

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 25 February 2014 at 18:30.

Agenda

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

- 1 To receive the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 10 December 2013 (attached).
- 2 To report any apologies for absence.
- 3 To receive any communications.
- 4 Declaration of Interests
To receive declarations of Disposable 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 Information report regarding the re-opening of The Brewhouse Theatre, Taunton. Report of the Economic Development Manager (attached).
- 8 Flooding response for the Levels – Council Tax and National Non Domestic Rates. Report of the Assistant Director - Resources (attached).
- 9 Changes to Standing Order 18 – Voting. Report of the Assistant Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer and Councillor David Reed (Chairman of the Corporate Governance Committee)
- 10 Part I - To deal with written questions to, and receive the following recommendations from, the Executive:-
 - (i) Councillor Williams - Recommendations relating to:-

- (a) General Fund Revenue Estimates 2014/2015 (attached);
- (b) Capital Programme Budget Estimates 2014/2015 (attached);
- (c) Council Tax Setting 2014/2015 (attached);
- (d) Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy (attached); and
- (e) Council Tax Base 2014/2015 and Business Rates Retention and the National Non-Domestic Rates Return 2014/2015 (attached).

(ii) Councillor Mrs Adkins - Recommendation relating to the Housing Revenue Account Estimates 2014/2015 (attached).

(iii) Councillor Edwards - Recommendation relating to the Introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in Taunton Deane – Regulation 123 List and Governance Arrangements (attached).

(iv) Councillor Mrs Vivienne Stock-Williams - Recommendation relating to Localism Act 2011 – Pay Policy Statement (attached).

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

- (a) Councillor John Williams - Leader of the Council;
 - (b) Councillor Norman Cavill - Economic Development, Asset Management, Arts and Tourism;
 - (c) Councillor James Hunt - Environmental Services and Climate Change;
 - (d) Councillor Catherine Herbert - Sports, Parks and Leisure;
 - (e) Councillor Jean Adkins - Housing Services;
 - (f) Councillor Vivienne Stock- Williams - Corporate Resources;
 - (g) Councillor Mark Edwards - Planning, Transportation and Communications;
- and
- (h) Councillor Jane Warmington - Community Development.

12 Appointment of Civic Marshall (attached).

Bruce Lang
Assistant Chief Executive

28 July 2016

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

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

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

Except at meetings of Full Council, where public participation will be restricted to Public Question Time only, if a member of the public wishes to address the Committee on any matter appearing on the agenda, the Chairman will normally permit this to occur when that item is reached and before the Councillors begin to debate the item.

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

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

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

Full Council, Executive, Committees and Task and Finish Review agendas, reports and minutes are available on our website: www.tauntondeane.gov.uk



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



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

For further information about the meeting, please contact the Corporate Support Unit on 01823 356414 or email r.bryant@tauntondeane.gov.uk

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Council Members:-

Councillor V Stock-Williams (Chairman and Mayor of Taunton Deane)
Councillor H Prior-Sankey (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 M 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 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 10 December 2013 at 6.30 pm.

Present The Mayor (Councillor Ms Lisgo)
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor D Durdan)
Councillors Mrs Adkins, Mrs Allgrove, Mrs Baker, Beaven, Bowrah, Cavill, Coles, Denington, Ms Durdan, Mrs Gaden, A 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, Gill Slattery, T Slattery, Miss Smith, Mrs Smith, P Smith, Mrs Stock-Williams, Stone, Swaine, Tooze, Watson, Mrs Waymouth, A Wedderkopp, D Wedderkopp, Williams and Wren

1. Nelson Mandela / Former Councillor Terry Murphy

The Mayor referred to the recent death of Nelson Mandela and asked how the Council might wish to remember him. A memorial garden in one of Taunton Deane's Parks was suggested.

The Mayor also announced the death of former Councillor Terry Murphy. Tributes were paid to Terry Murphy by several of the Councillors present.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council held on 12 November 2013, copies having been sent to each Member, were signed by the Mayor.

3. Apologies

Councillors Bishop, Edwards, Farbahi, Mrs Floyd, Gaines, Mrs Govier, Hayward, Ross and Mrs Warmington.

4. Declaration of Interests

Councillors Mrs Baker, Coles, A Govier, 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. Councillor Hunt declared personal interests both as a Member of Somerset County Council and in relation to Member pensions. Councillor Prior-Sankey declared a personal interest as a Member of Somerset County Council and a prejudicial interest in respect of the proposed redevelopment of dwellings at Bacon Drive, Taunton. She indicated that she would leave the meeting if any discussion on this topic took place. 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 Nottrodt declared a personal interest as a Director of Southwest One. 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. Councillor Miss James declared a personal interest as an employee of Somerset College.

5. **Communications**

Councillor Gill Slattery referred to the recent production by a local school at The Brewhouse Theatre.

Somerset College had been approached by Taunton School to design and apply the make-up for its production of 'Cats'. The college students were given the commission as a design project and rose to the challenge of making up the 44 strong cast at each of the performances in the seven show run. The feedback received had been excellent and it had been a thoroughly enjoyable experience for all involved.

The Mayor responded by saying that the performance she had attended was 'beyond stunning' and offered her congratulations to all of the organisations involved.

6. **Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning a proposal to support the Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control.

Smoking was the single greatest cause of premature death and disease in Somerset, and the single largest factor in health inequalities. It was also a major driver of poverty. The move of public health to local government presented an opportunity for local authorities to lead local action to tackle smoking, and to ensure that the tobacco industry was not able to influence local tobacco control policy.

Every year in England more than 80,000 people died from smoking related diseases. This was more than the combined total of the next six causes of preventable deaths, including alcohol and drugs misuse.

The following facts were reported:-

- Reducing smoking in our communities significantly increased household incomes and benefited the local economy;
- Reducing smoking amongst the most disadvantaged in our communities was the single most important means of reducing health inequalities;
- Smoking was an addiction largely taken up by children and young people;

- The smoking epidemic - The tobacco industry needed to recruit 200,000 smokers a year in the United Kingdom (UK) to maintain current levels of consumption. The great majority of these new smokers would be under 18 years old;
- The illicit trade in tobacco funded the activities of organised criminal gangs and gave children access to cheap tobacco.

The Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) was the World's first Public Health Treaty, negotiated through the World Health Organisation. It had been ratified by more than 170 countries, including the UK.

Key provisions included 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; tackling licit trade in tobacco products; and ending sales to children.

The FCTC was binding on all levels of Government, including Local Government. The national tobacco control plan aimed to cut the number of smokers by 210,000 every year.

Reported that the Somerset County Pension Fund, administered by the County Council through the Pensions Committee, invested in tobacco companies as part of its portfolio of investments. Approximately 1.4% of the fund was currently invested directly in tobacco stocks, amounting to some £19,200,000, producing around £800,000 per annum income.

In recent years there had been substantial investment in smoking cessation within the NHS, a service that was now commissioned by local authorities. The Government had also invested heavily in mass media campaigns to both reduce uptake and encourage cessation.

At its meeting on 26 September 2013, the Health and Wellbeing Board, agreed that it would be appropriate for improving public health in Somerset to divest from tobacco, and to ask the Pensions Committee to reconsider its investment policy accordingly. The Board also asked the District Councils to seek a review of the investment policy.

The Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control was a response to the enormous damage smoking did to local communities. It was a commitment to take action and a statement about a local authority's dedication to protecting local communities from the harm caused by smoking.

So far, the declaration had been signed by ten Councils including Somerset County Council, Swindon Borough Council, Bath and North East Somerset Council and Bristol City Council.

Although the FCTC was binding on Local Government, signing the Declaration and the actions that followed would raise awareness and thus limit the likelihood of Taunton Deane Borough Council breaching UK Treaty obligations. Signing the Declaration would also show strong leadership on a key public health issue in the County.

The Pensions Committee had 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.

Resolved that:-

- (i) The Government Declaration on Tobacco Control be signed by Taunton Deane Borough Council; and
- (ii) Somerset County Council's request to its Pensions Committee to reconsider its investment policy in relation to the tobacco industry be supported.

7. Monkton Heathfield Capacity Funding

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the use of capacity support funding for the urban extension at Monkton Heathfield.

This development comprised a mixed use including 1,000 dwellings identified in the Taunton Deane Local Plan with a further 3,500 in the period up until 2026 allocated in the Core Strategy.

Whilst planning permission had been granted for the first phases and dwellings were now occupied, there remained considerable work and a number of issues that needed to be overcome. This was to ensure that delivery was provided at a rate that would make a substantial contribution to the Council's Housing land supply in years to come, as well as bringing forward much needed employment land.

Capacity support had therefore been sought from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to assist in unblocking potential hurdles to delivery.

In July 2013 the DCLG had made available up to £500,000 to the Council through the Large Sites Programme Capacity Fund. The initial payment of £300,000 had been received with the additional payment being received at the start of the next financial year on the basis that satisfactory progress had been made.

The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) was monitoring the award and support was also being received from the Advisory Team for Large Applications (ATLAS).

Further reported that 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 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' was found.

As the award was not ring fenced, approval from Taunton Deane Members was required in order to spend this money in accordance with the various work streams identified.

Resolved that a supplementary estimate of £300,000 be approved, funded by the grant received from the Department of Communities and Local Government, which would allow the Large Sites Programme Capacity Fund award to be spent on progressing the five work streams identified above.

8. **Members' Allowances 2014/2015**

Submitted report previously circulated of the Members' Allowances Panel following its annual review of Members' Allowances. A copy of the report and recommendations had been circulated to all Councillors.

Details of the Members' Allowances Scheme that had been recommended by the independent Panel were submitted. The Panel had once again recommended increases to the Special Responsibility Allowance paid to the two Scrutiny Committee Chairmen and had also recommended that a Special Responsibility Allowance be paid to the Chairman of the Standards Committee. The panel felt that the rate paid to carers of Councillor's dependents be increased from £6.19 per hour to £6.31 per hour.

In recognition of the improving economic conditions, the 1% pay award that had been made to Local Government employees from 1 April 2013 and the fact that Members' Allowances had remained static for the last five years the independent Panel further recommended a modest increase in the allowances for the forthcoming Financial Year.

The Panel also undertook to keep under review the situation relating to the proposal by the coalition Government to scrap Pensions for Councillors.

Moved by Councillor Mrs Hill and seconded by Councillor Mrs Allgrove, that the following be agreed:-

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;
- 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; and
- No Special Responsibility Allowance to be paid to the Chairman of the Standards Committee.

The motion was put and was carried.

9. Recommendations to Council from the Executive

(a) Earmarked Reserves Review

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

A fundamental review had therefore been undertaken of all General Fund Revenue Earmarked Reserves, which had involved each Reserve holder being interviewed and asked to provide evidence as to how the Reserve balance was planned to be used.

These interviews had 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 were expected to be spent by 31 March 2014.

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

- £250,000 – Self-Insurance Fund;
- £117,000 – Core Council Review – Property Services;
- £45,000 – Energy Efficiency Reserve;
- £25,000 – Stable Payroll Pension Reserve;
- £24,000 – Welfare and Finance Reform; and
- £12,000 – Healthy Workplace.

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

On the motion of Councillor Williams, it was

Resolved 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

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.

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

The Directors had reviewed and prioritised the entire list of capital schemes within the following categories:-

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

In addition to the above prioritisation, the Directors had also proposed the general principle that schemes would only be supported if they were "invest to save".

The results of the prioritisation review were shown in the tables below. They showed the costs of the continuing non-growth schemes for both general schemes and Deane DLO schemes. For 2013/2014 these schemes had already been approved but there had been no approvals beyond this financial year.

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
Total	1,125	34	410	0	0	681

It was proposed that the Deane DLO schemes should be funded from DLO resources so they effectively became 'self-financing'.

Existing Continuing Non-Growth DLO Schemes

	Annual £k	Priority				
		1	2	3	4	5
DLO Vehicles	180		180			
DLO Plant and Equipment	23		23			
Total	203		203			

The following table showed the bids for new non-growth schemes. These spanned the next five years and included one off schemes and yearly schemes.

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						
	2,290	0	180	0	30	2,080

Based on the above prioritisation exercise it was suggested that schemes within either Priority 1 or 2 should be funded. This meant that £180,000 of the

£2,081,000 'general' available funding would be used leaving a remaining general funding balance of £1,901,000.

The Council received funding through Section 106 Agreements that had to be spent on Affordable Housing Schemes. Through the prioritisation, affordable housing had been allocated a Priority 5. Nevertheless, it was recommended that the principal should be agreed that any funding received for affordable housing should be spent on this.

The growth schemes were overall allocated a Priority 3. Within this priority group a number of potential investment needs had been considered and ranked in order to provide a steer on which schemes should be supported as funds became available. These schemes were set out in the following table:-

Growth Schemes

Project	Rank	14/15 £k	15/16 £k	16/17 £k	17/18+ £k	Total £k
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
Total		24,620	3,500	9,240	15,000	52,360

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 existed.

It was reasonable to assume that the top growth scheme identified above could be progressed within existing funding streams. This would reduce the unallocated general funding to £920,000 and the Growth Reserve to £0.

If the prioritisation methodology was accepted, the Priority 1 and 2 schemes would be funded along with the affordable housing schemes and the top Growth Scheme. The additions to the capital programme and funding of additions would therefore be as shown in the table below:-

Planned additions to the Capital Programme

Project	14/15 £k	15/16 £k	Total £k
Chapel Roof	90	90	180
Affordable Housing (S106 / developer	450	174	624
Firepool Access	1,500	0	1,500
Total	2,040	264	2,304
Funded by:			
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
Total	2,040	264	2,304

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

Remaining Funding

	Total £k	Funding Used £k	Remaining Total £k
General Fund			
<i>Affordable Housing</i>			
Affordable Housing Receipts (S106 / developer contributions)	624	(624)	0
<i>DLO</i>			
DLO Vehicle Sales	7	0	7
<i>Growth Funding</i>			
Growth and Regeneration Reserve (NHB)	519	(519)	0
<i>General Funding</i>			
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
Sub Total: General Funding	2,081	(1,161)	920
TOTAL Remaining Funding	3,231	(2,304)	927

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

On the motion of Councillor Williams, it was

Resolved that:-

- (1) The Prioritisation Framework set out above 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

Consideration had been given to the proposed fees and charges for 2014/2015 for the following services:-

- Cemeteries and Crematorium;
- Waste Services;
- Housing;
- Licensing;
- Planning;
- Environmental Health;
- Deane Helpline; and
- Charging for Housing Act (Improvement and Prohibition) Notices and Immigration Visits.

Details of the proposed increases were submitted. No increases were proposed to Land Charges fees, the fees for recovering Court Costs or in connection with Building Control and charging for Housing Act Notices and Immigration Visits.

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

On the motion of Councillor Williams, it was

Resolved that the fees and charges for 2014/2015 in respect of the Cemeteries and Crematorium, Waste Services, Housing, Licensing, Planning, Environmental Health and the Deane Helpline be agreed.

(d) Local Development Scheme 2013

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

Localism Act 2011, required Local Planning Authorities to prepare a Local Development Scheme (LDS) and keep it updated.

The LDS was a rolling project management plan for the preparation of the planning policy documents that would direct future planning decisions in Taunton Deane.

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

The Local Development Framework Steering Group had suggested that 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.

On the motion of Councillor Edwards, it was

Resolved that:-

- (a) The latest version of the Local Development Scheme and timetable for the preparation of planning documents be adopted; and
- (b) Any future changes to the Local Development Scheme be agreed through the Local Development Framework Steering Group and Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation.

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

Following consultation on the Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), 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 Examination.

Subject to two suggested minor modifications, the Examiner had endorsed the Council's proposals for the levels of CIL within Taunton Deane and the zones within which they would apply.

Overall, the Examiner had concluded that the Council's proposed Charging Schedule provided 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 was important that systems were in place and functioning ahead of CIL implementation. It was therefore proposed to appoint a CIL Administration Officer early in 2014 for a two year period on the basis that the costs would be recouped from CIL receipts.

As the process of preparing to introduce CIL would take some time to implement it was proposed that CIL should be introduced in Taunton Deane with effect from 1 April 2014.

On the motion of Councillor Edwards, it was

Resolved that:-

- (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 on 13 November 2013, which incorporated the modifications recommended by the Examiner; and
- (3) The proposed Instalment Policy which was also set out in the Executive's Report,

all be approved.

(f) Review of Council Tax Support Scheme for 2014/2015

Council Tax Benefit (CTB) was abolished on 1 April 2013 and replaced with a locally designed "Council Tax Support" (CTS) scheme.

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 be applied to people of working age.

Full Council had previously adopted the CTS scheme only for the 2013/2014 financial year so consideration needed to be given to the scheme for the next financial year.

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

Indicative figures had shown that the LGFS would be reduced not only in 2014/2015 but in future years too. Therefore, it was possible Councillors might wish to consider applying cuts to localised CTS spending.

A decision not to change the money paid out by CTS would leave a greater cut in the remaining LGFS. A decision to decrease the money paid out by CTS by the same proportion the LGFS had been reduced could mean significant cuts in CTS available to working age recipients.

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 in 2015/2016 as proposed would 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 would 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. In such circumstances the Council did have a means of providing some discretionary assistance.

The funding for CTS within the 2013/2014 LGFS included a proportion relating to parishes and Special Expenses. The Council had previously decided to

pass on a proportion of this funding to parishes to reflect their reduction in funding as a result of CTS.

The Funding Settlement for 2014/2015 and beyond would not separately identify the proportion of funding for CTS for any preceptors. The Council therefore needed to determine the policy for providing any CTS Grant funding to parishes for 2014/2015. There were two options open to the Council:-

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.

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

Resolved 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 continued to provide discretionary help through the Discretionary Council Tax Assistance Policy to give extra short-term help towards Council Tax costs for those in hardship.

(g) Customer Access Strategy

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

It was vital for the Council as it moved forward with less resource at its disposal that technology was used wherever possible to provide access to services. For many this would be an improvement on the current situation as it would enable access to key services on a 24/7 basis.

The Council had already identified that it had to make suitable provision for those who did not have access to technology or had special needs.

This change could not be made without cost and a Business Case had been included within the Strategy for the investment that would be required which included:-

- 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 whilst 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 was estimated as £320,000 one off investment plus a continuing charge of £40,000 per annum.

There was the requirement for each service, to implement a 'channel shift' process – moving its way of operating wherever possible to self service. This would involve further cost and it was suggested that £50,000 should be allocated as a corporate resource to help support this work.

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

As approximately 20% of current customer contact costs were currently funded from the Housing Revenue Account, it was proposed that 20% of the £180,000 (£36,000) should continue to be funded from the same source.

One of the main purposes of implementing channel shift was to make financial savings for the Council. With this in mind it was 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.

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

With only a 25% shift, the payback on the one off investment of £180,000 would be made within one year with a continuing saving of over £200,000 in the years following if all the savings accrued 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 the year to be implemented during 2015.

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

Resolved that

(1) The revised Customer Access Strategy 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.

(h) Asset Strategy

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

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.

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 would:-

- (i) Ensure the Council made 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 had 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 had identified a number of key issues which were summarised below:-

- The acute financial pressures on the Council to which the property portfolio would 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 contributed to the Council's objectives; and
- 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 focused on the Council's priorities and to reduce net revenue expenditure.

The Council's gross spend on General Fund assets was 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 were 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 was required.

The Strategy development process had identified some fundamental areas where improvements were essential. Key amongst these were:-

- (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 was in progress following the decisions in connection with the West Somerset Project. However, it was important to understand that implementing the Strategy would require additional staff resource and expertise, compared with the current situation.

Additionally, it was vital that action was taken now to provide for the provision of accurate property cost and income data in the future.

Consequently, the Executive was of the view that £90,000 from General Fund Reserves should be set aside to fund an additional specialist Estates Surveyor for a period of two years.

On the motion of Councillor Cavill, it was

Resolved that:-

- (a) The new Asset Strategy and Decision Making Framework – to incorporate the revised wording agreed by the Executive – 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.

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

The Mayor certified that the item of business covered by Minute No.11 below

was urgent and required a decision before the next scheduled meeting of the Council.

11. **Proposed Exemption from the Treasury Management Strategy Statement**

Each year the Council approved the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS).

The existing TMSS (covering 2013/2014) was in the process of being refreshed and would be presented to Members for consideration after Christmas. The existing parameters for investment and borrowing (type / maturity limit / portfolio limit) were being fundamentally reviewed to reflect the shifting financial risks in the economy and banking industry.

Reported that the Council had been presented with an opportunity to invest with another local authority at a rate which was favourable to that which could currently be achieved on the money market.

The existing TMSS gave the authority to invest with other local authorities – as long as the deal was for no more than 30% of the overall investment portfolio and the maturity period was no longer than five years.

The opportunity available was to invest £2,500,000 for a period of 16-17 years at a rate of 3.9% (60 basis points above 15 year gilt rates). The local authority was looking to borrow £7,500,000 in total, from various other local authority sources.

The issue was not the level of investment, but the maturity date. The risks around this longer term investment were mitigated by having a break clause opportunity in the deal every six months.

In the view of the Section 151 Officer, the indicative financial advantage to our revenue budget was potentially an additional £80,000 of investment income per annum. Should the investment market change significantly the Council could exercise the break clause and invest elsewhere.

Resolved that the exemption sought from the 2013/2014 Treasury Management Strategy Statement to allow the investment transaction set out above to proceed be approved.

12. **Reports of the Leader of the Council and Executive Councillors**

(i) **Leader of the Council (Councillor Williams)**

Councillor Williams's report covered the following topics:-

- Taunton Town Centre Rethink;
- Shared Management and Services with West Somerset Council (WSC);
- The Brewhouse Theatre and Arts Centre;

- Economic Growth Prospectus for Taunton;
- Taunton Town Centre Fun Day and Lights Switch On;
- Budget Setting;
- Employment Land at Bathpool; and
- National Citizens Service Graduation Ceremony.

(ii) **Environmental Services and Climate Change (Councillor Hayward)**

No report.

(iii) **Sport, Parks and Leisure (Councillor Mrs Herbert)**

The report from Councillor Mrs Herbert dealt with activities taking place in the following areas:-

- Parks;
- Community Leisure and Play; and
- Tone Leisure (Taunton Deane) Limited Activities.

(iv) **Housing Services (Councillor Mrs Adkins)**

Councillor Mrs Adkins submitted her report which drew attention to the following:-

- Housing Enabling;
- Affordable Housing Target;
- Council House Building;
- Estates Management – Welfare Reform;
- Estates Management – Rent Arrears; and
- Estates Management - Voids.

(v) **Corporate Resources (Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams)**

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

- Corporate and Client Services;
- Corporate Health and Safety;
- Corporate Performance;
- Customer Contact Centre;
- Legal and Democratic Services; and
- Revenues and Benefits.

(vi) **Planning, Transportation and Communications (Councillor Edwards)**

The report from Councillor Edwards provided information on the following areas within his portfolio:-

- Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan

- (SADMP);
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL);
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA);
- Authorities Monitoring Report;
- Routes to the River Tone;
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plans;
- Communications; and
- Car Parking.

(vii) **Community Leadership (Councillor Mrs Jane Warmington)**

Councillor Mrs Warmington presented the Community Leadership report which focused on the Efficient and Effective Delivery of Services with Better Outcomes.

(viii) **Economic Development, Asset Management, Arts and Tourism (Councillor Cavill)**

The report from Councillor Cavill covered:-

- Business Support and Networking;
- Business Grants;
- Taunton Town Centre Company and BID (Business Improvement District);
- The Brewhouse Theatre;
- Taunton Growth Prospectus;
- Small Business Saturday;
- Jobs Clubs;
- Business Advice Workshops;
- Land for Business Investment;
- Regeneration and Development; and
- Taunton Tourist Information, Ticket and Travel Centre Update.

(Councillor Mrs Waymouth declared a personal interest as a Governor of Taunton School during the discussion of Councillor Cavill's report to Council.)

(Councillors Mrs Baker, Henley, Meikle, Mrs Messenger and D Wedderkopp all left the meeting at 8.51 pm. Councillors A Govier, Hall and C Hill left the meeting at 8.55 pm. Councillors D Reed, Mrs Reed, Gill Slattery, Stone, Swaine and Wren left the meeting at 8.57 pm. Councillor Morrell left the meeting at 9.09 pm and Councillor Mrs Herbert left at 9.21 pm.)

(The meeting ended at 9.27 pm.)

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

Council Meeting - 25 February 2014

Information report regarding the re-opening of The Brewhouse Theatre, Taunton

Report of the Economic Development Manager

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

Negotiations have progressed with the Taunton Theatre Association (TTA) in recent months to secure the reopening of The Brewhouse Theatre and Arts Centre. Members will recall that the Council purchased the lease on the property from the Administrator in October 2013.

The Executive subsequently approved the leasing of the property to the TTA in December 2013 and resolved to delegate authority to the Executive Portfolio Holder to sign off the TTA's Business Plan (once submitted and in an acceptable form) and to enter a lease and a funding agreement with the TTA.

The Brewhouse Steering Group met on 10 February 2014 and considered correspondence from the TTA intended to reassure the Members of the robustness of the Business Plan. The Steering Group acknowledged the uncertainties – both practical and economic – involved in the re-opening of the theatre (particularly for the period immediately after re-opening) and agreed to sign off the Business Plan.

A draft set of Heads of Terms for a ten year lease on the property and a draft funding agreement in relation to the Council's annual grant have both been issued to the TTA. A verbal update on progress with those two documents will be offered at the meeting.

Under the proposed terms of the lease the Council will retain responsibility for the maintenance of the external fabric of the property. Upon consideration of this item in December 2013 the Executive agreed to allocate £70,000 per year to the maintenance for a period of five years.

Officers have since obtained advice that the total maintenance cost over the proposed ten year term of the lease will be in the region of £601,000.

The Council should therefore note the long term financial implications of entering the lease, i.e. that budgetary provision will need to be made during years five to ten of the lease period in connection with the maintenance obligations for which the Council will be assuming responsibility.

Subject to completion of the lease and the signing of the funding agreement in the next few weeks, the TTA is planning to reopen the theatre initially in April with activity during the Summer months. This will culminate in a formal opening in the Autumn. The programme of activity will be shared with Councillors as it is developed.

Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Council – 25 February 2014

Flooding response for the Levels – Council Tax and National Non Domestic Rates

Report of the Assistant Director - Resources

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

1 Executive Summary

This report is requesting an update to the Council's discretionary tax relief policies in respect of villages in Taunton Deane that have been most affected by the recent flooding: Saltmore, Burrowbridge, Stathe, North Curry, Stoke St Gregory, Curload, Knapp and Ruishton.

Statutory reliefs are being applied for households that have had to evacuate their properties due to flooding. The proposal is to allocate a sum of up to £40,000 to provide support for council tax bills for residents that have been flooded by remain living upstairs, or those left stranded in the flooded areas where their properties may not be flooded but are inaccessible through the normal road infrastructure. The Council will be requesting a financial contribution from the major preceptors in the area, towards the cost of council tax relief.

On the 12 February 2014 the Prime Minister announced that 100% business rates relief for three months would be given to businesses affected by the flooding. Full guidance has not been issued yet but it is assumed that any lost income will be reimbursed by Central Government Grant.

2 Background

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to request that Council agree Taunton Deane Borough Council's response to the flooding on the levels in relation to Council Tax and Business Rates.
- 2.2 This report sets out what help the Council can provide to those residents in areas significantly affected by severe flooding, that have been flooded since late December/ early January and who pay Council Tax, Business Rates or both and are affected by the recent flooding.
- 2.3 Flooding on the levels has affected three of the Somerset Districts. Taunton Deane Borough Council, Sedgemoor District Council, and South Somerset District Council have been working together to take a consistent and fair approach in providing support to Council Tax payers in the affected villages. The villages in Taunton Deane that have been

most affected by the recent flooding are Saltmore, Burrowbridge, Stathe, North Curry, Stoke St Gregory, Curload, Knapp and Ruishton. This is a distressing time for those residents who have been forced to leave their homes or have chosen to remain in a flooded property. The impact of the floods applies to businesses as well as people's homes. Unless already exempt there will be a liability to pay Council Tax, or Business Rates, or in the case of a mixed hereditament possibly both. There are already some discounts or exemptions that can be applied but these do not cover all situations arising from the current flooding.

- 2.4 The proposals would apply a policy extension to two policies already agreed by Taunton Deane members:
- Section 13a (1)(c) Reductions Procedures
 - Business Rates Discretionary Relief Policy effective from 2014 and the previous policy from 2008 up to 31 March 2014

3 Council Tax

- 3.1 Centrally prescribed Council Tax and Business Rate reliefs do not offer any specific support for victims of flooding. However, where a property has been left uninhabitable and the residents have vacated the property the local "Class D" discount (previously "Class A"), already in place, can be awarded for a period of up to 52 weeks. This has been applied automatically where the Council has been notified or been given evidence that this has happened, and would end when the property is reoccupied. So far 10 properties have been classified as uninhabitable and the discount applied (this could increase). This cost is borne by all of the major precepting authorities.
- 3.2 Authorities can provide a "local discount" under exceptional circumstances such as flooding under Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended and empowers a billing authority as follows:-
- 1) Where a person is liable to pay Council Tax in respect of any chargeable dwelling and any day, the billing authority for the area in which the dwelling is situated may reduce the amount which he is liable to pay as respects the dwelling and the day to such extent as it thinks fit;
 - 2) The power under subsection (1) above includes power to reduce and amount to nil;
 - 3) The power under subsection (1) may be exercised in relation to particular cases by determining a class of case in which liability is to be reduced to an extent provided by the determination.
- 3.3 The Council has the right to choose whether to use this power on a case by case basis or it also has the right to specify a class of use. A class of use is where several people who pay Council Tax fall into a group because their circumstances are similar e.g. Council Tax payers who have been affected by flooding. Members are requested to

consider 100% discount for six months for a “class of property” in this case residents of Saltmore, Burrowbridge, Stathe, North Curry, Stoke St Gregory, Curload, Knapp and Ruishton whose homes were flooded at the end of December/ early January.

- 3.4 The billing authority awarding the discount (in this case TDBC) must fund the cost of that discount. This means that the other precepting authorities wishing to support this initiative would need to make a direct financial contribution to TDBC to support this otherwise the whole cost would be borne by TDBC. Normally residents would apply to the local authority setting out the individual circumstances for each property but in this case there is sufficient evidence to apply the discount without this requirement to approximately 15 homes within these specific villages. The discount proposed in this report would apply where the property was or still is flooded since late December/ early January and the resident has decided to remain in the property (living upstairs). We do not know how long the flooding will continue for or how long the clear up will take. At this time the period of award proposed is 100% for a period of up to approximately six months from 23 December 2013 (or date first flooded) to 30 June 2014. If members agree these proposals we will write to the individuals letting them know of the decision with revised bills being sent out in early April.
- 3.5 In addition it is proposed that if a household is inaccessible due to flooding of the surrounding area and road infrastructure, such that the occupants are fully cut off and stranded in their homes (e.g. receiving supplies by other means of transport other than cars/motorbikes/vans and lorries) will receive 100% relief via section 13a for a maximum of 3 months. It is estimated this could range from an estimated 20 properties.
- 3.6 It would be appropriate to possibly discount other properties on the Levels or other severely flooded areas depending on their individual circumstances but these would need to be based on individual requests. This would be based on a short application form and it is recommended that the Assistant Director – Resources in consultation with the Portfolio Holder – Corporate Resources and Health & Wellbeing is delegated authority to award up to 100% discount for up to 6 months. The delegation will cease on the 30 June 2014.
- 3.7 It is not proposed to apply a discount to any residents who’s home has not been flooded but may have been inconvenienced by the floods e.g. for travel to and from work.

4 Business Rates

- 4.1 On the 12 February 2014 the Prime Minister announced that 100% relief for three months would be given to businesses affected by the flooding. Full guidance has not been issued yet but any lost income will be reimbursed by Central Government Grant.
- 4.2 The time limit of three months may not be enough time for some

businesses to re-occupy so there may be a mix of assistance given with options that we already had available.

4.3 Statutory reductions will be applied before any discretionary relief or new 3 months flood relief announced (it is unlikely that the flood relief will be overridden by statutory reliefs).

- Empty rate relief - where businesses have vacated due to the floods we are able to give up to 3 months 100% relief, or 6 months for industrial units.
- Hardship - where the income of a business has suffered as a result of the flooding they are able to apply under the Council's hardship policy.

4.4 Note - Agricultural Land and Building - These are generally exempt from Business Rates and do not appear in the rating list (with a few exceptions).

4.5 The following advice has been issued by the Valuation Office Agency:

"Flooding in England and Wales, and its impact on business rates

If your premises have been damaged by severe flooding, you may be entitled to a temporary reduction in your rateable value. This will reduce the amount of tax you pay while you get your property back in business.

The VOA is working to identify and assess business property that has been damaged in areas hit by severe flooding, to ensure that those affected are not paying tax on a property that cannot be used.

Call us on 03000 501 501 (England) or 03000 505 505 (Wales) to discuss the details. Each case will need to be considered on its own merits".

4.6 They have also advised Local Authorities that if they are aware of affected properties to refer them direct rather than signpost the ratepayer to the Valuation Office.

4.7 The Revenues Team will work to identify affected premises and refer them to the Valuation Office.

5 Finance Comments

5.1 Further work is currently being done to ensure those residents that have been affected are being identified to enable the Council to apply the discount. It is estimated from current data that the discretionary discounts will cost approximately £17k-£20k. However, we need to ensure that all properties eligible have been identified and it is recommended that members allocate up to £40,000 from General Reserves (this should be offset by projected underspend in the current financial year, which would transfer to General Reserves at the year

end). If the other major precepting authorities agree to contribute, the Council's cost will reduce to approximately £4,500 and those contributions can be returned to Reserves.

5.2 Members will note that it is fully expected that Somerset County Council specifically will fund their element of the discount amounting to approximately £29,000 having already made a public announcement of support for and commitment to the initiative on the 12th and 13th of February.

5.3 The cost of statutory reliefs will be shared through the Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit allocations. Data is still being collected and analysed at the time of issuing this report, but it is reasonable to estimate the total cost could be in the region of £50k-£70k. The TDBC share of this would be in the region of £5k-£7k.

6 Legal Comments

6.1 None for the purposes of this report.

7 Links to Corporate Aims

7.1 This proposal is in response to the emergency situation in respect of severe flooding, and therefore fits with our Civil Contingencies priority.

8 Environmental and Community Safety Implications

8.1 None associated with this report.

9 Equalities Impact

9.1 None associated with this report.

10 Risk Management

10.1 None for the purposes of this report.

11 Partnership Implications

11.1 The Council has been working with colleagues in Sedgemoor and South Somerset District Councils with a view to providing a similar level of financial support through tax reliefs, for those communities most affected by the severe flooding.

12 Recommendations

12.1 That the Council uses its discretionary powers to introduce a once-off local Council Tax discount of 100% for up to 6 months for residents in Saltmore, Burrowbridge, Stathe, North Curry, Stoke St Gregory, Curload, Knapp and Ruishton, who have decided not to leave their flooded property using the award criteria set out in this report.

- 12.2 That up to £40,000 is allocated from General Reserves.
- 12.3 That consideration and allocation of discounts of up to 100% for up to 6 months, for other domestic properties in the severely flooded areas that have been flooded, are delegated to the Assistant Director – Resources in consultation with the Portfolio Holder – Corporate Resources and Health and Wellbeing for any applications received by the Council prior to 30th June 2014 only and a further report on the use of this delegated authority be provided to Council after it has expired.
- 12.4 Note the help that is available for Business Rates to assist businesses affected by the flooding.

Background Papers

None

Contact Officers:

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Taunton Deane Borough Council

Full Council - 25 February 2014

Changes to Standing Order 18 – Voting

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer and Councillor David Reed (Chairman of the Corporate Governance Committee)

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

1. Executive Summary

<p>The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 require local authorities to amend their Standing Orders to provide that votes at key budget decision making meetings are recorded.</p>

2. Background

- 2.1 The regulations come into force on the 25 February 2014 and require local authorities to amend their Standing Orders to provide that votes taken at budget decision meetings are recorded.
- 2.2 The regulations were issued on the 7 February 2014 and there has not been time to bring the changes through the Council's normal decision making processes.
- 2.3 The required changes to the Council's Standing Orders are set out in Appendix 1 to this report and amend Standing Order 18.

3. Finance Comments

- 3.1 There are no financial implications other than those set out in this report.

4. Legal Comments

- 4.1 The regulations come into force on the same day at the Council's budget decision making meeting and therefore the changes to the Standing Orders need to be approved to comply with this legislation. A failure to comply will make the decisions to be made at the budget decision meeting unlawful.

5. Links to Corporate Aims

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

6. Environmental and community safety implications

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

7. Equalities impact

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

8. Risk management

8.1 There are reputational and financial risks should these changes not be approved.

9. Recommendations

9.1 To approve the changes to Part 4 of the Constitution, Standing Order 18 as detailed in Appendix 1 to this report.

Contact

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Appendix 1

Voting *

18. (1) All motions and amendments, unless the law otherwise requires, shall be decided by affirmation or by a show of hands, as the Mayor shall choose.
- (2) If before the Mayor calls for the vote, either,
- (a) the mover and seconder of the motion - or of the amendment, or,
 - (b) any councillor supported by the votes of at least a quarter of the councillors present,
- request that a Recorded Vote be taken, then votes shall be publicly declared, and recorded in the minutes.
- (3) In addition to the option under SO 18 (2), any member may require - immediately after a vote is taken - that the manner in which that member's vote was cast (for, against or abstaining) shall be recorded in the minutes.
- (4) Where a vote is taken upon the choice of more than two candidates for an appointment and there is not an absolute majority in favour of one candidate, the candidates receiving the least number of votes shall be excluded and a further vote taken, the procedure being continued until there is an absolute majority in favour of one candidate.
- (5) (a) in the case of an equality of votes, the Mayor shall have a second or casting vote.
- (b) The Mayor shall have unfettered discretion as to its use for against the proposition.
- (6) (a) Immediately after any vote is taken at a budget decision meeting there must be a recorded vote in the minutes of the proceedings of that meeting the names of the persons who cast a vote for the decision or against the decision or who abstained from voting.
- (b) "budget decision meeting" means the meeting at which the Council makes a calculation (whether originally or by substitute) in accordance with any sections 31A, 31B 34 to 36A, 42A 42B, 45 to 49, 52ZF, 52ZJ of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 or

(c) issues a precept under Chapter 4 of Part 1 of that Act and includes a meeting where making the calculation or issuing the precept as the case may be was included as an item of business on the agenda for that meeting.

(d) references to a vote are references to a vote on any decision related to the making of the calculation or the issuing of the precept as the case may be.

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Council Meeting - 25 February 2014

Part I

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

(i) Councillor Williams

(a) General Fund Revenue Estimates 2014/2015

(These recommendations need to be read in conjunction with the report submitted to the Executive on 5 February 2014 which includes all the details of the proposed General Fund Budget to reflect the proposed 1.99% Council Tax increase.)

The Executive has considered its final 2014/2015 budget proposals which recognises the continuing financial challenges, with annual reductions in Government funding for Local Council services as the Government seeks to reduce the national deficit.

The 2014/2015 Budget is the first year within the Council's five-year Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and has been prepared within the context of priorities identified by Members which were embedded in the Council's Corporate Business Plan 2013-2016.

The budget contains details on:-

- (i) the General Fund Revenue Budget proposals for 2014/2015, including the proposed Council Tax rate;
- (ii) draft figures on the predicted financial position of the Council for the following four years.

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee considered the draft budget proposals at its meeting on 21 January 2014. Although there were no specific amendments proposed by the Committee, a number of comments were made in connection with the proposals relating to the Mayoralty, the use of New Homes Bonus, Shopmobility, increased fees for pitch fees and open spaces, Council Tax, Deane Helpline and play equipment inspections. These comments had been taken into account by the Executive.

The Council Tax calculation and formal tax setting resolution is to be considered separately. The proposed budget for Taunton Deane contains a proposed 1.99% Council Tax increase for 2014/2015 which will mean that the Band D Council Tax will remain at £137.88. The Band D taxpayer will, therefore, receive all the services provided by the Council in 2014/2015 at a cost of £2.64 per week.

It is a requirement for the Council to prepare not only budgets for the following financial year but to also provide indicative figures into future years. The MTFP provides an indication of the expected budget gap going forward into 2015/2016 and beyond and a summary of this position is reflected in the following table:-

	2014/15 £k	2015/16 £k	2016/17 £k	2017/18 £k	2018/19 £k
Net Expenditure	10,860	10,239	11,103	11,644	12,325
<i>Financed By:</i>					
Retained Business Rates	(2,346)	(2,411)	(2,471)	(2,533)	(2,596)
Revenue Support Grant	(2,766)	(1,901)	(1,309)	(720)	(324)
Tax Freeze Grant	0	0	0	0	0
Council Tax	(5,748)	(5,846)	(5,980)	(6,118)	(6,260)
Predicted Budget Gap	0	81	1,343	2,273	3,145

These estimates include the following main assumptions relating to funding:-

- Revenue Support Grant (RSG) for 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 is as set out in the Provisional Finance Settlement. It is then projected to diminish to nil by 2020.
- Retained Business Rates for 2014/2015 is currently based on the provisional forecasts for 2014/2015 – but final estimates need to be reviewed once final guidance was received from the Government. Broadly, funding in subsequent years is projected to increase in line with inflation.
- Council Tax is assumed to increase by 1.99% in 2014/15, then subsequently increase by 2% per year.

It is proposed that the minimum acceptable reserves position should be retained at £1,500,000, or £1,250,000 if funds are allocated to 'invest to save' initiatives.

The current Budget for 2014/2015 will maintain reserves above this minimum, but following a number of allocations from reserves agreed during 2013/2014 there is limited 'headroom' in the current estimated balance. This will significantly limit the Council's ability to fund 'up front' service and transformation investment from revenue reserves.

Based on the MTFP position set out above the General Reserves forecast is summarised as follows:-

General Reserves Forecast

	2014/15 £k	2015/16 £k	2016/17 £k	2017/18 £k	2018/19 £k
Estimated Balance B/F	(1,697)	(1,697)	(1,616)	(273)	2,000
Predicted Budget Gap	0	81	1,343	2,273	3,145
Estimated Balance C/F	(1,697)	(1,616)	(273)	2,000	5,145

Clearly the Council will need to ensure that further action is taken in future to balance the budget and maintain a sustainable reserves position. The Budget proposal for 2014/2015 plus the savings that will be delivered through the Joint Management and Shared Services in 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 mean that the reserves forecast for the next two years remains above the minimum requirement.

However reserves are currently projected to fall below the acceptable minimum in 2016/2017 if no further action is taken. The Council will need to continue to plan to deliver a sustainable financial position as part of the Corporate Business Plan and supporting financial strategy.

The estimated Special Expenses chargeable to the non-parished area of Taunton in 2014/2015 amounts to £42,290 (rounded), which represents a 1.99% increase in the special expenses per Band D equivalent of £2.98 per property per year in the Unparished Area.

In line with the Policy recently agreed by Full Council, it is proposed to 'top up' the budget for the Unparished Area by allocating £6,220 of the Council Tax Support Grant Funding to increase the budget for the new financial year to £48,510 (rounded).

Before the start of each financial year, the Council is required to determine the basis on which it will make provision from revenue for the repayment of borrowing undertaken for the purpose of financing capital expenditure. This annual provision, known as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), is designed to ensure that authorities make prudent provision to cover the continuing costs of their borrowing.

The proposed Policy for 2014/2015 is for the calculation of MRP to be the same as the current year.

The Council's Section 151 Officer has a duty to comment, as part of the budget setting process on the robustness of the budget and the adequacy of reserves. In her response, Shirlene Adam has stated that she believes the Council's reserves to be adequate and the budget estimates used in preparing the 2014/2015 budget to be robust.

Equalities Impact Assessments have again been undertaken on proposed budget savings items in line with the Council's statutory obligations. Members are recommended to take account of these assessments as part of the budget decision process.

It is therefore **recommended** that the budget for General Fund services for 2014/2015 as outlined in the report to the Executive be agreed and that:-

- (a) The Section 151 Officer's Statement of Robustness, which applies to the whole budget including General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Budget proposals be noted and that the recommended minimum acceptable level of reserves at £1,500,000 or £1,250,000 if funds are allocated to invest to save initiatives, be approved;

- (b) The General Fund Revenue Budget 2014/2015, including a Basic Council Tax Requirement budget of £5,192,970 and Special Expenses of £48,512 be approved;
- (c) The transfer of any under/overspend in the 2013/2014 General Fund Revenue Account Outturn to/from the General Fund reserves be approved;
- (d) The Budget Savings Proposals for 2014/2015 as set out in the report to the Executive be approved and the Equalities Impact Assessments provided as part of the budget decision process be noted;
- (e) A Supplementary Estimate of £72,500 in 2013/2014 to provide funding for the estimated redundancy costs related to the Savings Proposals be approved;
- (f) The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy with MRP calculated as follows, be approved:-
- for supported borrowing, 4% on outstanding debt;
 - for unsupported borrowing, the debt associated with the asset divided by the estimated useful life of the asset; and
 - for capital grants and contributions to third parties, 4% (or 1/25th) per year on a straight line basis; and
- (g) The General Reserves position and Medium Term Financial Plan projections, and the continuing financial challenge to address the Budget Gap for future years be noted.

(b) Capital Programme Budget Estimates 2014/2015

(These recommendations need to be read in conjunction with the report submitted to the Executive on 5 February 2014 which includes all the details of the proposed Capital Programme.)

The Executive has also considered the proposed General Fund (GF) and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programmes for 2014/2015.

At its last meeting, Full Council approved the prioritisation framework for capital schemes, reflecting the issues flagged by Members as being important during the Corporate Business Plan review process. The prioritisation system has been developed in order to ensure that the Council's very limited Capital Resources are channelled at key projects. This framework has been applied in arriving at the proposed Capital Programme for 2014/2015:-

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

The Council approved a Capital Programme for General Fund schemes totalling £3,930,000 in February 2013. Slippage from the previous year plus supplementary budget approvals during the year has increased the current Budget to £17,469,000.

Approval has also recently been given for £2,040,000 of capital expenditure for 2014/2015 (and £264,000 for 2015/2016) for the Firepool Access, Section 106 Agreement Affordable Housing schemes and the Chapel Roof (Taunton Cemetery).

Further bids for capital expenditure have been received for 2014/2015 and these have been considered against the prioritisation framework. The proposed additions to the General Fund Capital Programme for 2014/2015 total £684,000.

Funding of capital investment in the future will rely upon a variety of sources including Capital Receipts, Grant Funding, Capital Contributions, Revenue Budgets or Reserves and through Borrowing.

In addition to the above programme, the Corporate Management Team has prioritised the 'Top 5' growth-related capital projects as those schemes that would be recommended to Members assuming the necessary funding sources could be identified.

These were large schemes that were not currently affordable from existing capital resources. However, the Executive has included a recommendation in the General Fund Revenue Budget report to allocate £1,600,000 of the 2014/2015 New Homes Bonus Grant to support growth and regeneration priorities which would provide a potential source of funding towards the identified schemes in the future.

The proposed Draft HRA Capital Programme 2014/2015 totals £7,750,000 for Maintenance and Improvement schemes plus £500,000 for the Social Housing Development Programme. This was part of a Five-Year Capital Expenditure Estimate of some £37,900,000 for the period 2014/2015 to 2018/2019. The programme reflects the priorities set out in the updated 30-Year HRA Business Plan.

It is proposed that the HRA Capital Programme for 2014/2015 will be fully funded from revenue resources, including the Major Repairs Reserve, Revenue Contributions to Capital Outlay and the Social Housing Development Fund.

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee has considered the draft programmes and made no formal suggestions for any changes. The Tenants Services Management Board has also considered the draft Housing Capital Programme.

Equality Impact Assessments have been undertaken on the proposed budget items,

where appropriate. Members are asked to take these assessments into account in confirming the recommended budget proposals for 2013/2014.

It is therefore **recommended** that:-

- (a) The additional General Fund Capital Programme Budget of £684,000 be approved; and
- (b) The Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme of £8,250,000 for 2014/2015 also be approved.

(c) Council Tax Setting 2014/2015

The Localism Act 2011 has made significant changes to the Local Government Finance Act 1992, and now requires the billing authority to calculate a Council Tax requirement for the year.

The Town and Parish Council Precepts for 2014/2015 total £545,755. The increase in the average Band D Council Tax for Town and Parish Councils, including Special Expenses for the Unparished Area, is 3.80% and results in an average Band D Council Tax figure of £14.49 for 2014/2015.

The Avon and Somerset Constabulary Police and Crime Commissioner has recently announced a 1.99% increase. The confirmed precept is £6,454,420.12 which results in a Band D Council Tax of £171.37. The precept will be adjusted by a Collection Fund contribution of £39,010.

The Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority approved its tax requirement on 17 February 2014. The estimated amount of precept reflects a 0% increase (subject to confirmation after this report is published) and has been set at £2,839,411, which results in a Band D Council Tax of £75.39. The Precept will be adjusted by a Collection Fund contribution of £17,500.

The Somerset County Council approved its tax requirement on 19 February 2014. The amount of precept also includes a 0% increase (subject to confirmation after this report is published) and has been set at £38,691,169, which results in a Band D Council Tax of £1,027.30. The Precept will be adjusted by a Collection Fund contribution of £238,490.

The estimated balance on the Council Tax Collection Fund is forecast on 15 January each year. Any surplus or deficit was shared between the County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Fire Authority and Taunton Deane, in shares relative to our precept levels.

This year the estimated balance is a surplus of £329,630. Taunton Deane's share of this amounts to £34,630, and this has been reflected in the General Fund Revenue Estimates.

It is **recommended**:-

- (a) That the following formal Council Tax Resolution to reflect the proposed 1.99% increase in Council Tax in 2014/2015 be approved:-
- (1) That it be noted that on 15 January 2014 the Council calculated the Council Tax Base for 2014/2015:-
- (i) for the whole Council area as 37,662.97 [Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act"); and,
 - (ii) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept related as in Appendix B below;
- (2) That the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2014/2015 (excluding Parish precepts) be calculated as £5,192,970;
- (3) That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2014/2015 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:-
- (i) £92,496,325 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils. (*Gross Expenditure including amount required for working balance*)
 - (ii) £86,757,600 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act. (*Gross Income including reserves to be used to meet Gross Expenditure*)
 - (iii) £5,738,725 being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act). (*Total Demand on Collection Fund.*)
 - (iv) £152.37 being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts). (*Council Tax at Band D for Borough Including Parish Precepts and Special Expenses*)
 - (v) £545,755 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as in Appendix B below). (*Parish Precepts and Special Expenses*).

(vi) £137.88 being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates. (*Council Tax at Band D for Borough Excluding Parish Precepts and Special Expenses*);

- (4) To note that Somerset County Council, Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner and Devon and Somerset Fire Authority would issue precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area;
- (5) That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate provisional amounts shown in the table in Appendix A to these Minutes as the amounts of Council Tax for 2014/2015 for each part of its area and for each category of dwellings;
- (6) To determine that the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2014/2015 was not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB Local Government Finance Act 1992; and
- (7) To note that if the above formal Council Tax Resolution was approved the total Band D Council Tax would be as follows:-

	2013/2014	2014/2015	Increase
	£	£	%
Taunton Deane Borough Council	135.19	137.88	1.99%
Somerset County Council	1,027.30	1,027.30*	0.00%
Police and Crime Commissioner	168.03	171.37	1.99%
Devon and Somerset Fire Authority	75.39	75.39*	0.00%
Sub-Total	1,405.91	1,411.94*	0.43%
Town and Parish Council (average)	13.96	14.49	3.80%
Total	1,419.87	1,426.43*	0.46%

* provisional figures

APPENDIX A

Valuation Bands								
Council Tax Schedule 2014/2015	Band A £	Band B £	Band C £	Band D £	Band E £	Band F £	Band G £	Band H £
Taunton Deane Borough Council *	91.92	107.24	122.56	137.88	168.52	199.16	229.80	275.76
Somerset County Council *	684.87	799.01	913.16	1,027.30	1,255.59	1,483.88	1,712.17	2,054.60
Police and Crime Commissioner *	114.25	133.29	152.33	171.37	209.45	247.53	285.62	342.74
Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority *	50.26	58.64	67.01	75.39	92.14	108.90	125.65	150.78
Parish / Town only (a)	9.66	11.27	12.88	14.49	17.71	20.93	24.15	28.98
Parish / Town & District (b)	101.58	118.51	135.44	152.37	186.23	220.09	253.95	304.74
Total (c)	950.95	1,109.45	1,267.94	1,426.43	1,743.42	2,060.40	2,377.38	2,852.86
<u>Parish: **</u>								
Ash Priors	941.30	1,098.18	1,255.06	1,411.94	1,725.70	2,039.47	2,353.24	2,823.88
Ashbrittle	954.41	1,113.48	1,272.54	1,431.61	1,749.74	2,067.88	2,386.02	2,863.22
Bathealton	945.20	1,102.73	1,260.26	1,417.79	1,732.85	2,047.92	2,362.99	2,835.58
Bishops Hull	954.43	1,113.50	1,272.57	1,431.64	1,749.78	2,067.93	2,386.07	2,863.28
Bishops Lydeard/Cothelstone	961.80	1,122.10	1,282.39	1,442.69	1,763.28	2,083.89	2,404.49	2,885.38
Bradford on Tone	954.15	1,113.17	1,272.19	1,431.21	1,749.25	2,067.30	2,385.36	2,862.42
Burrowbridge	957.61	1,117.21	1,276.81	1,436.41	1,755.61	2,074.82	2,394.02	2,872.82
Cheddon Fitzpaine	956.43	1,115.83	1,275.23	1,434.63	1,753.43	2,072.24	2,391.06	2,869.26
Chipstable	952.69	1,111.47	1,270.25	1,429.03	1,746.59	2,064.16	2,381.72	2,858.06
Churchstanton	957.89	1,117.53	1,277.18	1,436.82	1,756.11	2,075.41	2,394.71	2,873.64
Combe Florey	953.75	1,112.71	1,271.66	1,430.62	1,748.53	2,066.45	2,384.37	2,861.24
Comeytrowe	949.19	1,107.39	1,265.58	1,423.78	1,740.17	2,056.57	2,372.97	2,847.56
Corfe	948.85	1,106.98	1,265.12	1,423.26	1,739.54	2,055.82	2,372.11	2,846.52
Cotford St Luke	955.31	1,114.52	1,273.74	1,432.95	1,751.38	2,069.82	2,388.26	2,865.90
Creech St Michael	960.17	1,120.19	1,280.22	1,440.24	1,760.29	2,080.35	2,400.41	2,880.48

Valuation Bands

Council Tax Schedule 2014/2015	Band A £	Band B £	Band C £	Band D £	Band E £	Band F £	Band G £	Band H £
Durston	948.09	1,106.11	1,264.12	1,422.13	1,738.15	2,054.19	2,370.22	2,844.26
Fitzhead	957.63	1,117.22	1,276.83	1,436.43	1,755.63	2,074.84	2,394.06	2,872.86
Halse	950.83	1,109.29	1,267.76	1,426.23	1,743.17	2,060.11	2,377.06	2,852.46
Hatch Beauchamp	951.85	1,110.48	1,269.12	1,427.76	1,745.04	2,062.32	2,379.61	2,855.52
Kingston St Mary	949.92	1,108.24	1,266.55	1,424.87	1,741.50	2,058.15	2,374.79	2,849.74
Langford Budville	954.44	1,113.51	1,272.58	1,431.65	1,749.79	2,067.94	2,386.09	2,863.30
Lydeard St Lawrence/Tolland	954.16	1,113.18	1,272.21	1,431.23	1,749.28	2,067.33	2,385.39	2,862.46
Milverton	957.69	1,117.31	1,276.92	1,436.53	1,755.75	2,074.99	2,394.22	2,873.06
Neroche	953.47	1,112.37	1,271.28	1,430.19	1,748.01	2,065.83	2,383.66	2,860.38
North Curry	956.07	1,115.41	1,274.75	1,434.09	1,752.77	2,071.46	2,390.16	2,868.18
Norton Fitzwarren	959.81	1,119.78	1,279.74	1,439.71	1,759.64	2,079.58	2,399.52	2,879.42
Nynehead	958.75	1,118.54	1,278.33	1,438.12	1,757.70	2,077.29	2,396.87	2,876.24
Oake	951.71	1,110.33	1,268.94	1,427.56	1,744.79	2,062.03	2,379.27	2,855.12
Otterford	941.30	1,098.18	1,255.06	1,411.94	1,725.70	2,039.47	2,353.24	2,823.88
Pitminster	954.43	1,113.50	1,272.57	1,431.64	1,749.78	2,067.93	2,386.07	2,863.28
Ruishton/Thornfalcon	957.50	1,117.08	1,276.66	1,436.24	1,755.40	2,074.57	2,393.74	2,872.48
Sampford Arundel	966.92	1,128.07	1,289.22	1,450.37	1,772.67	2,094.98	2,417.29	2,900.74
Staplegrove	951.88	1,110.52	1,269.17	1,427.81	1,745.10	2,062.39	2,379.69	2,855.62
Stawley	953.30	1,112.18	1,271.06	1,429.94	1,747.70	2,065.47	2,383.24	2,859.88
Stoke St Gregory	958.34	1,118.06	1,277.78	1,437.50	1,756.94	2,076.39	2,395.84	2,875.00
Stoke St Mary	952.15	1,110.84	1,269.53	1,428.22	1,745.60	2,062.99	2,380.37	2,856.44
Taunton	943.29	1,100.50	1,257.71	1,414.92	1,729.34	2,043.77	2,358.20	2,829.83
Trull	953.36	1,112.26	1,271.15	1,430.04	1,747.82	2,065.61	2,383.41	2,860.08
Wellington	957.93	1,117.59	1,277.24	1,436.89	1,756.19	2,075.51	2,394.82	2,873.78
Wellington Without	954.17	1,113.20	1,272.22	1,431.25	1,749.30	2,067.36	2,385.42	2,862.50
West Bagborough	951.49	1,110.07	1,268.65	1,427.23	1,744.39	2,061.56	2,378.72	2,854.46

Valuation Bands

Council Tax Schedule 2014/2015	Band A £	Band B £	Band C £	Band D £	Band E £	Band F £	Band G £	Band H £
West Buckland	953.19	1,112.06	1,270.92	1,429.78	1,747.50	2,065.24	2,382.97	2,859.56
West Hatch	952.74	1,111.53	1,270.31	1,429.10	1,746.67	2,064.26	2,381.84	2,858.20
West Monkton	957.82	1,117.45	1,277.09	1,436.72	1,755.99	2,075.26	2,394.54	2,873.44
Wiveliscombe	957.23	1,116.76	1,276.30	1,435.83	1,754.90	2,073.98	2,393.06	2,871.66

(* provisional figures)

(** this may be subject to penny rounding adjustments and will be confirmed in the final Tax Report to Full Council on the 25 February 2014)

APPENDIX B

TOWN & PARISH COUNCIL PRECEPTS

Parish/Town Council	2013/14			2014/15			Council Tax Increase
	Tax Base	Precept Levied	Council Tax Band D	Tax Base	Precept Levied	Council Tax Band D	
		£	£		£	£	
Ash Priors	81.46	-	-	77.15	-	-	0.00%
Ashbrittle	86.74	2,000	23.06	91.49	1,800	19.67	-14.67%
Bathealton	84.83	500	5.89	85.52	500	5.85	-0.81%
Bishops Hull	1,052.00	20,750	19.72	1,066.11	21,000	19.70	-0.13%
Bishops Lydeard/ Cothelstone	1,021.90	28,489	27.88	1,051.08	32,321	30.75	10.30%
Bradford on Tone	285.01	5,500	19.30	285.36	5,500	19.27	-0.12%
Burrowbridge	196.21	4,700	23.95	200.22	4,900	24.47	2.17%
Cheddon Fitzpaine	598.80	9,843	16.44	612.72	13,900	22.69	38.01%
Chipstable	129.81	2,150	16.56	130.11	2,223	17.09	3.16%
Churchstanton	342.98	8,126	23.69	348.93	8,681	24.88	5.01%
Combe Florey	116.50	2,250	19.31	120.42	2,250	18.68	-3.26%
Comeytrove	1,967.11	23,290	11.84	1,955.60	23,154	11.84	0.00%
Corfe	132.02	1,500	11.36	132.54	1,500	11.32	-0.39%
Cotford St Luke	752.62	15,300	20.33	764.65	16,065	21.01	3.35%
Creech St Michael	937.95	26,544	28.30	952.22	26,948	28.30	0.00%
Durstun	58.64	607.37	10.36	58.89	600	10.19	-1.63%
Fitzhead	113.55	2,832	24.94	116.15	2,844	24.49	-1.82%
Halse	139.03	1,800	12.95	139.93	2,000	14.29	10.40%

Parish/Town Council	2013/14			2014/15			Council Tax Increase
	Tax Base	Precept Levied	Council Tax Band D	Tax Base	Precept Levied	Council Tax Band D	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Hatch Beauchamp	249.16	4,000	16.05	252.87	4,000	15.82	-1.47%
Kingston St Mary	424.73	5,496	12.94	425.85	5,508	12.93	-0.05%
Langford Budville	225.54	4,500	19.95	228.27	4,500	19.71	-1.20%
Lydeard St Lawrence/Tolland	199.03	3,839.23	19.29	204.14	3,938	19.29	0.01%
Milverton	562.51	12,650	22.49	569.28	14,000	24.59	9.36%
Neroche	239.15	4,446	18.59	245.73	4,484	18.25	-1.85%
North Curry	692.23	15,366	22.20	692.49	15,342	22.15	-0.19%
Norton Fitzwarren	903.16	25,871	28.64	904.74	25,122	27.77	-3.06%
Nynehead	165.34	4,250	25.70	162.35	4,250	26.18	1.84%
Oake	317.34	5,000	15.76	320.09	5,000	15.62	-0.86%
Otterford	165.11	-	-	168.69	-	-	0.00%
Pitminster	435.08	8,885	20.42	451.84	8,899	19.70	-3.56%
Ruishton/Thornfalcon	574.63	14,000	24.36	576.15	14,000	24.30	-0.26%
Sampford Arundel	121.94	4,800	39.36	124.91	4,800	38.43	-2.38%
Staplegrove	708.57	10,000	14.11	743.74	11,800	15.87	12.42%
Stawley	132.17	2,460	18.61	133.37	2,400	18.00	-3.32%
Stoke St Gregory	356.14	10,000	28.08	352.08	9,000	25.56	-8.96%
Stoke St Mary	198.25	3,008	15.17	198.81	3,236	16.28	7.28%
Taunton	14,115.83	41,218	2.92	14,206.18	42,292	2.98	1.95%
Trull	992.02	18,000	18.14	994.65	18,000	18.10	-0.26%
Wellington	4,290.56	97,396	22.70	4,355.37	108,666	24.95	9.91%

Parish/Town Council	2013/14			2014/15			Council Tax Increase
	Tax Base	Precept Levied	Council Tax Band D	Tax Base	Precept Levied	Council Tax Band D	
		£	£		£	£	
Wellington Without	293.61	5,500	18.73	292.04	5,640	19.31	3.10%
West Bagborough	154.78	2,500	16.15	163.53	2,500	15.29	-5.35%
West Buckland	424.77	7,580	17.84	419.36	7,483	17.84	-0.01%
West Hatch	136.11	2,330	17.12	135.80	2,330	17.16	0.23%
West Monkton	1,077.78	27,664	25.67	1,105.07	27,379	24.78	-3.47%
Wiveliscombe	1,027.90	23,500	22.86	1,046.48	25,000	23.89	4.49%
Totals	37,280.60	520,441	13.96	37,662.97	545,755	14.49	3.80%

(d) Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy

At its last meeting, the Executive considered a report which detailed the Treasury Management and Investment Strategies for the 2014/2015 financial year.

The Council's debt is currently £94,200,000. Short-term interest rates are currently at 0.5% and this rate is expected to be at this level for the next financial year.

The Financial Services (Banking Reform) Act 2013 changes – which includes the bail-in provisions – are reflected within the Treasury Management Strategy Statement.

The Strategy has taken account of the Government's predictions for growth, advice from the Council's Treasury advisors Arlingclose including their predictions on interest rates and changes in legislation governing financial institutions. The current economic outlook has several key treasury management implications:-

- Investment returns are likely to remain relatively low during 2014/2015;
- Borrowing interest rates are currently attractive, but might remain low for some time;
- The timing of any borrowing will need to be monitored carefully. There will remain a cost of carry – any borrowing undertaken that results in an increase in investments will incur a revenue loss between borrowing costs and investment returns.

The Strategy looks to reduce the levels of investment per counterparty but included more counterparties with whom the Council can invest any cash surpluses. To reduce exposure to risk and volatility Taunton Deane will continue to:-

- (1) Consider security, liquidity and yield, in that order;
- (2) Consider alternative assessments of credit strength;
- (3) Spread investments over a range of approved counterparties; and
- (4) Only invest for longer periods to gain higher rates of return where there are acceptable levels of counterparty risk.

The historically low interest rate situation has led to significant reductions in investment income in the past years which impacts directly on the Council's budget.

The Council's General Fund capital financing requirement (CFR) for 2014/2015 is £11,908,000 which is currently funded through internal borrowing. The Council is able to borrow funds in excess of the current CFR up to the projected level in 2016/2017 of £10,777,000.

It is **recommended** that:-

- (1) The Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy be approved; and
- (2) The Prudential Indicators, set out in the Appendix to the Treasury Management

Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy – a copy of which is attached to this recommendation – be also approved.

Appendix

Prudential Indicators

Prudential Indicators revisions to 2013/14 and 2014/15 – 2016/17

1. Background:

There is a requirement under the Local Government Act 2003 for local authorities to have regard to CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the "CIPFA Prudential Code") when setting and reviewing their Prudential Indicators.

2. Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement:

This is a key indicator of prudence. In order to ensure that over the medium term debt will only be for a capital purpose, the local Council should ensure that debt does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of capital financing requirement in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional capital financing requirement for the current and next two financial years.

If in any of these years there is a reduction in the capital financing requirement, this reduction is ignored in estimating the cumulative increase in the capital financing requirement which is used for comparison with **gross** external debt.

The s.151 officer reports that the Council had no difficulty meeting this requirement in 2013/14, nor are there any difficulties envisaged for future years. This view takes into account current commitments, existing plans and the proposals in the approved budget.

3. Estimates of Capital Expenditure:

3.1 This indicator is set to ensure that the level of proposed capital expenditure remains within sustainable limits and, in particular, to consider the impact on Council Tax and in the case of the HRA, housing rent levels.

Capital Expenditure	2013/14 Approved £'000	2013/14 Revised £'000	2014/15 Estimate £'000	2015/16 Estimate £'000	2016/17 Estimate £'000
Non-HRA	3,553	7,254	7,574	667	667
HRA	14,805	9,186	18,927	7,515	7,415
Total	18,358	16,440	26,501	8,182	8,082

3.2 Capital expenditure will be financed or funded as follows:

Capital Financing	2013/14 Approved £'000	2013/14 Revised £'000	2014/15 Estimate £'000	2015/16 Estimate £'000	2016/17 Estimate £'000
Capital Receipts	1,229	1,468	679	0	0
Government Grants	787	1,602	685	310	310
Revenue Contributions	9,342	11,602	10,858	7,872	7,772
s.106 Funding	0	340	0	0	0
Unsupported borrowing	7,000	1,428	14,279	0	0
Total Financing and Funding	18,358	16,440	26,501	8,182	8,082

Table 1 shows that the capital expenditure plans of the Council cannot be funded entirely from sources other than external borrowing.

4. Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream:

4.1 This is an indicator of affordability and highlights the revenue implications of existing and proposed capital expenditure by identifying the proportion of the revenue budget required to meet financing costs. This ratio can be negative for Councils in a net investment position. The definition of financing costs is set out in the Prudential Code.

4.2 The ratio is based on costs net of investment income.

Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream	2013/14 Approved %	2013/14 Revised %	2014/15 Estimate %	2015/16 Estimate %	2016/17 Estimate %
Non-HRA	(2.52)	(2.36)	(2.41)	(2.46)	(2.46)
HRA	12.03	12.42	11.44	10.78	10.50
Total	9.51	10.06	9.03	8.32	8.04

5. Capital Financing Requirement:

5.1 The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) measures the Council's underlying need to borrow for a capital purpose. The calculation of the CFR is taken from the amounts held in the Balance Sheet relating to capital expenditure and financing.

Capital Financing Requirement	2013/14 Approved £'000	2013/14 Revised £'000	2014/15 Estimate £'000	2015/16 Estimate £'000	2016/17 Estimate £'000
Non-HRA	7,688	8,604	11,908	11,337	10,777
HRA	102,232	98,003	106,546	106,546	103,848
Total CFR	109,920	106,607	118,454	117,883	114,625

6. Incremental Impact of Capital Investment Decisions:

6.1 This is an indicator of affordability that shows the impact of capital investment decisions on Council Tax and Housing Rent levels. The incremental impact is calculated by comparing the total revenue budget requirement of the current approved capital programme with an equivalent calculation of the revenue budget requirement arising from the proposed capital programme.

Incremental Impact of Capital Investment Decisions	2013/14 Approved £	2014/15 Estimate £	2015/16 Estimate £	2016/17 Estimate £
Increase in Band D Council Tax	3.15	5.31	(0.29)	(0.15)
Increase in Average Weekly Housing Rents	(0.59)	0.69	(0.02)	(0.02)

7. Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary for External Debt:

7.1 The Council has an integrated treasury management strategy and manages its treasury position in accordance with its approved strategy and practice. Overall borrowing will therefore arise as a consequence of all the financial transactions of the Council and not just those arising from capital spending reflected in the CFR.

7.2 The **Authorised Limit** sets the maximum level of external debt on a gross basis (i.e. excluding investments) for the Council. It is measured on a daily basis against all external debt items on the Balance Sheet (i.e. long and short term borrowing, overdrawn bank balances and long term liabilities). This Prudential Indicator separately identifies borrowing from other long term liabilities such as finance leases. It is consistent with the Council's existing commitments, its proposals for capital expenditure and financing and its approved treasury management policy statement and practices.

7.3 The Authorised Limit is the statutory limit determined under Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2003 (referred to in the legislation as the Affordable Limit).

7.4 The Operational Boundary has been set on the estimate of the most likely, i.e. prudent but not worst case scenario with sufficient headroom over and above this to allow for unusual cash movements.

7.5 The Operational Boundary links directly to the Council's estimates of the CFR and estimates of other cashflow requirements. This indicator is based on the same estimates as the Authorised Limit reflecting the most likely, prudent but not worst case scenario but without the additional headroom included within the Authorised Limit.

	2013/14 Approved £'000	2013/14 Revised £'000	2014/15 Estimate £'000	2015/16 Estimate £'000	2016/17 Estimate £'000
Authorised Limit for External Debt	166,920	166,920	182,733	167,883	164,625
Operational Boundary for External Debt	146,920	146,920	162,733	147,883	144,625

7.6 The HRA has a debt cap of £115.8m which is a figure set by Central Government.

8. Adoption of the CIPFA Treasury Management Code:

8.1 This indicator demonstrates that the Council has adopted the principles of best practice.

Adoption of the CIPFA Code of Practice in Treasury Management
The Council approved the adoption of the CIPFA Treasury Management Code at its Executive meeting on 14 January 2004

The Council has incorporated the changes from the revised CIPFA Code of Practice into its treasury policies, procedures and practices.

9. Upper Limits for Fixed Interest Rate Exposure and Variable Interest Rate Exposure:

9.1 These indicators allow the Council to manage the extent to which it is exposed to changes in interest rates. This Council calculates these limits on (*select as appropriate*) net principal outstanding sums, (i.e. fixed rate debt net of fixed rate investments / net interest paid (i.e. interest paid on fixed rate debt net of interest received on fixed rate investments))

9.2 The upper limit for variable rate exposure has been set to ensure that the Council is not exposed to interest rate rises which could adversely impact on

the revenue budget. The limit allows for the use of variable rate debt to offset exposure to changes in short-term rates on investments

Interest Rate Exposures	Existing level or Benchmark level at 31/03/13 %	2013/14 Approved %	2013/14 Revised %	2014/15 Estimate %	2015/16 Estimate %	2016/17 Estimate %
Fixed						
Interest payable on fixed rate borrowing /Principal sums outstanding on fixed rate borrowing	94.69	100	100	100	100	100
Less: Interest receivable on fixed rate investments/Principal sums outstanding on fixed rate investments	(14.04)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
Variable						
Interest payable on variable rate borrowing/Principal sums outstanding on variable rate borrowing	5.31	50	50	50	50	50
Less: Interest receivable on variable rate investments/Principal sums outstanding on variable rate investments	(52.96)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)

9.3 The limits above provide the necessary flexibility within which decisions will be made for drawing down new loans on a fixed or variable rate basis; the decisions will ultimately be determined by expectations of anticipated interest rate movements as set out in the Council's treasury management strategy.

10. Maturity Structure of Fixed Rate borrowing:

10.1 This indicator highlights the existence of any large concentrations of fixed rate debt needing to be replaced at times of uncertainty over interest rates and is designed to protect against excessive exposures to interest rate changes in any one period, in particular in the course of the next ten years.

10.2 It is calculated as the amount of projected borrowing that is fixed rate maturing in each period as a percentage of total projected borrowing that is fixed rate. The maturity of borrowing is determined by reference to the earliest date on which the lender can require payment.

10.3 LOBOs are classified as maturing on the next call date i.e. the earliest date that the lender can require repayment.

Maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing	Existing level %	Lower Limit for 2013/14 %	Upper Limit for 2014/15 %
under 12 months	2.12	0	50
12 months and within 24 months	0	0	50
24 months and within 5 years	7.11	0	50
5 years and within 10 years	26.54	0	50

10 years and within 20 years	56.80	0	100
20 years and within 30 years	0	0	100
30 years and within 40 years	0	0	100
40 years and within 50 years	4.25	0	100
50 years and above	3.18	0	100

11. Credit Risk:

11.1 The Council considers security, liquidity and yield, in that order, when making investment decisions.

11.2 Credit ratings remain an important element of assessing credit risk, but they are not a sole feature in the Council's assessment of counterparty credit risk.

11.3 The Council also considers alternative assessments of credit strength, and information on corporate developments of and market sentiment towards counterparties. The following key tools are used to assess credit risk:

- Published credit ratings of the financial institution (minimum A- or equivalent) and its sovereign (minimum AA+ or equivalent for non-UK sovereigns);
- Sovereign support mechanisms;
- Credit default swaps (where quoted);
- Share prices (where available);
- Economic fundamentals, such as a country's net debt as a percentage of its GDP);
- Corporate developments, news, articles, markets sentiment and momentum;
- Subjective overlay.

11.4 The only indicators with prescriptive values remain to be credit ratings. Other indicators of creditworthiness are considered in relative rather than absolute terms.

12. Upper Limit for total principal sums invested over 364 days:

12.1 The purpose of this limit is to contain exposure to the possibility of loss that may arise as a result of the Council having to seek early repayment of the sums invested.

Upper Limit for total principal sums invested over 364 days	2013/14 Approved	2013/14 Revised	2014/15 Estimate	2015/16 Estimate	2016/17 Estimate
	£3.5m	£3.5m	£6m	£5m	£4.5m

(e) Council Tax Base 2014/2015 and Business Rates Retention and the National Non-Domestic Rates Return 2014/2015

At its January meeting, the Executive was asked to consider reports on the:-

- (a) Council Tax Base – which has to be calculated for each financial year and is used to determine the Band D Council Tax for the year. The calculation is in accordance with the requirements of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base (England) Regulations 2012. The responsibility to approve the Council Tax Base was currently delegated to the Executive; and
- (b) Business Rates Retention and the National Non-Domestic Rates Return (NNDR1) 2014/2015 – Under the Business Rates Retention funding system, the Council is required to approve the NNDR1 for 2014/2015 by the end of January each year. The responsibility to approve the NNDR1 Return was currently delegated to the Executive.

As the Tax Base is largely a factual matter together with adjustments applied through approved policies, the Executive is of the view that the approval of the Tax Base should be delegated to the Section 151 Officer in future years.

The production of the NNDR1 this year has caused significant issues due to the late issue of the NNDR1 form template and guidance by the Department of Communities and Local Government. To comply with the deadline to submit the NNDR1 Return by 31 January 2014, the Executive agreed to delegate the completion and submission of the Return to the Section 151 Officer. In addition, it was agreed that delegated authority should be sought to enable the Council's Section 151 Officer to approve the NNDR1 Return in future years too.

It is **recommended** that:-

- (1) The requirement to approve the Council Tax Base be delegated to the Section 151 Officer in future years; and
- (2) Authority be formally delegated to the Council's Section 151 Officer to approve the National Non-Domestic Rates Return in future years too.

(ii) Councillor Mrs Jean Adkins

Housing Revenue Account Estimates 2014/2015

(These recommendations need to be read in conjunction with the report submitted to the Executive on 5 February 2014 which includes all the details of the proposed Housing Revenue Account Budget.)

The Executive has given consideration to the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) estimates for the 2014/2015 Financial Year. It also includes details of the proposed increase in Average Weekly Rent for the year where a 6.23% increase has been recommended.

The proposed increase allows sufficient funds to provide tenancy management services, maintain housing stock in good condition, continue the established programme of stock refurbishment and invest in new housing.

2014/2015 will be the third year of operating the HRA under self-financing arrangements. The Council remains on course to repay the settlement debt of £85,200,000 by 2030.

The Proposed Budget is based on assumptions and estimates on expenditure requirements and income projections, in order to deliver the updated Business Plan.

Dwelling rents for approximately 6,000 properties provides annual income of over £24,000,000 for the HRA.

Local authorities have both the power and duty to set their own rent. However, in December 2000 Central Government set out a policy for social rents in England to be fair, affordable and less confusing for tenants. Local Authorities and Housing Associations were required to bring rents into line over several years, using a national formula to set a target rent (also called 'formula rent') based on property values and average manual earnings in each area.

The previous subsidy system required Local Authorities to raise their 'average weekly rent' to meet the 'target' or 'formula' rent by the convergence date of 2015/2016. However, the Government has recently amended its guidance in this respect and full convergence cannot now be obtained.

The final year that a convergence factor can be included in the rent calculation will now be 2014/2015 and the continuing budget impact of this change is that the Council will lose the potential to increase rent income by approximately £250,000 per year from 2015/2016 onwards.

From 2015/2016 the Government has proposed to alter the basis for calculation of guideline rent increases, from RPI plus ½%, to CPI plus 1% but the full impact of this change cannot yet be predicted.

Increasing the actual average weekly rent paid by tenants to the target rent will make

the rent paid higher than the guideline rent. It is therefore proposed that the average weekly rent for dwellings for 2014/2015 should be set at the guideline rent of £82.06, an increase of 6.23% or £4.81 per week.

The dwelling rents form the major element of income for the HRA. Each ½% rent increase is equivalent to approximately £117,300. If the average rent is set lower than the current proposal, the loss of income will have to be met by reducing expenditure.

The budget for non-dwelling rents and charges for services and facilities is based on a 3.2% increase.

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee considered the 2014/2015 draft budget at its meeting on 21 January 2014 where no formal recommendations to change the HRA budget were made.

The Tenants Services Management Board has also considered the report.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken on the proposed rent increase. Members are asked to take this assessment into account in confirming the recommended budget proposals for 2014/2015.

It is therefore **recommended** that:-

- (1) The Average Weekly Rent increase of 6.23% be approved; and
- (2) The Housing Revenue Account budget for 2014/2015 be agreed.

(iii) Councillor Edwards

Introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in Taunton Deane – Regulation 123 List and Governance Arrangements

Full Council has previously approved the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in Taunton Deane with effect from 1 April 2014.

Under Regulation 123 of the CIL Regulations, the Council is required to publish a list of the projects that it intends to finance using CIL receipts. The purpose of the list is to ensure that developers do not end up paying twice for the same piece of infrastructure – items on the list are not permitted to receive funding via a Section 106 Agreement.

The draft Regulation 123 list has now been prepared. The list which includes measures believed to be those most important for the delivery of the Council's Core Strategy has been the subject of internal discussion with the Local Development Framework (LDF) Steering Group and has also been shared with representatives from Somerset County Council and the Environment Agency.

The proposed list is general in nature, and does not identify specific schemes by name. This is largely because of uncertainties as to which measures will come forward at what time, and to avoid the need to constantly review the list as priorities change.

Certain items are specifically not included on the list because it has been assumed that they will continue to be funded via Section 106 Agreements. These were basically essential on-site requirements such as children's play, immediate highway access and travel planning measures. Affordable Housing is not within the scope of CIL and will continue to be delivered through Section 106 Agreements.

The Council will need to publish the Regulation 123 List on its website in time for the introduction of CIL on 1 April 2014. The list will be reviewed on a regular basis and an annual report on the collection, management and distribution of the CIL receipts will also need to be prepared.

Delivering infrastructure is one of the major challenges facing the Council in support of its growth agenda. Receipts from CIL and New Homes Bonus are likely to be the two largest sources of external funding for this.

The Council therefore needs to have a process to determine how the CIL receipts should be spent, to agree on the timing of spend and to arrange the distribution of funds to partner organisations.

Current thoughts are that this should take the form of a 'Governance Board' made up of Members to which an officer group would report. It has been agreed that the precise composition of the Board should be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation and the Shadow Portfolio Holder.

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

- (1) Both the proposed Regulation 123 List – attached as a Appendix to the recommendations – and the suggested governance arrangements for the delivery of infrastructure and spending of CIL receipts, specifically the proposed Governance Board, be endorsed; and
- (2) The Regulation 123 List be formally adopted.

Appendix

Taunton Deane draft Regulation 123 List: Infrastructure to be delivered partly or wholly by CIL

April 2014

TDBC Draft Regulation 123 List

In accordance with the Planning Act (2008) as amended by the Localism Act (2011) and the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations (2010) as amended.

The list set out below identifies the types of infrastructure and/or specific infrastructure projects to which CIL receipts raised by Taunton Deane Borough Council as the Charging Authority could be applied:

Education

Statutory education, including but not limited to:

- Early years learning
- Primary School provision
- Secondary School provision, including Post-16 education
- Special Schools

Transport

- Strategic transport improvements associated with the growth of Taunton and Wellington

Community Development

- Sport and recreation (excluding children's play)
- Community Halls, places of assembly and other community facilities
- Arts and Culture
- Green Infrastructure

Taunton Town Centre Regeneration

Schemes as defined in the Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan, including:

- Firepool Infrastructure
- Town Centre Enhancements

Surface Water and Flood Risk Mitigation

- Strategic works only (i.e. excluding mitigation of surface water run-off back to greenfield)

This Regulation 123 List will take effect from 1 April 2014. It will be reviewed annually.

(iv) Councillor Mrs Vivienne Stock-Williams

Localism Act 2011 – Pay Policy Statement

The Localism Act 2011 has made it a requirement for all Local Authorities to prepare a Pay Policy Statement each year for approval by Members.

The first Statement was prepared in 2012 and was considered by Scrutiny and the Executive before approval by Full Council. However, due to the fact that the document is largely unchanged for the third year, the 2014/2015 Statement has again been reported directly to Full Council.

The 2014/2015 Statement covers the 'joint working' arrangements with West Somerset Council and the approvals made by Council on 12 November 2013.

The Statement has to include policies on which remuneration of its Chief Officers and its lowest paid employees (and the relationship between them) are based.

The Statement is also required to:-

- Set out arrangements for the remuneration of Chief Officers on appointment;
- Set out arrangements for payments on termination of employment for Chief Officers even if covered by other approved policies;
- Set out arrangements for the re-employment of Chief Officers; and
- Be published on the Council's website.

Taunton Deane's latest Pay Policy Statement is attached to this recommendation as an Appendix and consultation on this has taken place with the local UNISON Branch.

UNISON comments are:-

The salary multiplier between the Chief Executive and the mean FTE salary for Taunton Deane staff has increased from 4.1:1 in 2013-14 to 4.4:1 in 2014-15. This is indicative of the financial 'leg up' that senior managers have received as a result of the South West Council's recommendations in 2013, resulting in some senior managers getting a rise of 14%, at the same time as pay for all other Local Government staff was limited (in 2013-2014) to a below-inflation 1% rise. Such a widening of the gap between senior management pay and that of all other staff seems inappropriate.

It is **recommended** that the Pay Policy Statement for 2014/2015 be approved.

Appendix

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Pay Policy Statement 2014/2015

1. Executive Summary

This pay statement describes the pay arrangements and policies that relate to the pay of the workforce which serves the Joint Management and Shared Services (JMASS) Partnership between Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council. This statement describes in particular the arrangements for the JMASS senior staff and its lowest paid employees.

The statement will be considered by elected members of the two councils at Full Council meetings.

2. Background

Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to prepare and publish a pay policy statement for each financial year.

The pay statement is intended to bring together sufficient information about the different elements of the local authority's pay policies to enable local taxpayers to reach an informed view about local decisions on all aspects of pay and reward for employees. It also provides the context for the more detailed financial information that is already published by local authorities under the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency and by the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011.

3. The Joint Management and Shared Service partnership between Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council

In November 2013 the two councils entered into an agreement by which services will be delivered by a single workforce across the two local authority areas.

In order to reduce costs and increase efficiency for the two councils the workforce is led by a single Chief Executive and team of senior staff which replaces the two separate management teams which served the two councils before the agreement was approved. The two councils share the salary costs of senior employees set out in this statement.

This pay statement has been produced during a period of transition for the workforce. The transfer of staff into new posts in a reorganised single

workforce is currently underway and will be completed by the end of 2014/15. Taunton Deane Borough Council will employ all staff on behalf of the Partnership.

Elected members, at respective Council meetings on 12 November 2013, have already considered and approved the details of senior salary packages for the Joint Management Team and new terms and conditions of employment for the whole of the shared workforce are being negotiated with UNISON with a view to these new terms being in place by 1 April 2015.

Elected members agreed a revised pay and grading scheme for the single workforce below the Joint Management Team at their meetings of 12 November 2013.

In view of these changes this pay statement represents the position on the pay structures and other elements of the remuneration package for staff as at 31 March 2014.

4. Policy statement

The Partnership is committed to ensuring transparent, fair and equitable pay and reward arrangements that provide value for money and enable the recruitment and retention of employees with the skills and motivation to deliver high quality services for Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council and its communities. The policies that support these objectives are summarised in this document.

5. Scope

The pay statement describes the pay arrangements that apply to the Joint Management Team (the senior employees) and the two councils lowest paid employees.

For the purpose of this pay statement **senior employees** are defined as those staff in the top three tiers of management; the Chief Executive, three Directors, the Assistant Chief Executive and seven Assistant Directors.

The pay and grading of employees, other than senior employees, are currently set using pay structures divided into grades within which there are spinal column points setting the pay rates. Posts are allocated to a pay grade through a process of job evaluation.

Current pay and grading structures for the two councils are set out in the attached Appendices C (Taunton Deane Borough Council) and B (West Somerset Council). As agreed by both Councils the Taunton Deane Borough Council pay and grading structure will be used when appointments are made to the joint workforce.

For the purpose of this statement **lowest paid employees** for the two councils are defined as follows:

- Taunton Deane Borough Council – Those who receive a salary equivalent to Grade B on the council's pay structure. This is because no employee of the council is paid at a grade lower than Grade B (Point 11).
- West Somerset Council – Those who receive a salary equivalent to Grade 1 (Point 8)

The Councils are required, for the purposes of this statement, to define 'its lowest paid employees' and also to explain why they have adopted this definition.

Other than the posts set out in above (senior management) and recognised apprentices all posts within the councils have been subject to Job Evaluation to assess the value of the job content and then, subject to that value, have been placed in an agreed grade.

The councils will therefore define their lowest paid employees as those on the minimum pay points as these (apart from apprentices) are the lowest hourly rates paid to employees of the councils. The Councils have adopted this definition, as it can be easily understood.

It should, however, be pointed out that the new Taunton Deane Borough Council pay gradings have been amended by Members to commence from the current 'Living Wage' (outside of London) and when the creation of the shared workforce is completed this will be the lowest hourly rate paid to employees.

6. Remuneration of senior employees

As part of the annual Pay Policy Statement each council must state:

- (a) The elements of remuneration for each senior employee and these are set out in Appendix A.
- (b) The policy for determining the remuneration of senior employees on recruitment.

The Joint Management Team are employed on fixed pay points for all posts within the top three tiers and therefore remuneration in terms of salary will be fixed on appointment if these remained unaltered.

Any other elements of remuneration, as set out in Appendix A, that are relevant at the point of recruitment are highlighted accordingly.

The Leaders will, after taking independent pay advice from South West Councils or similar, recommend the remuneration package on appointment to the above posts to Full Council prior to advertisement of any vacancy. The remuneration package will then be subject to the approval of Full Council.

- (c) How any increases and additions to remuneration for each senior employee are made.

Annual cost of living pay awards are negotiated nationally by the Local Government Employers organisation and, where a pay award is agreed, these will be applied to the fixed pay point of the employee.

The Councils have the ability to determine certain Local Government Pension Scheme discretions and the Discretions which have been adopted by each authority are attached in Appendices D (Taunton Deane Borough Council) and E (West Somerset Council).

The post of Chief Executive is employed on the Terms and Conditions of Employment agreed by the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) for Chief Executives and all other senior employees are covered by the Terms and Conditions of Employment agreed by the JNC for Chief Officers all of which are supplemented by local terms and conditions agreed by Taunton Deane Borough Council as the employer.

- (d) The use of performance-related pay for chief officers.

The councils do not operate Performance Related Pay schemes for any of its staff.

- (e) The use of bonuses for senior employee.

The councils do not operate Bonus Schemes or Bonus Payments for any of its staff.

- (f) The approach to the payment of senior employees on their ceasing to hold office under or to be employed by the authority

Any termination payments to senior employees on ceasing office will comply with the policies current at that time, which will have been approved by Full Council of the employing authority. No additional termination payments will be made without the approval of the Executive/Cabinet, this will include any Compromise Agreement settlements, which may be subject to a confidentiality clause. The current joint redundancy policy is attached at Appendix F and retirement policies are attached as Appendices G (Taunton Deane Borough Council) and H (West Somerset Council).

That where severance payments for staff exceed £100,000 they will be reported to Full Council for approval and in presenting information to Full Council the components of the relevant severance package will be clearly set out. These components may include salary paid in lieu, redundancy compensation, pension entitlements, holiday pay and any bonuses, fees or allowances paid.

- (g) The remuneration of senior employees who return to Local Authority employment.

Where the senior employee:

- (i) Was a previously employed senior employee who left with a severance payment and applies to comeback as a senior employee.

Executive/Cabinet approval would be required to authorise re-employment within the authority of a previously employed senior employee who had left with a severance payment and is seeking re-employment.

- (ii) Was previously employed by the same authority and have comeback as a senior employee under a contract for services.

Executive/Cabinet will be required to approve any award of a 'contract for services' to a senior employee who has previously been employed by the authority.

- (iii) Is in receipt of a Local Government Pension Scheme Pension.

If an employee receiving a pension from the Local Government Pension Scheme becomes re-employed then their pension could be affected. If their pension plus the earnings from their new job is higher than the final pay their pension was calculated on, then their pension will be affected. For every pound that their earnings plus pension exceed previous pay, then their pension will reduce by a pound. This abatement will last for as long as the person exceeds their limit (so either when the new job ends or they reduce their hours so their earnings drop down below the acceptable level).

However, abatement is not applied where the member's pension is less than £3000 per annum.

The Joint Chief Executive is the appointed Returning Officer for Taunton Deane whilst the Assistant Chief Executive is the appointed Returning Officer for West Somerset Council and both receive a fee for County, District and Parish Council and for Parliamentary Election duties. The fee for undertaking this role varies from year to year and is not subject to this policy since fee levels are set regionally and nationally.

7. Remuneration of other employees

As explained in paragraph 5 above, the councils pay structure for all other employees consists of grades and incremental points set out in the attached appendices. Grades are allocated to jobs through a process of job evaluation which establishes the relative value of different jobs within the workforce. The two councils currently operate the same job evaluation scheme (the Greater London Provincial Council Scheme) and both Councils have agreed to continue to use this Scheme for the shared workforce. Salaries for all

employees (including senior employees) are subject to increases agreed under national pay award settlements.

The councils pay structures create the basis of the relationship between the pay of all employees within the scope of the Pay Policy Statement.

The maximum salary for the post of Chief Executive is approximately 7.39:1 for Taunton Deane Borough Council and 8.26:1 for West Somerset Council times the maximum salary of the lowest paid employee. The maximum salary of the Directors is 5.38:1 for Taunton Deane Borough Council and 6.01:1 for West Somerset Council times the maximum salary of the lowest paid employee. The maximum salary of the Assistant Directors is 4.03:1 for Taunton Deane Borough Council and 4.50:1 for West Somerset Council times the lowest paid employee.

The maximum salary for the post of Chief Executive is approximately 4.4:1 for Taunton Deane Borough Council and 3.7:1 for West Somerset Council times the mean FTE salary.

NB: On completion of the creation of the shared workforce at the end of 2014/15 there will only be one set of comparisons as all staff will be employed by Taunton Deane Borough Council.

8. Transparency and Publication of Data

The councils will publish the Pay Policy Statement on the Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council websites alongside other information relating to transparency/open government and this can be found on:

<https://www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk/transparency>
http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/irj/public/council/consultations/consultation?rid=/wpccontent/Sites/TDBC/Web%20Pages/Council/Consultations/Transparency%20Open%20Data_0

9. Review

The Localism Act requires councils to prepare and publish a pay policy statement for each financial year. The next statement is due for publication before the end of March 2015.

Appendices

- Appendix A Remuneration to senior staff
- Appendix B West Somerset Council Pay and Grading Structure
- Appendix C Taunton Deane Borough Council Pay and Grading Structure
- Appendix D Taunton Deane Borough Council Local Government Pension Scheme Discretions
- Appendix E West Somerset Council Local Government Pension Scheme Discretions
- Appendix F Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council redundancy policy
- Appendix G Taunton Deane Borough Council Flexible Retirement Policy
- Appendix H West Somerset Council Retirement Policy

Appendix A – Remuneration to Senior Staff

The Level and Remuneration for each Chief Officer

Post	Statutory Role	Terms and Conditions and JE Status	Salary	Salary Progression	Bonus or Performance related pay	Other Benefits	Pension Enhancement in Year
Chief Executive	Head of Paid Service	JNC Chief Executives – Out of JE	£110,000	No	No	Lease Car Payment of Professional Subscription *Election payments – Returning Officer Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No
Strategic Director of Operations and Deputy Chief Executive	Section 151 Officer	JNC Chief Officers – Out of JE	£85,000	No	No	Lease Car Payment of Professional Subscription Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No
Strategic Director of Housing and Communities		JNC Chief Officers – Out of JE	£80,000	No	No	Payment of Professional Subscription Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No
Strategic Director Growth and Development		JNC Chief Officers – Out of JE	£80,000	No	No	Lease Car Payment of Professional Subscription Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No

Post	Statutory Role	Terms and Conditions and JE Status	Salary	Salary Progression	Bonus or Performance related pay	Other Benefits	Pension Enhancement in Year
Assistant Chief Executive	Monitoring Officer	JNC Chief Officers – Out of JE	£63,500	No	No	Payment of Professional Subscription Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No
Assistant Director Housing and Community Development		JNC Chief Officers – Out of JE	£60,000	No	No	Payment of Professional Subscription Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No
Assistant Director Corporate Services		JNC Chief Officers – Out of JE	£60,000	No	No	Lease Car Payment of Professional Subscription Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No
Assistant Director Planning and Environment		JNC Chief Officers – Out of JE	£60,000	No	No	Lease Car cash allowance Payment of Professional Subscription Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No
Assistant Director Resources		JNC Chief Officers – Out of JE	£60,000	No.	No	Payment of Professional Subscription Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No

Post	Statutory Role	Terms and Conditions and JE Status	Salary	Salary Progression	Bonus or Performance related pay	Other Benefits	Pension Enhancement in Year
Assistant Director Business Development		JNC Chief Officers – Out of JE	£60,000	No	No	Payment of Professional Subscription Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No
Assistant Director Operational Delivery		JNC Chief Officers – Out of JE	£60,000	No	No	Payment of Professional Subscription Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No

* Additional payments are made by Central Government to officers carrying out additional duties at elections. These payments will only be received when elections take place and vary according to the responsibility undertaken.

** These thresholds relate to the publication of salary information as required under the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency (£58,200 is the minimum of the Senior Civil Service minimum pay band) and the Audit and Accounts Regulations (£50,000)

Appendix B – West Somerset Council Pay and Grading Structure

West Somerset Groups	Spinal Column Points	Salary Banding
WS 1	SCP 5 – 8	£12,435 - £13,321
WS 2	SCP 9 – 12	£13,725 - £15,189
WS 3	SCP 13 – 16	£15,598 - £16,604
WS 4	SCP 17 – 20	£16,998 - £18,638
WS 5	SCP 21 – 24	£19,317 - £21,067
WS 6	SCP 25 – 28	£21,734 - £23,945
WS 7	SCP 29 – 32	£24,892 - £27,323
WS 8	SCP 33 – 36	£28,127 - £30,311
WS 9	SCP 37 – 40	£31,160 - £33,998
WS 10	SCP 41 – 44	£34,894 - £37,578
WS 11	SCP 45 - 48	£38,422 - £41,148
Group Manager	SCP 49 – 52	£42,032 - £44,674

Appendix C – Taunton Deane Borough Council Pay and Grading Structure

Grade	SCP/£				
	Increment 1	Increment 2	Increment 3	Increment 4	Increment 5
A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
B	N/A	N/A	N/A	10 £14,760	11 £14,880
C	12 £15,189	13 £15,598	14 £15,882	15 £16,215	16 £16,604
D	17 £16,998	18 £17,333	19 £17,980	20 £18,638	21 £19,317
E	22 £19,817	23 £20,400	24 £21,067	25 £21,734	26 £22,443
F	27 £23,188	28 £23,945	29 £24,892	30 £25,727	31 £26,539
G	32 £27,323	33 £28,127	34 £28,922	35 £29,528	36 £30,311
H	37 £31,160	38 £32,072	39 £33,128	40 £33,998	41 £34,894
I	42 £35,784	43 £36,676	44 £37,578	45 £38,422	46 £39,351
J	47 £40,254	48 £41,148	49 £42,032	50 £42,935	51 £43,811
K	52 £44,705	53 £45,590	54 £46,483	55 £47,171	56 £47,862
L	57 £48,547	58 £49,234	59 £49,922	60 £50,610	61 £51,298

Appendix D - Written Statement on Local Government Pension Scheme Employers Discretions and Key Pensions Policy

Taunton Deane Borough Council

April 2014 to 31 March 2015

LGPS (Administration) Regulations 2008

Regulation B12

It is not the policy of the Council to augment member's service made redundant/retiring in the interests of efficiency on or before 31 March 2014. This discretion can be deleted on 30 September 2014 as former employees only have six months in which to make a request.

Regulation B30 (2)

The Council will allow individual former employees leaving employment on or before 31 March 2014 the option to request early payment of benefits after on or after age 55 and before age 60 which will be considered on a case-by-case basis following the production of a business case. In these cases no additional compensation will be awarded.

Regulation B30 (5)

With regard to the early payment of benefits on or after age 55 and before age 60 made under B30 (2) above the Council retains the right to waive the actuarial reduction of benefits on exceptional compassionate grounds.

Regulation B30A (3)

The Council will allow the option to request an application for reinstatement of a suspended tier 3 ill health pension on or after age 55 and before age 60 which will be considered on a case-by-case including the production of evidential support. This applies to employees leaving service on or before 31 March 2014.

Regulation B30A (5)

With regard to an application for reinstatement of a suspended tier 3 ill health pension on or after age 55 and before age 60 made under B30A (3) above the Council retains the right to waive the actuarial reduction of benefits on exceptional compassionate grounds.

Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 1997 (as amended) in relation to active councillor members and pre 1 April 2008 scheme leavers.

Regulation 31 (2)

The Council will allow a post 31 March 1998/pre 1 April 2008 leaver or from a councillor member the option to request early payment of benefits after on or after age 55 and before age 60 which will be considered on a case-by-case basis following the production of a business case. In these cases no additional compensation will be awarded.

Regulation 31 (5)

With regard to the early payment of benefits made in accordance with Regulation 31 (2) the Council retains the right to waive the actuarial reduction of benefits on exceptional compassionate grounds.

Regulation 31 (7A)

The Council will allow councillor optants out and pre 1 April 2008 employee optants out the option to request payment of benefits at normal retirement date and these will be considered on a case-by-case basis following the production of a business case.

The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013

Regulation 100 (6)

It is not Council policy to extend the 12-month limit on transfer of previous pension rights into the LGPS.

Regulation 9 (1) and 9 (3)

It is Council policy to allow employee contribution rates to be determined as changes occur during the financial year.

Regulation 16(2)(e) and 16(4)(d) Funding of Additional Pension

It is not the policy of the Council to fund additional pension and will not enter into a shared cost additional pension contributions arrangement.

Regulation 30(6) Flexible Retirement

The Council will allow benefits to be paid to a member of staff if they reduce their hours/grade (known as flexible retirement) and this is set out in the Council's Retirement Policy. Each case will be decided individually after the consideration of a detailed business case and only applies to those aged 55 and over.

Regulation 30(8)

With regard to flexible retirement and requests from staff aged 55 or over for retirement the Council retains the right to waive the actuarial reduction of benefits on exceptional compassionate grounds.

Regulation 31 Award of Additional Pension

It is not the policy of the Council to award Employer APC for active member leaving on redundancy/efficiency other than by allowing employees leaving on grounds of redundancy/efficiency to use compensation payments to fund additional pensions.

The Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) Discretionary Compensation Regulations 2006

As set out in the Redundancy Policy the Council do not limit redundancy payments to the statutory maximum weekly pay threshold and instead use actual weekly pay of the employee.

The Council does not offer a minimum payment with regard to redundancy. Benefits are calculated using actual weekly pay and the statutory number of weeks as calculated against continuous local government service (and service covered by the Modification Order).

The Council provides up to 60 weeks compensation, in addition to any redundancy payment as set out in both the Compensation Policy.

Where additional compensation is paid the employee has the option to augment pension benefits by using all of the additional compensation unless specific criteria are met.

Appendix E - Written Statement on Local Government Pension Scheme Employers Discretions and Key Pensions Policy

West Somerset Council

April 2014 to 31 March 2015

LGPS (Administration) Regulations 2008

Regulation B12

It is not the policy of the Council to augment member's service made redundant/retiring in the interests of efficiency on or before 31 March 2014. This discretion can be deleted on 30 September 2014 as former employees only have six months in which to make a request.

Regulation B30 (2)

The Council will allow individual former employees leaving employment on or before 31 March 2014 the option to request early payment of benefits after on or after age 55 and before age 60 which will be considered on a case-by-case basis following the production of a business case. In these cases no additional compensation will be awarded.

Regulation B30 (5)

With regard to the early payment of benefits on or after age 55 and before age 60 made under B30 (2) above the Council retains the right to waive the actuarial reduction of benefits on exceptional compassionate grounds.

Regulation B30A (3)

The Council will allow the option to request an application for reinstatement of a suspended tier 3 ill health pension on or after age 55 and before age 60 which will be considered on a case-by-case including the production of evidential support. This applies to employees leaving service on or before 31 March 2014.

Regulation B30A (5)

With regard to an application for reinstatement of a suspended tier 3 ill health pension on or after age 55 and before age 60 made under B30A (3) above the Council retains the right to waive the actuarial reduction of benefits on exceptional compassionate grounds.

Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 1997 (as amended) in relation to active councillor members and pre 1 April 2008 scheme leavers.

Regulation 31 (2)

The Council will allow a post 31 March 1998/pre 1 April 2008 leaver the option to request early payment of benefits after on or after age 55 and before age 60 which will be considered on a case-by-case basis following the production of a business case. In these cases no additional compensation will be awarded.

Regulation 31 (5)

With regard to the early payment of benefits made in accordance with Regulation 31 (2) the Council retains the right to waive the actuarial reduction of benefits on exceptional compassionate grounds.

Regulation 31 (7A)

The Council will allow pre 1 April 2008 employee optants out the option to request payment of benefits at normal retirement date and these will be considered on a case-by-case basis following the production of a business case.

The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013

Regulation 100 (6)

It is not Council policy to extend the 12-month limit on transfer of previous pension rights into the LGPS.

Regulation 9 (1) and 9 (3)

It is Council policy to allow employee contribution rates to be determined as changes occur during the financial year.

Regulation 16(2)(e) and 16(4)(d) Funding of Additional Pension

It is not the policy of the Council to fund additional pension and will not enter into a shared cost additional pension contributions arrangement.

Regulation 30(6) Flexible Retirement

The Council will allow benefits to be paid to a member of staff if they reduce their hours/grade (known as flexible retirement) and this is set out in the Council's Retirement Policy. Each case will be decided individually after the consideration of a detailed business case and only applies to those aged 55 and over.

Regulation 30(8)

With regard to flexible retirement and requests from staff aged 55 or over for retirement the Council retains the right to waive the actuarial reduction of benefits on exceptional compassionate grounds.

Regulation 31 Award of Additional Pension

It is not the policy of the Council to award Employer APC for active member leaving on redundancy/efficiency other than by allowing employees leaving on grounds of redundancy/efficiency to use compensation payments to fund additional pensions.

The Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) Discretionary Compensation Regulations 2006

As set out in the Redundancy Policy the Council do not limit redundancy payments to the statutory maximum weekly pay threshold and instead use actual weekly pay of the employee.

The Council does not offer a minimum payment with regard to redundancy. Benefits are calculated using actual weekly pay and the statutory number of weeks as calculated against continuous local government service (and service covered by the Modification Order).

The Council provides up to 30 weeks compensation, in addition to any redundancy payment as set out in both the Redundancy and Retirement Policies.

Where additional compensation is paid the employee has the option to augment pension benefits by using all of the additional compensation.

Appendix F – Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council Redundancy Policy



Implementation date of policy 13 November 2013

Review date April 2015

Redundancy and Redeployment (transition) Policy

Introduction

This policy covers any redundancy situations that may arise following the approval of the business case for joint management and shared services between Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council (the Councils).

The Councils recognise a responsibility to safeguard the job security and prospects of their employees as far as possible. They also recognise that they must adapt to change and that this process of combining two sets of employees will inevitably affect the structure and size of the workforce.

Scope

The policy applies to the employees of both of the Councils and will cover the period following the approval at Full Council of the business case for joint management and shared services between the Councils.

The policy will be reviewed in April 2015 with UNISON to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness. An extension may be applied with agreement of UNISON.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to set out one procedure that will be followed by both Councils throughout the transition period. In doing so, it ensures employees, managers and UNISON are clear of the procedure that is being followed through any redundancy process.

As far as possible, the Councils will seek to avoid or minimise the need for compulsory redundancies, this policy sets out the ways in which the Councils will do this.

Redundancy Procedure

Consultation

Where the possibility of redundancies is identified the Councils will inform and consult with the relevant trade union representatives as early as possible and before any formal decisions have been made. As part of the consultation the Council will provide the following information:

- the reasons for the proposed redundancies;
- the numbers and descriptions of employees it proposes to make redundant;
- the total number of employees of those descriptions employed at the establishment in question;
- the proposed method of selecting those who may be dismissed;
- the proposed method of carrying out the dismissals, including the period over which the dismissals are to take effect;
- the proposed method of calculating any redundancy payments;
- the number of agency workers working temporarily for, and under the supervision and direction of, the employer;
- the parts of the employer's business in which the agency workers work; and
- the type of work that the agency workers carry out.

Formal consultation shall be deemed to commence on the date when these details are given in a letter to the Branch Secretaries of both Branches.

Consultation timescales will depend upon the scale of potential redundancies and will be as follows:

- A minimum of 30 days before the first dismissal takes effect, where up to 99 employees are to be made redundant over a period of 90 days or less; or
- A minimum of 45 days before the first dismissal takes effect, where more than 100 employees are to be made redundant over a period of 90 days or less

Any consultation responses received in time will be included in any committee reports to be considered by the appropriate Committee.

Measures to avoid or minimise compulsory redundancies

The Councils will, in consultation with the appropriate trade union representatives explore any options to avoid or minimise the need for compulsory redundancies. Alternatives may include (not in order of priority):

- Reductions through natural staff turnover (ie not automatically replacing employees who leave);
- Seeking volunteers for redundancy;
- Redeployment, including retraining where appropriate;
- Stopping or reducing overtime other than contractual or emergency overtime;
- Restrictions on permanent and/or external recruitment;
- Termination of casual or agency worker arrangements;
- Flexible retirements/voluntary reduction in hours.

Employees 'at risk' of redundancy

Notification of 'at risk' status

As soon as practicable after the unions have been informed of the potential for redundancies, any individuals affected will be informed that they are 'at risk' of redundancy and that consultation has commenced. An individual will be identified as being 'at risk' of redundancy if their current post does not exist in a new structure or there will be a reduction in the number of the same post in a new structure. This will be confirmed in writing with an estimate of any redundancy payment and if applicable, pension payment due.

Throughout the consultation period, further meetings (usually mid consultation and at the end of the consultation period) will be arranged with individuals 'at risk' of redundancy to discuss any concerns, redeployment opportunities, any selection processes etc. Records of any discussions will be kept on the employee's personal file.

Rights of employees 'at risk'

Employees 'at risk' of redundancy have certain rights. The Councils will make every effort to redeploy the individuals within the Councils services.

Employees are entitled to reasonable paid time off to look for alternative employment. This may include time off to attend interviews or attend relevant training courses. A reasonable amount of time is considered to be up to two days per week (pro rata for part-time employees). Such time off must be arranged in advance with the line manager.

A central register of employees 'at risk' of redundancy will be held in HR and those employees put 'at risk' will be informed by HR of all relevant vacancies arising within the Councils. Efforts will be made to redeploy employees within the Councils to retain skills, knowledge and experience and reasonable training will be provided if necessary.

The Councils will make every effort to facilitate employees search for new employment, either through in-house support or, on occasions, outplacement specialists. Support may include; advice on writing application forms or preparing CVs, interview tips, coaching etc.

Selection for redundancy

Once a proposal for a restructure or reduction in headcount is approved and where compulsory redundancies are unavoidable, the ring fence arrangements and process of selection for redundancy will be agreed with UNISON. It may include some or all of the following criteria:

- Attendance records (other than absences covered by the Equality Act 2010);
- Disciplinary records ('live' warnings only);
- Skills and experience;
- Past performance records;
- A selection interview.

If a function or service is to be discontinued all employees directly related to the provision of that function will automatically be selected for redundancy.

If there is to be a reduction in the number of posts but the job descriptions remain largely unchanged, (i.e. duties are more than 80% the same). Selection will be based on agreed criteria and made by a selection panel that comprises of a higher level of management, at least one member of Corporate Management Team (CMT) and a representative from HR.

If a restructure involves the creation of new roles, selection for redundancy will be dependant on success at interview for those new roles. A new role is one where the duties are more than 20% different. A ring fence of employees that can apply for the new posts will be agreed with UNISON and will be based on job type, grade and/or salary levels. The appointment panel should consist of managers from a higher level of management, at least one member of CMT and a representative from HR.

This appointment process does not apply to posts named as Scheduled Posts on the constitution, (i.e. Joint Chief Executive, Strategic Directors, Corporate Directors, Theme Managers and Corporate Managers). As these appointments require an Appointments Committee, comprising of at least one member of each of the Councils Executive/Cabinet Committees.

The employee/s selected for redundancy will receive written notification of the reasons for their selection as well as their proper contractual notice in accordance with their contract of employment or statutory notice whichever is greater.

NB: The cost of redundancy is not a factor that will be taken into account when selection for redundancy is made.

Calculation of redundancy payments

Employees will be notified personally about their redundancy entitlements as soon as possible after they have been notified that they are 'at risk' of redundancy, including the compensation/severance payment in writing and details of any pension due where applicable.

The qualifying service in respect of redundancy payments is two years continuous local government service (in accordance with the Redundancy Payments (Local Government) Modification Order. Reckonable service is limited to the last 20 years before redundancy.

Statutory redundancy payments are made according to the following scale:

- (a) one and a half week's pay* for each year of employment during which the employee was aged 41 and over;
- (b) one week's pay* for each year of employment during which the employee was aged 22 to 40 inclusive;
- (c) half a week's pay* for each year of employment in which the employee was aged 21 and under.

* A week's pay is based on contractual pay and does not include occasional overtime or additional payments.

Appendix one includes a table with the number of statutory weeks entitlement according to age and continuous service.

If prior to the expiry of the employee's notice of dismissal an individual receives an offer of employment with a related employer (in accordance with the Redundancy Payments Continuity of Employment in Local Government Modification Order 1999) to start immediately or within four weeks of the end of the previous employment, a redundancy payment cannot be made by the Council.

Compensation/severance payments

The Councils operate a discretionary enhanced redundancy payment scheme under the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) Regulations 2006, as compensation for the loss of employment on redundancy grounds. Details of the Council's schemes are available from the HR representatives.

Employees will be entitled to the discretionary compensation/severance payments in accordance with the existing policy of their employing Council.

Redundancy and compensation/severance payments will be made to employees within 4 weeks of the date of leaving employment.

Local Government Pension Scheme Payments

Employees that have been members of the LGPS for 3 month's or more and are aged 55 or over, are entitled to the immediate unreduced payment of their LGPS benefits if dismissed on the grounds of redundancy.

Redeployment Procedure

Wherever possible employees will be redeployed to avoid compulsory redundancy.

The Councils reserve the right in agreement with UNISON to apply a ring fence to new roles that are created as a result of any proposed restructures and offer them in the first instance to those employees at a similar job type grade/salary level within the existing structure and who have the relevant skills and experience that match the job description or person specification.

Where there is only one individual matched with the new position they will be slotted in.

Where there is more than one employee that matches the role or a group of employees to more than one role, a selection procedure panel will take place that involves a formal interview and other recruitment selection procedures.

All other vacancies arising within the Council where a suitable ring fence is not identified will be offered to employees 'at risk' of redundancy in the first instance.

Such vacancies will be sent initially to the HR Team who will check them against the 'at risk' register for any suitable candidates. Employees will be matched according to the essential criteria on the person specification, salary levels and preferred hours of work. Consideration must also be given to any reasonable appropriate training that will enable them to perform the duties of the role.

Any employees that meet the essential criteria will be made an offer of redeployment. Where more than one employee is matched to a vacancy a selection process will apply.

Any offer of redeployment will be made in writing and will include reference to a trial period, any training available, terms and conditions and protection arrangements if applicable.

Any employees that are redeployed into a new role will be given a 4 week trial period. This period may be extended by mutual agreement.

If the trial period is successful the employee will be sent written confirmation of any changes to terms and conditions. If the trial period is deemed unsuccessful by the manager, contractual notice will be reduced by the length of the trial period.

If an offer of redeployment is made by the Councils and the employee decides during the trial period that they wish to reject the offer, they must advise HR in writing within the trial period.

An employee who believes that a job offer is not suitable alternative employment may claim a redundancy payment. However, this will only be paid where the Councils agree that the job is unsuitable. The decision will be made by a Member of CMT, taking account of any changes to terms and conditions and the level of seniority.

Pay Protection and Trickle Down

As part of this policy there will be no protection for employees who are redeployed into another post.

Once agreed, ringfences will operate distinctly from one another without the ability to trickle down or across.

Appeals

If an employee is aggrieved about their selection for redundancy they have the right of appeal. The appeal must be received in writing by HR within 10 working days of the decision being made. Refer to Council Appeal Procedure.

If the selection for redundancy was made by the Joint Chief Executive the employee will have the right of appeal to be heard by an Appeal Committee comprising of at least one member of each of the Councils Executive/Cabinet Committee.

If the selection for redundancy was made by a Member of CMT other than the Joint Chief Executive the employee will have a right of appeal to be heard by the Joint Chief Executive.

All decisions made by the appeal panel are final.

Appendix one – Table to show entitlement to statutory weeks redundancy based on age and continuous service

		Years Service																		
		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Age	18																			
	19																			
	20	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0															
	21	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5														
	22	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0													
	23	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0												
	24	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0											
	25	2.0	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0										
	26	2.0	3.0	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.5	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0									
	27	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	5.5	6.0	6.5	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0								
	28	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	6.5	7.0	7.5	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0							
	29	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	7.5	8.0	8.5	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0						
	30	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	8.5	9.0	9.5	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0					
	31	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	9.5	10.0	10.5	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0				
	32	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	10.5	11.0	11.5	12.0	12.0	12.0	12.0			
	33	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	11.0	11.5	12.0	12.5	13.0	13.0	13.0	13.0		
	34	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	11.0	12.0	12.5	13.0	13.5	14.0	14.0	14.0	14.0	
	35	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	11.0	12.0	13.0	13.5	14.0	14.5	15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0
	36	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	11.0	12.0	13.0	14.0	14.5	15.0	15.5	16.0	16.0	16.0
	37	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	11.0	12.0	13.0	14.0	15.0	15.5	16.0	16.5	17.0	17.0
	38	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	11.0	12.0	13.0	14.0	15.0	16.0	16.5	17.0	17.5	18.0
	39	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	11.0	12.0	13.0	14.0	15.0	16.0	17.0	17.5	18.0	18.5
	40	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	11.0	12.0	13.0	14.0	15.0	16.0	17.0	18.0	18.5	19.0
41	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	11.0	12.0	13.0	14.0	15.0	16.0	17.0	18.0	19.0	19.5	
42	2.5	3.5	4.5	5.5	6.5	7.5	8.5	9.5	10.5	11.5	12.5	13.5	14.5	15.5	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	
43	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	11.0	12.0	13.0	14.0	15.0	16.0	17.0	18.0	19.0	20.0	21.0	

		Years Service																		
		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Age	44	3.0	4.5	5.5	6.5	7.5	8.5	9.5	10.5	11.5	12.5	13.5	14.5	15.5	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	21.5
	45	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	11.0	12.0	13.0	14.0	15.0	16.0	17.0	18.0	19.0	20.0	21.0	22.0
	46	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	8.5	9.5	10.5	11.5	12.5	13.5	14.5	15.5	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	21.5	22.5
	47	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.0	11.0	12.0	13.0	14.0	15.0	16.0	17.0	18.0	19.0	20.0	21.0	22.0	23.0
	48	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	11.5	12.5	13.5	14.5	15.5	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	21.5	22.5	23.5
	49	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.0	14.0	15.0	16.0	17.0	18.0	19.0	20.0	21.0	22.0	23.0	24.0
	50	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5	14.5	15.5	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	21.5	22.5	23.5	24.5
	51	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5	15.0	16.0	17.0	18.0	19.0	20.0	21.0	22.0	23.0	24.0	25.0
	52	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5	15.0	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	21.5	22.5	23.5	24.5	25.5
	53	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5	15.0	16.5	18.0	19.0	20.0	21.0	22.0	23.0	24.0	25.0	26.0
	54	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5	15.0	16.5	18.0	19.5	20.5	21.5	22.5	23.5	24.5	25.5	26.5
	55	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5	15.0	16.5	18.0	19.5	21.0	22.0	23.0	24.0	25.0	26.0	27.0
	56	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5	15.0	16.5	18.0	19.5	21.0	22.5	23.5	24.5	25.5	26.5	27.5
	57	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5	15.0	16.5	18.0	19.5	21.0	22.5	24.0	25.0	26.0	27.0	28.0
	58	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5	15.0	16.5	18.0	19.5	21.0	22.5	24.0	25.5	26.5	27.5	28.5
	59	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5	15.0	16.5	18.0	19.5	21.0	22.5	24.0	25.5	27.0	28.0	29.0
	60	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5	15.0	16.5	18.0	19.5	21.0	22.5	24.0	25.5	27.0	28.5	29.5
	61	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5	15.0	16.5	18.0	19.5	21.0	22.5	24.0	25.5	27.0	28.5	30.0
	62	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5	15.0	16.5	18.0	19.5	21.0	22.5	24.0	25.5	27.0	28.5	30.0
	63	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5	15.0	16.5	18.0	19.5	21.0	22.5	24.0	25.5	27.0	28.5	30.0
	64	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5	15.0	16.5	18.0	19.5	21.0	22.5	24.0	25.5	27.0	28.5	30.0

Appendix G – Taunton Deane Borough Council Flexible Retirement Policy

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Full or Partial Flexible Retirement Policy

1. Employees aged 55 (aged 50 up to 31 March 2010) who are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme are able to request payment of early retirement benefits whilst remaining in the Council's employment on reduced hours or a lower grade.
2. This right does not apply to employees who are in receipt of a redundancy payment and early pension benefits or who have taken early retirement in the interests of the efficiency of the service.
3. As a guide, a business case for flexible retirement where any reduction is minimal (e.g. less than 20% either in terms of reduced hours or lower grade) may be difficult to objectively justify.
4. Requests for flexible working may be instigated by employees who meet the criteria set out in 1. above at anytime but will only be able to make one request in any 12 month period.
5. An employee should, in the first instance, approach their line manager with a request for reduced hours, more flexible working patterns by putting their request in writing.
6. The line manager will notify the HR Advisory Team and a meeting will be arranged within 21 days to discuss the request from the employee.
7. At this point the HR Advisory Team will request an estimate of early retirement benefits from the Pension Section of Somerset County Council which will be provided to the employee and be used to complete the Flexible Retirement Approval Request Form.
8. The meeting between the employee, line manager and a member of the HR Advisory Team will discuss the request and business case and will only be referred for approval if it is operationally viable.
9. If the request is referred for approval this will be considered by the relevant Theme Manager/Service Unit Manager and the HR Manager.
10. It should be noted that employees who are retiring in this way before their normal retirement age will suffer an actuarial reduction in their benefits to reflect early payment. In exceptional compassionate circumstances the Council has the right to waive this actuarial reduction.
11. If the request is not referred for approval this will be confirmed to the employee in writing to the employee within 14 days of the meeting. The

employee would have the right of appeal against this decision which should be made in writing to the Retained HR Manager within 10 days of receipt of the reason for refusal of the request or refusal to waive the actuarial reduction on compassionate grounds where the request is approved.

12. Appeals will be heard by a Strategic Director advised by the Retained HR Manager.

Approved by Council – October 2009

Appendix H – West Somerset Retirement Policy

June 2008

CAB

Amended August 2008 (Agreed Council 17 September 2008)

Amended March 2011 (Agreed Council 23 March 2011)



For your information, this policy gives details on the Council's retirement procedures, which include Flexible Retirement Scheme, Retirement in the Interests of Efficiency and Ill Health Retirement.

With the abolition of the Default Retirement Age from 1st October 2011 the Council no longer has a fixed age of retirement and employees will be able to determine their own retirement date. It should be noted that the Local Government Pension Scheme retains a normal retirement age of 65 when benefits can be drawn without deduction although employees should always take advice on when and on what basis benefits can be drawn.

1. Discretionary Flexible Retirement

Employees aged fifty-five years or over who are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme may apply to receive payment of early pension retirement benefits whilst remaining in the Council's employment on reduced hours/grade.

The Council's decision is purely discretionary in such cases, but fair and appropriate consideration will be given to all requests where the reduction is for at least 20% of existing hours of work.

Please note this does not apply to employees who are in receipt of a redundancy payment and early pension benefits or who have taken early retirement in the interests of efficiency.

Discretionary Flexible Retirement Procedure

If you satisfy the criteria and wish to request payment of your accrued pension benefits whilst continuing in employment on reduced hours/grade, you must submit your request in writing to your Corporate Manager. Your written request must contain details of the following:

- The reduction in hours/grade proposed (at least 20% of existing hours).
- How the change in working pattern will affect the Council and your colleagues and how this might be overcome.
- The proposed start date of the change in hours/grade.

On receipt of your request your Corporate Manager will advise Human Resources who will request an estimate of your early retirement benefits from the Pensions Section of Somerset County Council.

Employees who are retiring in this way before the normal retirement age as laid down in the Local Government Pension Scheme may suffer an actuarial reduction in their benefits to reflect the early payment. However, employees who are retiring before their normal retirement age and who are protected and meet the 85 year rule criteria will not suffer any actuarial reduction in their benefits. In these cases, there will be up-front costs to the Council arising from the early payments of benefits.

The relevant Corporate Manager and Human Resources will then give due consideration to your request based on the operational viability of the proposal and the economic impact of any up-front pension costs or any other associated costs to the Council.

The outcome of this review will then be reported to CMT for a decision and after consideration of all the relevant factors, you will then be notified in writing of the outcome. The Council's decision in such cases is purely discretionary and the outcome is final.

2. Retirement in the Interests of Efficiency

This scheme facilitates reorganisation in staffing structures in the interests of the efficiency of the service and of the individual employee(s) concerned. It is applied entirely at the discretion of the Council and there is no right of appeal against the Council's decision.

The expression 'early retirement in the interests of the efficiency of the service' is difficult to define but the application of this scheme can be justified because: -

- (a) it facilitates/encourages internal restructuring
- (b) it allows for the retirement of an employee who is unable to match up to the changed requirements of his/her job
- (c) The Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Payments) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006 allow local authorities to use their discretion in the interests of the efficient exercise of that authority's functions.

The scheme is voluntary and it must be clearly understood that it is not meant to cover cases where action should be taken to dismiss an employee on grounds of discipline, ill health, and lack of qualifications or capability. Application of the scheme does not imply that an employee is or has become inefficient.

If you retire in the interests of efficiency, you will be entitled to a lump-sum payment calculated using your actual weeks pay and equating to the equivalent of the statutory number of weeks payable for redundancy (see the ready reckoner table at

the end of this policy), however you will not be entitled to receive a redundancy payment from the Council.

The lump sum received may be used to augment pensionable service and advice should be sought from the Pensions Section of Somerset County Council or may be taken as a cash sum (with the first £30,000 tax free).

Employees aged fifty-five years or over who are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme will receive payment of early pension retirement benefits.

3. Ill Health Retirement

Early retirement on the grounds of permanent ill health can be approved in circumstances where the Council's Occupational Health Physician or an independent Physician have issued a certificate stating that the employee is permanently incapable of undertaking his/her duties and if you are unlikely to be capable of gainful employment within a reasonable time after you leave.

The Chief Executive has delegated authority in consultation with the appropriate Portfolio holder, to take this course of action on behalf of the Council and in so doing would have regard to: -

- (a) length of sickness absence of the employee
- (b) age of the employee and nature of duties undertaken
- (c) scope for redeployment
- (d) nature of the sickness absence

The Council expects the Occupational Health Physician to ensure that the employee is examined by himself/herself or a specialist Occupational Health Physician. The Council would not wish to receive a report, which relied solely on the opinion of the employee's GP. In addition the Council may obtain the view of an independent medical adviser.

During the period of sickness absence, the employee will be visited by a member of the Human Resources Team or his/her representative and, in most instances, it is anticipated that the decision to retire an employee on ill health grounds will be taken with the employee's agreement.

The retirement of the employee will be reported to a meeting of the Council's Cabinet.

The Council has no discretion on the enhancement of superannuation benefits in circumstances of ill health retirement.

The LGPS operates a three-tier ill health system for employees who are members of the Scheme. To qualify for a benefit:

- The employee must have at least 3 months membership or have had a transfer of pension rights into the LGPS and

- The employer must terminate the employment on grounds that the employee's ill health or infirmity of mind or body renders him/her incapable of discharging efficiently the duties of his/her employment, and
- The employee must have a reduced likelihood of obtaining gainful employment before age 65 (Note: gainful employment means paid employment for not less than 30 hours in each week for a period of not less than 12 months).

If all of the above conditions above are met, and the employer has obtained the certificate referred to in the first paragraph of this Section the scheme member is entitled to a tier 1, tier 2 or tier 3 pension.

Tier 1: If a member is judged to have no reasonable prospect of being capable of obtaining gainful employment before age 65, pension benefits are payable based on accrued membership plus 100% of prospective membership* between leaving and age 65.

Tier 2: If the member is judged to be incapable of obtaining gainful employment within 3 years of leaving but is likely to be capable of obtaining gainful employment before age 65, pension benefits are payable based on accrued membership plus 25% of prospective membership* between leaving and age 65.

Tier 3: If the member is judged to be capable of obtaining gainful employment within 3 years of leaving, short-term reviewable pension benefits are payable based on accrued membership only.

* If the member is part time, the enhancement is pro-rated based on their hours at the date of leaving but ignoring any reduction in hours directly resulting from the employee's ill health or infirmity of mind or body.

If you have any queries regarding this policy, please do not hesitate to contact Human Resources.

Retirement in the Interest of Efficiency Pay – Ready Reckoner

Age	Complete Year's Service																			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
18		1																		
19		1	1.5																	
20		1	1.5	2																
21		1	1.5	2	2.5															
22		1	1.5	2	2.5	3														
23		1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4													
24		2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5												
25		2	3	3.5	4	4.5	5	5.5	6											
26		2	3	4	4.5	5	5.5	6	6.5	7										
27		2	3	4	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8									
28		2	3	4	5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	8.5	9								
29		2	3	4	5	6	7	7.5	8	8.5	9	9.5	10							
30		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	8.5	9	9.5	10	10.5	11						
31		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	9.5	10	10.5	11	11.5	12					
32		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	10.5	11	11.5	12	12.5	13				
33		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	11.5	12	12.5	13	13.5	14			
34		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	12.5	13	13.5	14	14.5	15		
35		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	13.5	14	14.5	15	15.5	16	
36		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	14.5	15	15.5	16	16.5	17
37		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	15.5	16	16.5	17	17.5
38		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	16.5	17	17.5	18
39		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	17.5	18	18.5
40		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	18.5	19
41		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	19.5
42		2.5	3.5	4.5	5.5	6.5	7.5	8.5	9.5	10.5	11.5	12.5	13.5	14.5	15.5	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5
43		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
44		3	4.5	5.5	6.5	7.5	8.5	9.5	10.5	11.5	12.5	13.5	14.5	15.5	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	21.5
45		3	4.5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
46		3	4.5	6	7.5	8.5	9.5	10.5	11.5	12.5	13.5	14.5	15.5	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	21.5	22.5
47		3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
48		3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	11.5	12.5	13.5	14.5	15.5	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	21.5	22.5	23.5
49		3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
50		3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	14.5	15.5	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	21.5	22.5	23.5	24.5
51		3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
52		3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	21.5	22.5	23.5	24.5	25.5
53		3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
54		3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	19.5	20.5	21.5	22.5	23.5	24.5	25.5	26.5
55		3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	19.5	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
56		3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	19.5	21	22.5	23.5	24.5	25.5	26.5	27.5
57		3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	19.5	21	22.5	24	25	26	27	28
58		3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	19.5	21	22.5	24	25.5	26.5	27.5	28.5
59		3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	19.5	21	22.5	24	25.5	27	28	29
60		3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	19.5	21	22.5	24	25.5	27	28.5	29.5
61 plus		3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	19.5	21	22.5	24	25.5	27	28.5	30

Council Meeting – 25 February 2014

Report of Councillor John Williams – Leader of the Council

1. Flooding Events

- 1.1 Following excessive rainfall of epic proportions we have a disaster occurring on the Levels and Moors and as water finds its own level its affect is far and wide into other District Councils areas. It is tragic to hear of the lost homes, businesses and livelihoods of those seriously affected and I offer my, and the Council's, deepest sympathy to those suffering from this unprecedented flooding
- 1.2 What we must do as the local authority is to ensure all possible is done to protect people and property and to start planning for the future. Firstly, the difficult task of recovery and the longer term plan of mitigation to reduce the dreadful impact of flooding that occurred this time. It is accepted the Levels and Moors will flood but it is the depth and duration they are flooded this time that has turned it into a disaster. We must do all possible to work with partners and other agencies to avoid a recurrence of these proportions.
- 1.3 Talking of working with others, it is only right that I acknowledge and thank all those in the community, the emergency services, the armed forces, Environment Agency and our own Council officers who have been maintaining a 24/7 response service to those in need and I would like to record my thanks to all and applaud them for their dedication and commitment - thank you.
- 1.4 Can I also reassure Members and our community that Taunton Deane Borough Council has not approved housing development within active flood plains. Any such application received would immediately be referred to the Environment Agency who would almost certainly recommend that we refuse the application. If, as the Planning Authority, we choose to ignore that advice and give approval then we have to report that we have not complied with the Environment Agency recommendation to Central Government. This has not arisen because we have always accepted the recommendations of the Environment Agency as the experts.
- 1.5 There is also concern expressed about the extensive new development taking place around Taunton and it contributing to the storm water run off so worsening the situation lower downstream. All new development has to be designed to meet "sustainable urban drainage systems" (SUDS) to ensure the run off of surface water from any new development is no greater than the existing use of the land before

development. In practice this generally means a mixture of permeable paving, large underground holding structures or attenuation ponds and the outfall from the latter two is controlled by the size of the outfall pipe restricting flow. In this way the watercourses taking the water away are not surcharged by the new development that is occurring.

- 1.6 We are constantly looking at the flood risk to existing and any new development and, in recent years, have implemented schemes such as the dam at Norton Fitzwarren and the attenuation ponds at Longrun Meadow, both holding back substantial amounts of flood water and releasing slowly as the floods subside. The current events make it all the more important to pursue the planned major new flood prevention scheme between Taunton and Wellington as that has the potential to hold back two million cubic metres of water in times of flood which has to be beneficial for areas below.

2. Budget Setting

- 2.1 Hopefully by the time we reach this item our budget will have been approved by Members, but I must take this opportunity of acknowledging all the hard work by many that has gone into preparing and delivering the balanced budget for this year.
- 2.2 In setting this budget we have had to deal with year on year reductions in our Revenue Support Grant of 13.4% this year and a further 15.4% projected for next year. All in all just short of £3 million reduction in the five years to 2016 representing a 44% reduction in our funding from Central Government which has been necessary to meet the challenge of and help address the national deficit. I am pleased to say we have achieved this with minimum impact on front line services
- 2.3 It is also worth noting that even in these difficult times we have set aside the sum of £50,000 to deal with flooding issues and help with much needed dredging to try and mitigate the disaster we have witnessed this year. Also that £1,600,000 of our New Homes Bonus is being set aside to help with much needed investment in economic development and infrastructure.
- 2.4 As I referred to above a lot of hard work has gone in by many to reach this point and my thanks to Members for their engagement through Scrutiny and the budget pack, my colleagues on the Executive who have worked so closely with officers to achieve the outcome of minimum impact on front line services and the officers themselves who have worked so hard to deliver massive savings from an already reduced budget. My thanks to you all.

3. Brewhouse Theatre and Arts Centre

- 3.1 I am pleased to report that Taunton Theatre Association have now taken on the tenancy and operation of The Brewhouse Theatre and have access to commence the considerable works ahead of them to ensure a safe reopening of the theatre on a long term basis.
- 3.2 Getting all the agreements in place has taken a little longer than hoped, but we are still anticipating an April opening proposing to build up gradually over the summer as funds are built and, importantly, the audience. A full programme is unlikely to be in place before September with a formal launch in the autumn. Two shows have already been booked for April, the Gang Show (25 Anniversary in Taunton) and the Young Musical Theatre Company (YMTC) production of High School Musical both involving youth groups based in Taunton. Bookings for these shows can now be made from the Taunton Tourist Information Office in case of the Gang Show and from www.ymtcgroup.com for High School Musical. I encourage all to support.
- 3.3 As I have said before, The Brewhouse is an important part of Taunton's night time economy and I welcome the fact that we are now on course for its full re-opening so it can play its part in keeping the performing arts alive in the town centre and contribute to our economy.
- 3.4 Finally, I must commend Taunton Theatre Association for its 'Christmas gift to Taunton' - the outdoor 'promenade' performance of the magical fairytale 'Hansel and Gretel', in Castle Green and flowing into the Somerset Museum just prior to Christmas. If this is a taste of the quality and ability that is yet to come then we will be truly well served.

4. Taunton Town Centre Rethink

- 4.1 This has been a review of our regeneration proposals as established under Project Taunton some years ago that due to changes in the national and international economic circumstances have not been deliverable. This Rethink has been prepared by independent consultants looking at Taunton as it is and how best it can attract economic growth. In the process they have consulted widely with interested parties in the private and public sector and the proposals have generally been well received, a mandate has now been given by Members to proceed with planning and associated consultation.
- 4.2 Within the plan there are various "quick wins" listed which we need to look at and where not already in progress how we deliver the remainder. A progress on the various items is as follows:-
- Improve waterfront in various areas by clearance of banks and provision of café facilities. We will need to review how this can be achieved and if banks are cleared then this will make it easier to attract a café operator.

- Reopen The Brewhouse Theatre. This is happening now and they will probably wish to operate external café facilities so assisting delivery of the above.
- Possible pedestrian enhancement of the town centre area. We have already commenced discussion about this with the County Council, but not moved forward yet because of the focus on flooding issues. This will be followed up when we get back to business as usual.
- Secure a high quality restaurant for the Market House. Negotiations are in progress and we hope to bring proposals to Members shortly for consideration.
- Support the Town Centre Business Improvement District (BID) process. We are certainly doing all possible to support this and would urge all traders to support and ensure adequate resources and funding are available for the next five years, promoting the town and encouraging visitors.
- Develop markets and town centre events. This is already being successfully developed but to a great degree its growth will depend on the success or otherwise of the BID ballot in order to provide the resources to take it forward.

4.3 It is pleasing that Members have been generally supportive of the principle of the Town Centre Rethink and now the detailed planning and consultation through the planning process can commence.

5. Orchard Centre Development Proposals

5.1 We have met with the owners of the Orchard Centre and seen some very interesting plans of their proposals, but do not have further detail about car parking provision or how our land and buildings are to be dealt with to facilitate development.

5.2 We have requested they provide Heads of Terms as to how they see any agreement between us moving forward which we await receipt of.

6. Sale of former Taunton Youth and Community Centre (TYCC) Site

6.1 The sale of the redundant Youth Centre site is now progressing with LIDL and an exchange of contracts conditional upon planning is imminent. The TYCC Trustees are due to sign all contract documentation on 24 February 2014 so by the time of Full Council contracts should be formally exchanged or will about to be, which has

to be great news. The capital receipt from this is split three ways (at an agreed percentage) between Somerset County Council, TYCC Trustees and the Council but it is agreed that Taunton Deane will administer the Trustees receipt and it is to be directed to youth facilities as agreed with the Trustees.

- 6.2 Incorporated in the sale of the TYCC site to LIDL is an agreement giving the Council the option to proceed with a land swap involving the existing LIDL site and this would allow us to exercise a measure of control on the new use of this important riverside and town centre site. This is an option that can be exercised later.

7. West Park Employment Site, Chelston

- 7.1 Demand for this popular site is outstripping supply and the developers, Summerfield, have to construct new blocks earlier than anticipated so reflecting a resurgence in business confidence.
- 7.2 Seven of the 14 commercial units available at the newly constructed Block 1 have already been sold, with a further 5 units under offer. The new block is the latest addition to the 3-block complex of Westpark 26's Enterprise Unit, which is aimed at accommodating small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and saw its first 2 blocks, which together offer 26 units, sell out quickly.
- 1.0 The Enterprise Unit, which comprises a total of 40 units across the three blocks or terraces, represents the first phase of Summerfields' plan to create a wider mixed-use development on the site, which covers over 40 acres, and, subject to planning, will include distribution, manufacturing, trade, office and road-side uses.
- 7.4 In addition, planning consent is in process at present for a massive 100,000 sq ft building on the site for a fish farm in a controlled environment which is to be applauded as it is an inward investment and will be great news for Taunton Deane.
- 1.0 This demonstrates that business confidence is returning so what we must do is facilitate the planning process to be as efficient as possible, as we have been doing, and ensure a ready supply of further employment land is made available to provide choice. This reinforces the need to resolve Bathpool and Langaller sites and keep pressing for resolution of access problems to a strategic site east of the M5.

8. Taunton Forward

- 1.0 This is a new business focused organisation with an aspiration to promote Taunton and encourage inward investment. As it happens we share the same aims so we applaud their efforts and particularly

welcome support for our “Taunton Rethink” from which we share mutual ambitions to improve Taunton.

- 2.0 I have always said that as a Council we welcome ambitious proposals and if the private sector is prepared to share the load going forward then this is to be harnessed for the good of the community. We look forward to hearing more of how they may contribute and provide the resources to aid the development being proposed and well be seeing how we may integrate these efforts with the Taunton Economic Advisory Board, which has private sector representation and the plan we have for Taunton Town Centre.
- 3.0 Of course funding is one of the main issues to be overcome, it is not a lack of vision or drive on the Council’s part, it is dealing with the reality of the situation that funding for major projects is virtually non-existent and if the private sector is prepared to take some of this load, by investment, that can only be for the good of us all and I personally welcome it. I have also offered to attend a meeting with them or arrange for a relevant Portfolio Holder to attend, to understand better the ambitions and constraints we have.

Councillor John Williams

Council Meeting – 25 February 2014

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

1. The Brewhouse Theatre

- 1.1 A report on the progress in transferring The Brewhouse to the Taunton Theatre Association is included elsewhere on the agenda. A verbal update will be provided at the meeting.

2. New Inward Investment website

- 2.1 The Economic Development Team has, this month, launched a new inward investment website for Taunton Deane, amalgamating the former Taunton Means Business and Project Taunton websites in to one attractive, single point of information www.taunton.uk.com.
- 2.2 The site was under preparation for four months and presents comprehensive information to potential investors on the attractiveness of Taunton Deane and the support available to facilitate their development. The site has been the subject of informal soundings amongst local development partners, and a favourable response has been received.
- 2.3 The launch of the site will be enhanced by a range of activities to attract the attention of the industry. Activities will include:-
- A national PR and media and social media (Twitter: *@tauntonbusiness*) campaign;
 - The addition of local champions via individual case studies. The site already features articles on specific successful local businesses, which will be enhanced as more growing and expanding businesses are contacted by the team;
 - Enhanced liaison with regional and national commercial property agents, particularly those representing national firms and investors;
 - A Developer Forum amongst local commercial property agents and developers of major employment sites;
 - The website will have clear links to Into Somerset and other investment agencies.
- 2.4 Members' views on the website would be welcomed.

3. Business Investment

Inward Investment enquiries

- 3.1 Since Christmas the team has received six enquiries from external businesses looking to locate in Taunton Deane.

Businesses recently supported

- 3.2 Business grants awarded in the latest round total £3,000, comprising £500 to each of the following:-
- Rah Cattell towards the cost of a laptop and marketing for her dance business;
 - Mrs Lucilia Santos towards the cost of vital equipment for a new Portugese Restaurant being set up in Taunton Town Centre. The equipment to be purchased includes a cash register, dishwasher and a meat slicing machine;
 - Taunton Theatre Association towards the cost of a new server system to ensure all business areas are fully integrated to enable the necessary future marketing to take place;
 - Miss Nia Lawrence towards the cost of a new studio light, a back-drop and some publicity for her photography business “Fun ‘n’ fotos”;
 - Nicole Kirbyshire towards the cost of a new sewing machine for her business ‘Vintage Happiness’; and
 - Florica Tiplea towards the cost of marketing materials and a website for her Trust Inventory business.
- 3.3 Economic Development staff are also liaising with four of the Borough’s larger businesses to assist them to progress their investment and expansion plans.

4. Business Survey

- 4.1 The Economic Development Team has compiled and circulated a survey to identify business views on a variety of issues such as premises, recruitment, advice and support, and training. The intelligence obtained will be used to inform the services available from the Council.
- 4.2 The survey will be live until the end of March and has been circulated via business networks and representative organisations. Please encourage as many people as possible to complete the survey <http://tinyurl.com/pvsyakp>.

5. Events

Taunton Deane Advanced Engineering Forum

- 5.1 In January, the Council held the second meeting of the Forum alongside Somerset College. Eleven larger engineering businesses attended to hear the Chief Executive of the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership give a presentation on the LEP and sources of finance to assist business growth. The Forum will continue to meet on a bi-monthly basis and will address issues that are of relevance to our larger business community.
- 5.2 At the request of the Forum members, an Export Workshop is being organised at Somerset College on Monday, 24 February 2014.

Procurement Event

- 5.3 The Economic Development Team has organised an event on 26 March, 2014 between 8-10am at the County Cricket Ground, to promote opportunities for local businesses to identify and bid for public sector contracts. Other agencies involved are Musgrove Park Hospital, Somerset Chamber of Commerce (promoting Hinkley Supplier opportunities), Avon and Somerset Police and delivered in partnership with Southwest One . Attendance is free and individual clinics will be available to businesses. To register click onto <http://tinyurl.com/pcmn83f>

6. Taunton Town Centre Company and BID (Business Improvement District)

- 6.1 The Town Centre Company formally submitted to the Council in January 2014 its intention to hold a ballot amongst businesses in the town centre with a view to establishing a BID. The ballot, which will be of 400 businesses in the defined BID area, will close on 28 February 2014.
- 6.2 The BID would generate approximately £1,400,000 from the business community (and other organisations that pay Non Domestic Rates over £10,000 per property) over the five year term. That expenditure will be allocated mainly towards the marketing of the town to visitors and residents, and the provision of cultural events, and will be a welcome supplement to the Council's own activities.
- 6.3 The Council is supportive of the BID and has provided financial and staffing support to the company to assist it to canvas support amongst businesses. The Council is also required to hold the ballot, and officers of the Economic Development Team and the Revenues and Benefits Service have provided significant support to the company to ensure that effective ballot arrangements are in place.

- 6.4 As the owner of 13 individual heraditaments in the BID area the Council is required to tender its own votes. I can confirm that I have voted 'yes' in relation to each of the heraditaments.
- 6.5 The result of the ballot will be declared on 2 March 2014.

7. Hinkley C

- 7.1 We have been invited to meet the FID 4 (Final Investment Decision) who are in fact the four main contractors in the construction and build of Hinkley C.
- 7.2 This is a first opportunity for all Councils to pitch their business support packages, connectivity and of course previous record on achieving planning decisions and job creation.
- 7.3 In short, this is an opportunity to sell Taunton Deane and West Somerset Councils. This will give us an opportunity to create economic benefit for our area from this major project.

8. Somerset Growth Plan

- 8.1 This plan whilst presented by Somerset County Council, has been created by joint working with all the District Councils. It lays out the overall strategic framework for growth in Somerset, and will be a key component of the Heart of the South West LEP plan (HOTSW). The plan of course is backed up by our own Taunton Growth Prospectus.
- 8.2 In the coming months considerable work will need to be done on the priority projects within that report; so that as soon as the opportunity arises, we are ready to go. It is through establishing these objectives and the funding that we will be able to apply for from the LEP that we will be able to move these projects forward.

9. Hestercombe House, Cheddon Fitzpaine, Taunton

- 9.1 As many of you will know, Hestercombe Garden Trust now controls Hestercombe House. The Guildhall Centre for Young Musicians is going to use the top floor of the house, and other areas within Hestercombe for performances.
- 9.2 The Trust also wishes to establish an international centre for Landscape Studies and a major regional art gallery. They have already organised the loan of various pieces of art for the forthcoming first exhibition, and I hope we will be able to support them in moving their project forward.

10. Asset Management

- 10.1 Our Asset Management Team have now moved back into The Deane House and at the moment are headed up by Tim Child. Work continues on a number of projects, in particular, to accommodate a number of top quality restaurants that wish to move into Taunton.
- 10.2 The team is working on bringing forward early delivery of the Monkton Heathfield employment land to service the enquiries we are receiving.
- 10.3 As you all know, Ian Franklin and Mark Green have recently left the Council. I think it is appropriate to record our thanks for the excellent work they did in bringing forward the Project Taunton Plans.
- 10.4 I would like to promote one of the great successes of Project Taunton - the construction the flood retention schemes on the Halse Stream at Norton Fitzwarren and at Longrun Meadow. A number of property owners have expressed their gratitude that in these trying times, their properties have not been flooded.
- 10.5 We now move onto the next scheme and St Modwen is presently working up new schemes to assess the viability of redeveloping the Firepool site along the lines of the Rethink proposals. It should not be forgotten that there is one remaining piece in the flood prevention jigsaw to complete, the retention pond on the upper Tone, with a capacity of 2,000,000 cubic metres.

Councillor Norman Cavill

Council Meeting – 25 February 2014

Report of Councillor James Hunt – Environmental Services and Climate Change

1. Environmental Health / Licensing

- 1.1 The Coroner's inquest into the tragic accident on the M5 following the fireworks display at the Rugby Club is due to take place on 31 March 2014 at Taunton Crown Court. There will be a report for Members following the trial costs review and while Taunton Deane's interest in this is only as an interested party, an additional report is planned for Members at the conclusion of all activities associated with the incident.
- 1.2 Environmental Health are also involved in the review of the explosives legislation which was already underway as part of the Loftstedt recommendations on consolidating legislation.
- 1.3 A free dog micro chipping day was held in Vivary Park in conjunction with the Dogs Trust on 29 January 2014. Sadly this was not particularly well attended, partly due to the poor weather, so another event is being considered for the future, maybe at an alternative venue, to try and encourage more participants. Dog chipping is encouraged as part of responsible dog ownership and can be useful if repatriating dogs who become separated from their owners. Dog chipping will become law in Wales in 2015 and England in 2016.
- 1.4 All Health and Safety Executive SE listed cooling towers under Local Authority control have been inspected as part of proactive health and safety priorities for 2013/2014 and all were found to be in compliance.
- 1.5 Environmental Health is purchasing with the aid of a Government grant the UK Food Surveillance System, which is a national database for the central storage of analytical results taken by enforcement authorities as part of their official controls. This new system allows our Environmental Health department to be able to submit all our sample details into a national database, which will be received by the host laboratory and the Food Standards Agency. As a result Environmental Health will be able to interrogate the database to determine trends in specific areas. This aids consistency across the UK and should have the advantage saving the department time.
- 1.6 The Food Team is working towards completing all high risk (categories A and B) food premises inspections due for 2013/2014 and are presently on course to complete the Category C food business premises inspections also. The work to catch up on the lower rated inspections has been hampered by the changing in staffing resources as a result of the M5 accident.

- 1.7 The Licensing Team have been offering advice and guidance as part of the multi-agency Safety Advisory Group involved in the initial planning stage and application preparation for the Rod Stewart Concert known as Somerset Rocks, which takes place at Somerset County Cricket Club on Wednesday 18 June 2014. The concert is being held in aid of St Margaret's Hospice and a premises licence application has now been submitted.
- 1.8 Licensing Officers from Taunton Deane and West Somerset joined forces with the Police and other agencies to tackle metal theft and monitor compliance with new scrap metal laws, as part of an Operation Tornado 'day of action' which took place at the Deane DLO depot on the 29 January 2014. The exercise was a resounding success, with results ranging from vehicle seizures to confiscation of metal from an unlicensed scrap dealer. Licensed metal dealers praised the effort which was being made to ensure a level playing field for legitimate businesses.

2. Deane DLO

- 2.1 I would like to congratulate Chris Hall and his team of the fantastic work they have been doing over the last few weeks with regard to the flooding events in Taunton Deane. Their hard work has made a huge difference to families and the people affected.
- 2.2 There have been some misinformation incorrectly spread in the media, on social media and anecdotally, that Taunton Deane is charging for the supply of sandbags for those people affected by the flooding. This is absolutely not true. The Council has not been charging for sandbags and have not done so in years previously to this year's flooding events.
- 2.3 Taunton Deane is also working closely with other district councils and with Somerset County Council in a coordinated shared response to the flooding. Sandbag deliveries for example are being supplied by whichever Council with the best access or availability to a particular location and not simply dependent on which administrative area it falls in.

3. Climate Change / Carbon Management

Carbon management and Local Resilience Strategy booklet

- 3.1 Taunton Deane has now published its 'Carbon management and Local Resilience Strategy' booklet which is available in public places such as libraries and visitors centres.
- 3.2 I am sure you have all read the article about this in the January's 'Deane Dispatch' but as a quick reminder this is a community directory, strategy and action plan for managing carbon dioxide emissions and building local resilience to the three global challenges of climate change, population increase and depleting oil reserves.

Climate Change Officer Post

- 3.3 This post has not been filled as a result of the successful applicant phoning on the starting date to say he would not be accepting the post thereby wasting a three month recruiting exercise. The budget under spend for the post has been agreed to be carried across to the next financial year and we are hopeful that this will allow us to continue to progress a new climate change project, possibly a new solar PC installation.

Councillor James Hunt

Council Meeting – 25 February 2014

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

1. Parks

- 1.1 After a very successful 'Santa on the Run' in Vivary, the park has really taken a soaking and has been flooded for much of January and February. The team have been doing their best to open as often as possible but especially on the golf course we have lost some trees that will take some time to deal with due to the ground conditions..
- 1.2 Many of the team have been busy with duties associated with the flooding crisis and I would like to thank them all for their efforts in this especially when it has involved out of hours working.

2. Community Leisure and Play

- 2.1 Station Road Pool Refurbishment – You will have seen the latest newsletter and we are looking forward to the re-opening in early April. The project team have worked excellently together to bring what has been a complicated refurbishment to fruition and I am very excited to see the finished works. Also very excited about meeting Mark Foster!
- 2.2 Blackbrook Pool and Spa – Work continues on this project and the project team is now complete and will be moving forward on things such as design in the next few weeks.

3. Tone Leisure (Taunton Deane) Limited Activities

Community, Sports and Health Development

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

Health Development

Flexercise/Seated Activities

- 3.2 Tone has trained a number of volunteers to launch and deliver a new seated activity class in Lambrook, Taunton which started in January 2014. It is entirely volunteer structured and led and funded by the Halcon One Team, as

increasing physical activity for older people has been deemed a priority by the local Councillors - working in partnership with Taunton Deane Housing, Age UK Somerset and Avon and Somerset Police.

Community Event - Cades Farm, Wellington

- 3.3 In partnership with Wellington Children's Centre, Knightstone Housing and Somerset Skills and Learning, a community event was hosted on the green space at Cades Farm housing development in Wellington for families at the end of October 2013. Over 100 people attended the event and participated in ultimate Frisbee, NHS Health Checks, ping pong and membership offers. Other agencies were on hand to offer nature trails, scrap store, theatrical face painting tuition, cake making and a baby/toddler soft play corner.

Sportivate Funding

- 3.4 Tone has been successful in securing additional Sportivate funding for four projects that are running at Wellsprings Leisure Centre; these are due to start later this month.

Sportivate - Social Return on Investment Report

- 3.5 Following the successful completion of Spring Sisters (a running project funded by Sportivate last year) Tone have completed a Social Return on Investment report on the project. This shows how successful the project was, not only in attracting new runners but in the social and health benefits a project like this brings. The project gave a social return of £8.66 for every £1 invested in the activity.

Proactive Physical Activity Referral Scheme

- 3.6 Wellington Sports Centre, Blackbrook Pavilion and Wellsprings Leisure Centre have all achieved re-recognition as providers of the Proactive Physical Activity Referral Scheme. All three centres produced a portfolio and received a site visit and assessment from colleagues at Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

Facility News

Wellington Sports Centre

- 3.7 Work has finally commenced on the redevelopment works at Wellington funded by the Section 106 Agreement monies secured by Tone. Key facilities will be refurbished, with the focus to enhance the customer experience. The first of these projects will be the refurbishment of the Heath Suite facilities followed by the Reception with a new Fast Track entry system. Work is due to be completed by the beginning of April 2014.

Wellsprings Leisure Centre

- 3.8 This year's Christmas Party evenings were a huge success, with every night selling out. Definitely one of the best years for a very long time.

- 3.9 The centre has seen significant savings on its electricity bills since installing the sensors on the Sports Hall lights.

Blackbrook Pavilion

- 3.10 On Sunday, 23 March 2014, Blackbrook Pavilion will be holding a Sport Relief Mile; three and six mile runs, walk or crawl. There will be a number of different stands and fun activities for the spectators and children.

Taunton Tennis Club

- 3.11 Taunton Tennis Club has successfully secured £3,000 of funding from the British Tennis Foundation to spend over the next 12 months to expand Disability Tennis in and around Taunton. The funding will also enable the Club to host competitions for a network of wheelchair tennis centres from around the South West.

Vivary Adventure Centre

- 3.12 In December 2013 Helen Taylor started as the new site Manager overseeing both Golf and High Ropes.
- 3.13 Since late December Tone has struggled to open the golf course and, with several trees down, the course has been limited to 16 holes when it has opened.

Councillor Catherine Herbert.

Council Meeting – 25 February 2014

Report of Councillor Mrs Jean Adkins – Housing Services

1. Council House Building

- 1.1 The contractors, Galliford Try, started on site with asbestos surveys being carried out in the New Year.
- 1.2 The Phase 1 sites, Normandy Drive and Bacon Drive together and Vale View at West Bagborough were put out to tender and these were opened on Friday, 14 February 2014.

2. Housing Revenue Account Maintenance Contracts

- 2.1 There are currently 3 major refurbishment and repair contracts going to tender:-
 - Kitchen and Bathroom replacement;
 - Gas Central Heating installation; and
 - External decoration.
- 2.2 I have been visiting short-listed contractors with Tim Haynes, Property Manager, a surveyor and a member of the Tenant Services Management Board.
- 2.3 Air Source Heat Pumps - We recently passed the landmark 150th installation and work has begun at Monkton Heathfield following an open event for tenants on 7 February 2014. I had the privilege of attending to present a bouquet to the lady whose home benefited from this work and who is delighted with the system.
- 2.4 Air Source Heat Pumps will also be installed in the new homes at West Bagborough.

Councillor Jean Adkins

Council Meeting - 25 February 2014

Report of Councillor Mrs Vivienne Stock-Williams - Corporate Resources

1. Corporate and Client Services

Corporate Services

- 1.1 From 1 January 2014, the Corporate and Client Team became Corporate Services under the new shared services management structure. The key focus since then has been on taking on the functions moving into Corporate Services (Corporate Performance and Risk, Corporate Strategy, Complaints, Data Protection, Freedom of Information) and handing over functions that have moved elsewhere (Retained Finance, Procurement, Civil Contingencies and Parking, and clienting the Private Sector Housing and Waste Partnerships).
- 1.2 In addition, a number of services returned from Southwest One on 1 February 2014. These are now part of the new Corporate Services structure (Corporate Administration, Design and Print, Facilities Management and HR).
- 1.3 The current key objective for Corporate Services is the development of a new shared service structure for the next layer of management (tier 4/5) in order to bring together the corporate services functions at Taunton Deane and West Somerset. This work is progressing well and a draft structure is scheduled to be released for consultation in April 2014.

Client Team

- 1.4 The key focus for the Client Team has been ensuring the smooth return and transition of the functions returning from Southwest One (Corporate Administration, Design and Print, Facilities Management, Finance, HR, Property). The services returned on 1 February 2014 and so far the transition has gone smoothly.
- 1.5 The Client Team also continues to work closely with Southwest One to monitor the potential impact of the IBM/SYNNEX deal. The team is also working on succession planning options for the end of the Southwest One contract in 2017.

Corporate Performance and Risk Management

- 1.6 The Corporate Performance staff at Taunton Deane and West Somerset have worked with Members of the Joint Management Team (JMT) during January and February to produce a combined and refreshed joint risk register. This will be brought to Corporate Governance in due course.
- 1.7 The Quarter 3 (2013/2014) Corporate Performance Report was considered by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 20 February (and is to go on to the Executive on 12 March 2014). The 'Planning & Development' theme was featured as part of this report.
- 1.8 Initial work has commenced to review the Performance and Risk Management Frameworks at Taunton Deane and West Somerset (Corporate Business Plans, Service Plans, targets and measures, monitoring and reporting). The aim is to consider the potential for aligning processes, reducing duplication and adopting best practice to create a single, common and consistent framework that fulfils the requirements of both separate democratic Councils during 2014/2015. Members will be involved in any Performance and Risk Management Framework development.

HR

- 1.9 The key focus for the Retained HR Manager and HR Team has remained the provision of HR support for key corporate projects, such as the Joint Management and Shared Services project, and supporting the return of services from Southwest One.

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 assist in monitoring the ICT element of the Southwest One contract.
- 1.11 Work is progressing in relation to IT support for a number of key projects (Joint Management and Shared Services, the rollout of the Windows 7 upgrade and PSN compliance).

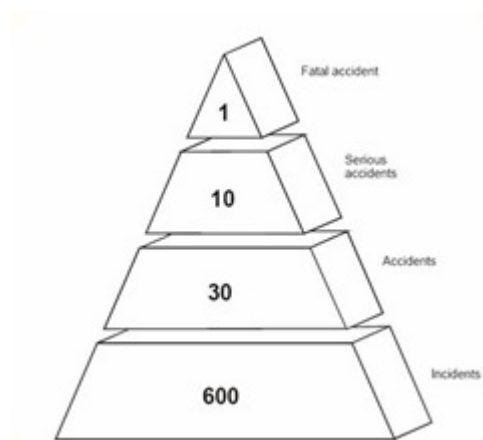
2. Corporate Health and Safety

Manual Handling Training

- 2.1 Manual handling toolbox talks have now been delivered to all Deane DLO teams. There have been no reported accidents involving manual handling operations since this training took place.

Accident Reporting

- 2.2 Whilst it is positive that we do not have significant numbers of serious accidents within the organisation, in order for us to learn appropriate lessons we need to ensure that all incidents (including minor accidents and near misses) are reported. This will be addressed in the Health and Safety Strategy for 2014/2015 and the accident reporting procedure for the organisation.
- 2.3 The diagram below represents the theory on the proportion of near miss incidents to accidents and to those leading to more serious injuries and lost time (that is, 600 Incidents, 30 Accidents, 10 Serious Accidents, 1 Fatal Accident). If we learn lessons from the near miss incidents, then hopefully the more serious accidents can be prevented. Thus it can be demonstrated to staff why reporting of all incidents should be encouraged rather than discouraged.



Continuing Investigation Work

- 2.4 Work on procedures has been continuing following the RIDDOR reportable incident relating to a Property Services employee being potentially exposed to asbestos fibres. The review process has led to improved documented procedures and a change in how contractors are notified where properties contain asbestos.
- 2.5 Asbestos awareness training is being delivered to all Deane DLO and Property Services employees and agency staff who may come into contact with asbestos whilst out on site.

3. Customer Contact Centre

Achievement of all performance indicators

- 3.1 The service has continued to perform well in line with its contractual performance indicators with no failures to report in the last quarter.

New Telephony Technology

- 3.2 The implementation of the new Siemens Contact Centre has been highly successful. There has been no interruption to service as a result of system failure, which used to be a frequent problem with the previous system.
- 3.3 User feedback is largely positive and, together with the new wireless headsets, the implementation has significantly enhanced the end user experience.
- 3.4 Feedback from customers is also very positive. We have been able to introduce 'position in queue' notifications to our customers. This ensures that in busy periods customers are informed about their position in the queue. Analysis suggests that this is incentivising customers to stay on the line and wait instead of abandoning their call.
- 3.5 Whilst we have not yet gone live with automated payments for Taunton Deane, the Customer Contact Centre has done so for Somerset County Council (SCC) and this has been very successful. About 60% of customers contacting SCC to make an invoice payment have chosen to use the new automated system. It is envisaged that we will be able to go live with Taunton Deane payments in time for next month's Council Tax increase.

Our World at Work

- 3.6 The Customer Contact Centre's staff forum, Our World at Work, continues to develop the scope of its influence. Recently the forum has been analysing the results from a staff satisfaction survey which they designed and distributed. The results are currently awaited, but the concept of empowering staff to be creative in finding solutions to problems seems to be working. Feedback has been very positive.

Service Development Plan 2014/2015

- 3.7 The Service Development Plan (SDP) for 2014/2015 is currently in draft form and has been distributed to Client Services. The focus of the SDP for 2014/2015 is on channel shift. The Centre aims to support Taunton Deane's corporate channel shift and customer access strategies by utilising new automated telephony technology and the Council's website.

Launch of Twitter

- 3.8 On 1 January 2014, Taunton Deane launched their new corporate Twitter account. The Customer Contact Team has been supporting the Council with handling inbound and outbound messaging and the account already has 250 followers. Having a Customer Contact presence on Twitter will allow us to help people using the service by signposting them to the right place, helping them to complete online services or by answering their questions directly.

4. Health and Wellbeing

Declaration on Tobacco Control

- 4.1 At the last Full Council meeting, Members agreed that the Authority should sign the Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control. In the process, we became the first District Council in the country to do so. The declaration makes a firm statement of intent that the Council will in no way promote tobacco companies or products. We are also committed to taking actions to reduce smoking in our District. Work is continuing with the Somerset Smoke-free Alliance and the Council is in the process of installing smoke-free signs in Taunton Deane children's play areas.
- 4.2 We have completed a draft audit of the Council's services against the priorities of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. This audit shows how many of our services make a real difference to people's health and wellbeing. The report will be brought to Community Scrutiny in March 2014 before going to the Executive. This audit will also be taken to the Health and Wellbeing Board and to the Taunton Deane Partnership (TDP), with recommendations on how best to use TDP funding to further support Health and Wellbeing in Taunton Deane.
- 4.3 We are also now supporting West Somerset Council in bringing together an audit that covers their area.

Directory of Services

- 4.4 The next steps will be to develop a directory for patients and GPs that helps signpost our services better.

Dementia Friendly Council

- 4.5 We have rolled out two dementia friendly training sessions, mostly focussed on front-line staff in Housing. In addition, we have now undertaken a commitment that both Taunton Deane and West Somerset Council will become dementia friendly Councils. A programme of short training sessions will be rolled out to all front-line staff over the next few months. These will ensure that staff have a better understanding of dementia, are better able to recognise it and can adapt conversations to provide improved customer service to people who suffer from dementia.

Prostate Cancer Awareness

- 4.6 A promotion campaign is being undertaken both within the Council offices and our public toilets to raise awareness of the signs of prostate cancer by putting up advisory posters.

Better Care Fund

- 4.7 The Council is contributing to workshops to help shape the use of the new NHS / Adults Social Care 'Better Care Fund'. The Assistant Director of Housing and Community Development is collating a county-wide strategic housing submission to show how better links and investment in housing could improve health outcomes and reduce 'downstream' costs to the NHS.

5. Legal and Democratic Services

Legal Shared Services

- 5.1 At the meeting of the county-wide Shared Services Task and Finish Group held on 17 January 2014, it was agreed that all six local Authorities work together to develop a business case for a shared county-wide Legal Service. It is aimed to produce a fit-for-purpose document for consideration by Members early in the next financial year. The basic principles underpinning such a business case are:-
- Provide savings of 15%;
 - Improve resilience for all partners;
 - The partnership to be flexible / extendable to other partners joining in the future; and
 - Levels of service will be maintained as a minimum.
- 5.2 One of the implications of exploring a wider partnership option is that it is not yet possible to be definitive about an intended implementation date for any new arrangement to commence. It is clear that this date will now be sometime after 1 April 2014. The current arrangements will be retained, therefore, until decisions are taken in respect of any proposed business case for shared services. From a practical point of view, this will mean that with effect from 1 April 2014 Roy Pinney, current Legal Services Manager, will undertake the role of Solicitor to the Council for Taunton Deane. Mendip District Council will continue to provide Legal Services for West Somerset Council.

Electoral Services

- 5.3 The establishment of a joint Electoral Services Team is being fast tracked as a high priority, given the unfortunate particular circumstances that are well known to all.
- 5.4 With effect from 1 February 2014, Elisa Day was appointed as Joint Electoral Services Manager. She will be assisted by an Electoral Services Officer and Electoral Services Assistant. If these posts can be filled internally, it is hoped they can be in place by the middle of March 2014.
- 5.5 It is essential that both Taunton Deane and West Somerset operate using the same Electoral Services Computer system. A decision has

been taken for both Councils to operate using Xpress. The new system needs to be up and running as soon as possible after the publication of the new Electoral Register on 17 February 2014.

- 5.6 On 29 January 2014, the Chief Executive and Assistant Chief Executive met with representatives of the Electoral Commission to advise them of the plans that were being put in place for a joint Electoral Services Team. The Electoral Commission confirmed that they were pleased and reassured by the progress that was being made.

Constitutional Issue – Recorded Votes at Budget Meetings

- 5.7 The Council was informed by the Department for Communities and Local Government that new Regulations have been made which take effect from 25 February 2014. It will be mandatory for Councils to adopt the practice of recorded votes at their annual Budget and Council Tax meetings in regard to the substantive motions/decisions relating to agreeing the Budget and setting the Council Tax. The legal advice we have received is to adopt this practice forthwith. This ensures that any Budget and Council Tax decisions taken by the Council cannot be challenged.

Tonya Meers

- 5.8 Tonya continues to receive treatment and is still doing valuable work behind the scenes to support the new Monitoring Officer and his team, which is much appreciated. This has included undertaking an update of the Constitution to reflect the recent personnel and management changes.
- 5.9 As this is the last Council meeting before Tonya formally ends her employment with Taunton Deane on 31 March 2014, I should like to place on record my appreciation of her service with the Council in her role as Monitoring Officer and Legal and Democratic Services Manager.

6. Revenues and Benefits

Customer Satisfaction Survey

- 6.1 Results from the Customer Satisfaction survey for the Revenues and Benefits Service have been distributed to all Members in an Information Report. The outcome for 2013 has been very pleasing, with overall satisfaction for Benefit customers improving to 91% and Council Tax and Business Rate customers' satisfaction improving to 84%. We will be using the feedback we have received to make further improvements to service delivery.

Corporate Fraud Policy

- 6.2 On 10 March 2014, the Corporate Governance Committee will consider a new Corporate Fraud Policy. This follows from the decision taken last year to establish a Corporate Anti-Fraud function to lead or guide any investigations into fraudulent activity within Taunton Deane Borough Council. While the function and formation of a Corporate Anti-Fraud Team is yet to be fully developed in the joint structure for Taunton Deane and West Somerset Council, preliminary work in developing a Corporate Anti-Fraud Policy will provide a basis to create a strong and effective anti-fraud, anti-corruption and anti-bribery culture.
- 6.3 The policy sets out the high level priorities we need to achieve the Council's vision of zero tolerance for fraud, corruption and bribery throughout the Authority. It brings together existing policies on Whistle-blowing and Anti-Bribery as well as updating the Revenues and Benefits Service's anti-fraud measures. It also sets the context for anti-fraud activities in other Council services, such as Housing and Procurement, as well as plans and protocols to mitigate effectively against fraud within the Council.

Council Tax and Business Rates

- 6.4 At annual Council Tax billing this year, we will consult all households on options and proposals to change our Council Tax Support Scheme from 2015/2016. This consultation was agreed by both the Corporate Scrutiny Committee and Executive following consideration of a report setting out significant reductions in funding for Council Tax Support next year and thereafter.
- 6.5 Council Tax bills will also be accompanied by information on recent changes on the Council Tax payable for annexes. This will ensure that anyone qualifying for reduced Council Tax for an annexe will be able to claim the appropriate discount.
- 6.6 Our Business Rate customers will receive information about the new discounts available for retail premises. Members will be aware of the extra help available to retail businesses through the recent briefing distributed on 30 January 2014.

Flooding Relief

- 6.7 We are all very aware of the difficult situation for those households and businesses affected by flooding. The Revenues and Benefits Service have been supporting members of the community with queries regarding their Council Tax and Business Rates. In many cases, there are statutory discounts that can and have been applied to people's Council Tax bills – for example, where the home is uninhabitable. In collaboration with colleagues in Sedgemoor and South Somerset

District Councils, we have also been working together to agree what further discretionary help can be provided for those worst affected. A report on this matter is being presented to Council this evening.

Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams

Council Meeting – 25 February 2014

Report of Councillor Mark Edwards - Planning, Transportation and Communications

1. Planning Policy

- 1.1 Officers continue to work through the responses made to the recent Preferred Options Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP) Consultation. Around 550 representations had been received from in the region of 450 respondents. Whilst some sites had attracted a substantial level of comment, others had received none!
- 1.2 It is our intention to publish a Report of Public Consultation towards the end of February. This will summarise the key messages arising from the consultation and officers' initial responses to these issues.
- 1.3 Meanwhile work continues on putting in place the evidence base to support the draft Plan with a review of the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan now well underway. Further transport modelling will commence shortly as will viability testing and some further work on the Sustainability Appraisal.
- 1.4 Officers still consider that it is viable to publish the draft Plan in Summer 2014 although this will be somewhat dependent on the timely completion of the technical work outlined above.
- 1.5 Having recently published the 2013 SHLAA (Strategic Housing Land Assessment) which identifies sufficient land to meet the requirements of a 5% but not 20% buffer of deliverable housing land, attention will shortly turn to the completion of monitoring reports.
- 1.6 Officers will soon be undertaking the annual Housing Land Availability Survey visiting development sites across the Borough. This will provide an up-to-date snapshot of progress on housing sites and completions in the monitoring year April 2013 - March 2014.

2. Monkton Delivery Board

- 2.1 At its meeting on 3 October 2013 the Taunton Economic Advisory Board agreed to establish a sub group focused on the delivery of the Monkton Heathfield urban extension. The main purposes of the Delivery Board will be to oversee the spending of the Large Scale Programme Capacity Fund award and to provide strategic direction for the delivery of both housing and employment land.

- 2.2 A key early focus will be to assist in resolving outstanding issues relating to the delivery of the Western Relief Road. The Board has representation at both officer and Member level from Taunton Deane and Somerset County Councils as well as from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), Local Enterprise Partnership, the Environment Agency and the three key developers.
- 2.3 The main purpose of the first meeting on 17 January 2014 was to get all parties up to speed with current issues and to agree terms of reference. The Board is scheduled to meet again on 14 March 2014.
- 2.4 It must be emphasised that the Board's role is to provide a strategic overview and there remains a need for continuing dialogue between this Council as Local Planning Authority and the developers.
- 2.5 These discussions which are supported by the HCA's ATLAS team are currently very much focused on the Consortium's applications to vary the existing planning obligations to remove the trigger for delivery of the Western Relief Road, replacing it with a financial contribution funded by a reduction in the percentage of affordable housing.

3. Duty to Cooperate - Mid Devon

- 3.1 Mid Devon District Council have commenced work on their Local Plan Review and in line with the 'Duty to Cooperate' (arising from the Localism Act 2011) have held initial meetings with adjoining districts and organisations which may be affected by the emerging plan.
- 3.2 I attended a meeting in Tiverton under to better understand the proposals.
- 3.3 Mid Devon are considering allocating a site around Junction 27 (North Devon Link) for around 25 hectares of employment land, over 30,000 sq.m. of retail space and a leisure complex including multiscreen cinema, outdoor activity centre, hotel and 500 seat theatre/conference venue.
- 3.4 Taunton Deane has expressed concern at this proposal and the potential impact on Taunton and Wellington Town Centres as well as the development plan strategy for Taunton Deane. The proposal also does not appear to be justified in relation to the evidence base prepared by Mid Devon District Council.
- 3.5 As the Plan emerges Officers will report back to Members on progress in addressing this Council's concerns over these proposals.

4. Meeting with Nick Boles MP Minister for Planning

- 4.1 In January I attended a meeting with Nick Boles MP, the Minister for Planning.
- 4.2 The meeting was a general question and answer session covering all aspects of the National Planning Policy Framework, Neighbourhood Planning, the five year land supply and the future of The Planning Inspectorate.
- 4.3 It was an extremely informative meeting and was extremely helpful in better understanding the challenges that we face balancing the housing needs of our communities versus the environmental constraints that exist.

5. Sandhill Park

- 5.1 The main contractor for the conversion and repair of the Grade 2* listed building has been approved.
- 5.2 Works on site preparation for the new build is underway.

6. Car Parking

- 6.1 I am working with officers on plans to reburish the lobby and immediate areas at the Multi Storey Car Park and have asked for a valuation of the works that need to be prepared.
- 6.2 Due to John Lewis being heavily involved in the civil contingencies around the recent flooding this has been slightly delayed but I will be progressing this as soon as is practical.

7. Communications

- 7.1 The Council has launched its own twitter account, @tdbc, and had attracted over 200 followers within the first four weeks of going live. This is about double the number we had forecast and has been increasing over the following weeks.
- 7.2 It is proving extremely useful as we can now make people aware of initiatives such as the free dog micro-chipping event, forthcoming Council meetings, progress on the Station Road Pool refurbishment and news releases.
- 7.3 Communications is working closely with the Customer Contact Centre to monitor tweets as Customer Contact has the technology to pick up and deal with issues that can arise – as they would with an email or phone call.

- 7.4 This ability makes our twitter account responsive and interactive which can only be good news.
- 7.5 Service areas in the Council are coming forward with some excellent ideas on how we can best use twitter – for example being able to tweet food hygiene ratings.
- 7.6 Other communications activity has included a media briefing on the budget proposals for 2014-2015, support for West Somerset Council's external communications and working on the daily issues around the severe flooding on the Somerset Levels.
- 7.7 We are currently working on some internal communications initiatives, including a new joint newsletter for staff and elected members at West Somerset and Taunton Deane.

Councillor Mark Edwards

Council Meeting – 25 February 2014

Report of Councillor Jane Warmington - Community Leadership

1. Flooding

- 1.1 The Somerset Levels and Moors are experiencing extensive, prolonged flooding following weeks of unprecedented rainfall. The drainage system of ditches, rhynes, drains and rivers has been unable to cope with such volumes and several villages have been inundated and remain so. Entire communities have been cut off, some now evacuated with water levels posing a threat to life.
- 1.2 Rest Centres staffed by volunteers have been set up to support those displaced from their homes. The situation is dire with the worst rainfall ever recorded and very strong accompanying winds. The flooding extends to over fifty square miles. Many farms are affected and stock has been moved out, winter fodder lost. Storms have also caused power losses and trees have blown down.
- 1.3 The Local Authorities with the Emergency Services led by the Police are prepared through civil contingency planning and the multi agency emergency response we have seen locally is little short of amazing. Boats and trucks have been deployed to support stranded communities and additional help on the ground has come from the Military (largely our own 40 Commando Royal Marines) helping to build temporary defences with sandbags, move things and people. There has been a lot of support from within communities themselves and from those outside the flood zone. Community updates are provided daily and Members receive these through our Press Office here at Taunton Deane.
- 1.4 The Environment Agency have been concentrating on getting flood water away (out to sea) with additional pumps but the continuing heavy rainfall means it is being replaced making alleviating any flooding in the short term impossible. The Press have been very critical but those involved have been full of praise for what they are achieving.
- 1.5 The area has received several high profile visits including His Royal Highness Prince Charles and the Prime Minister has now visited twice. There has been much reporting in the Press. Throughout this time the sensible, measured, considered, reasoned voice of Taunton Deane Borough Councillor Gill Slattery has stood out amongst everyone else, way beyond that of a local Councillor representing one of the flooded Wards. She has our admiration and thanks.
- 1.6 Several local appeals have been launched to help victims, both to help the clean up and support necessary work to reduce the awful impact of such weather in the future. Investment has also been promised for both from Central Government and we already have our own modest contribution.
- 1.7 There have been at least two previous Parrett Catchment Project/Plans. These and new initiatives are being pulled together by Somerset County Council and the

Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to produce a twenty year action plan to avoid flooding on such a massive scale again. The cost to achieve this will be many millions of pounds but as this local disaster has already cost several millions pounds, it is surely wise to invest in long term flood prevention.

2. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)

- 2.1 Taunton Deane has two AONBs, the Quantock Hills and the Blackdown Hills. Both these areas extend across several District boundaries with much of the Blackdown Hills in Devon. Although most of the land is privately owned and farmed, there is either open or extensive access across both areas with well signed car parks. These areas are our biggest and best used local leisure facilities and contribute to healthy public enjoyment of the countryside.
- 2.2 The small AONB Services were set up to comply with our Statutory Duty along with the other Local Authorities to produce Management Plans and also manage increasing public use of these two areas. The open hill along the top of the Quantocks is particularly well used and the Local Authorities support a Ranger Service to help manage this.
- 2.3 The Ranger Service do many things. They coordinate group activities (not everything goes well together), lead public walks, give talks, run a group of conservation volunteers (stiles, swaling, scrub clearance, path maintenance, annual deer count) with the help of a number of Voluntary Rangers (who have a patch local to where they live) and liaise with the public. The Rangers effectively police the hill and liaise with the Police at Williton. As a result of all this, although the hills are well used, we experience very few problems.
- 2.4 The AONBs Services are paid for from the Local Authorities combined contribution which then levers in three times more from Central Government. So one quarter of the costs are met locally with three quarters coming from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in recognition of their national importance. This means that any reduction in local support has a much greater impact on their budgets which is not always well understood. There are understandable concerns around County Hall's proposal to drastically reduce its support in two years time. Taunton Deane is not proposing any changes to their support for AONBs in the next two financial years and would look to sustain the services into the future.

3. Halcon One Team – “Think differently, do differently”

- 3.1 Ten months on and the new delivery and problem solving approach under the One Team continues to improve the lives of residents and those working to support them. Details have been included below to illustrate what is being done to start to make these changes. This approach is being looked at for other areas.
- 3.2 The Community Map shows 963 families in Halcon who need support from the Statutory Agencies which has now been documented under this process. This enables Family Plans to be drawn up for those families with the most complex needs. Some are referred on to Family Focus and have an allocated Family

Support Worker. Others are supported by One Team members who fulfil this role and hold individual Family Plans.

- 3.3 The One Team collectively made 26% of the total referrals to the Taunton Cluster One Children's Centres between April - November 2013 from Halcon alone, with Health Visitors who cover all four areas (not just one) making the most referrals. These referrals are now seeing the most vulnerable families making use of the Acorns Children's Centre and engaging with the One Team. These families are starting to change their lives for the better.
- 3.4 Taunton Deane's Rent Arrears for the Ward (two thousand homes) have fallen to £96,000, a reduction of approximately £15,000 in ten months (and this at a time of Welfare Reform). The three Estate Housing Officers as part of the One Team are providing a more holistic service with others to support our tenants.
- 3.5 The Link Power Project now has a dedicated Community Development Officer leading it, with an aspiration to build it into a Social Enterprise on behalf of the Link Partnership (we still await news of the bid to the Lloyds Foundation towards this). The Project now has a base in the old Brainwave Shop (it rather outgrew the Link Centre) which provides somewhere to meet, a reception area where residents can volunteer, book work (a system has been designed to pay for work bit by bit in advance), get information about Link Power, the Halcon One Team and wider services available throughout the Ward. The Project has also been boosted by the donation of a Mercedes box van from the Avon and Somerset Police Constabulary (ASP) which has been in use already to help a resident move house, collect trolleys and remove green waste from garden work undertaken.
- 3.6 Negotiations with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) now ensures that they refer those locally looking for work into the Link Power Project, so that unemployed individuals can become work ready and build a curriculum vitae to aid progress eventually into paid work. This does not affect their Benefits. Link Power may be followed on Facebook or on Twitter @Linkpowerteam.
- 3.7 'Chill & Chat' was the idea of John Hart, one of our two Housing Estate Anti-Social Behaviour Officers and developed through the One Team in response to significant Domestic Abuse issues across the Halcon Ward. This Project is now working with the Ward's previously hard to reach victims and offenders (offenders being directed to Link Power). The informal get-together on a Thursday mornings is where victims can meet each other and One Team professionals (out of uniform) with support from Women's Aid offering outreach and dedicated advice.
- 3.8 This has now expanded to include separate Self Defence Classes, Pattern Changing Courses (commissioned by the One Team to provide these locally), confidence building sessions from Tone Leisure and Somerset College are preparing a dedicated course for Chill & Chat regulars on improving their literacy and numeracy. These are helping to support victims of Domestic Abuse, which can be very isolating, within their own community alongside regular visits by members of the One Team.
- 3.9 VIDA (Women's Aid) have made a successful bid to the ASP Police and Crime Commissioner for funding towards a basic reading and writing course for parents in Halcon using the Acorns Children's Centre, having successfully delivered

something similar in Priorswood at the Hillside Children's Centre.

- 3.10 Tone Leisure has been commissioned by the One Team to provide Flexercise (part of their Active Lifestyles Programme) on the Lane Estate, a part of the Ward which has more elderly residents. This promotes mental health and wellbeing through regular chair based activity and is designed to work with groups of elderly or vulnerable residents, increasing fitness and getting them together within their own community. Sessions have just started at the Newton Road Community Hall one morning a month.
- 3.11 Supported by the One Team, a group of children aged between five and eleven years old have formed a Community Litter Pick Group and routinely walk around the Ward collecting rubbish and tidying up. The Group have been nominated for the BBC Pride in Somerset Youth Awards.
- 3.12 Police Community Support Officer Linda Ebdon led a group of children from Halcon Primary School through their Cycling Proficiency qualification in November, the first such course held within the Ward for many years.
- 3.13 The Citizens Advice Bureau provides money management advice to our tenants and on one day a week in the Halcon Ward. Chris Mitchell is kept busy. Poor money management for those on low incomes is a serious underlying issue which can lead to many other problems. Many tenants are in debt and have significant rent arrears. He is soon being joined by the Credit Union Somerset Savings and Loans who promote jam jar accounts which help make budgeting easier.
- 3.14 Somerset County Council is reconfiguring its Children's Centre Service concentrating some into Early Help Hubs with a wider remit beyond nought to five years up to nineteen to include parents with difficult teenagers. They have been impressed with the co-located services in the Acorns Children's Centre which has evolved into a base for members of the One Team and the benefits from this arrangement. Discussions are continuing around the proposed hubs as well as with those Children's Centres in less demanding areas where services are still delivered and appreciated.

4. Other Priority Areas

- 4.1 North Taunton and Wellington have both seen a recent rise in crime. This may be a blip as the District (and national) trend is that crime is still falling year on year from 2007. However, this year will see another reduction in overall crime reported across the Halcon Ward once final figures are pulled together. Indications are that the One Team problem solving approach is already having an effect.
- 4.2 Whilst Welfare Reform is an additional strain, it cannot be said to be the cause of poor budgeting, low educational attainment, not working, poor parenting, drug and alcohol misuse, domestic violence, poor health and not feeding your children enough. These problems and more beset our Priority Areas. Once an individual or families problems are identified through a One Team approach, these can be tackled pulling together all the expertise, both statutory and voluntary which is already out there (just not necessarily directed where it is really needed).

- 4.3 This may seem intrusive (and the Troubled Families Programme undoubtedly is) but it has to be to make a difference. There is an extraordinary amount of hand holding required for these families and individuals who struggle and a sort of determination needed to do this. People in despair feel supported and they start to see a difference in their lives and feel happier. We also need to remember that there are many families on low incomes who manage their lives rather well and have no need for any intervention, so this is a realistic aspiration for those that do.
- 4.4 Strategies around Early Intervention, Early Help, Children's Services, Education, Policing, Health and Wellbeing, General Practice Services, Housing and Tenant Management are already in place. These must translate into different service delivery on the frontline. Sharing information, mapping/collating it, co-locating services (which makes this much easier particularly for frontline workers) and working together as One Team just seems to be the right approach.
- 4.5 Rural areas with scattered small communities may experience similar problems but these are often compounded by rural isolation, fuel poverty and difficulty accessing most services so require a rather different approach. This has been largely been solved in part of the Borough by Somerset Community Council's Village Agents Project funded through the Big Lottery Fund.
- 4.6 Village Agents are trusted local people employed part-time to offer help in their communities (a cluster of Parishes). They do not cold call but network extensively with Parish Councillors, Police Community Support Officers, social group organisers, transport providers, Church groups, Youth Workers and others within their communities. They receive referrals (or introductions) to people needing information or support. They often make home visits and provide high-quality information. They have direct access to a wide range of services and use a secure electronic referral system. They can carry out informal practical checks related to safety in the home (for example smoke alarms, falls prevention), Benefit entitlement and energy efficiency. They are able to arrange follow up visits from experts for example the Fire Service and Social Care. They identify unmet needs within their communities and are helpful at supporting new social and healthy activities.
- 4.7 They are able to build trusted relationships within small communities particularly with those who are vulnerable to help improve their quality of life by helping them to feel more secure, more cared for and more informed and empowered. They have been able to identify gaps in services and feed back this information in order to influence future service provision. They support communities to respond to an identified need where appropriate and help advise on this. They liaise with each other, statutory and voluntary organisations and use the skills of Community Council colleagues. They are delivering the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Strategy and our own Priority Areas Strategy across some of our rural Wards. Their link to us is through the Taunton Deane Partnership and its sub-group the Community Planning Working Group. We would like to support this Project to widen its cover across the whole of Taunton Deane.
- 4.8 There are eighteen Village Agents across Somerset and so far three in Taunton Deane. By coincidence they are in those clusters of Parishes most affected by serious flooding. Sarah Aston is the Village Agents Project Manager : sarah@somersetcc.org.uk.

At the time of writing the forecast is for more rain so conditions are likely to get worse before flood waters to start to recede. Getting back to normal will take a long time for some and the full extent of damage to property and place revealed only after all the water has gone. Those affected will need our support.

Councillor Jane Warmington

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Council Meeting – 25 February 2014

Appointment of Civic Marshall

For the last nine months, the post of Civic Marshall has been efficiently carried out by Councillor Mrs Marcia Hill.

At the Informal Meeting of Council on 11 February 2014, Councillor Mrs Hill was selected at the Deputy Mayor Elect for the 2014/2015 Municipal Year. As such, she is not in a position where she is able to continue undertaking the role of Civic Marshall and therefore wishes to relinquish this role.

Councillor Mrs Jean Adkins has indicated that she is willing to undertake the duties of Civic Marshall.

It is therefore **recommended** that:-

- (1) Councillor Mrs Jean Adkins be appointed as Civic Marshall; and
- (2) Councillor Mrs Marcia Hill be thanked for carrying out the duties over the past nine months.