activities and events including working on a new updated version of the [www.visitsomerset.co.uk](http://www.visitsomerset.co.uk) website.

The STA has just launched its first Destination Management Plan as the first step of their strategy to become a Destination Management Organisation for the County.

- 11.3 The TIC has been and will be covering telephone calls for the Somerset Visitor Centre whilst it is temporarily closed until mid Summer 2014.
- 11.4 Meetings have been held with the Somerset County Cricket Club and Taunton Theatre Association and colleagues in Community Leisure, Licensing and Taunton Town Centre Company over joint promotion and possible marketing opportunities.

- 11.5 Advertisements promoting Taunton and the events taking place in the town have been placed in First Great Western's Escape Magazine, Lamp magazine, Somerset Jewel of the South West brochure, Suited and Booted and Wessex Water's Customer Magazine.
- 11.6 Twitter continues to be a positive way for the TIC Team to promote the area and the @TauntonTIC account now has over 1,600 followers which are growing each week.
- 11.7 **New Activities Planned**  
The TIC Lead is continuing to work with the Asset Management Team on the possible relocation of the TIC with a report due to come to committee for consideration in early Spring 2014.

I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate Jon Sumner on the excellent work which he has done for us and wish him all the best in his future career working for Avon and Somerset Police. His asset management work has been exceptional and has enabled us, over the last two years, to put our records onto the 'Atrium system' provided by SouthwestOne. We have, as a result, benefited considerably from his endeavours.

Councillor Norman Cavill