

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 14 July 2015 at 18:30.

Agenda

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

- 1 Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 31 March 2015 and the Annual Meeting of Council held on 20 May 2015 (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 Receipt of Petition from Mr Alun Tarr of Churchstanton Parish Council concerning the 387 bus service which operates between Sidmouth - Tipton St. John - Wiggaton - Ottery St. Mary - Gittisham - Honiton - Monkton - Rawridge - Uppottery - Smeatharpe – Churchinford-Culmhead-Blagdon Hill-Staplehay-Taunton. This service is currently under consideration. The petition contains over 200 signatures and a copy of the covering e-mail received back in April 2015 is attached for information. Mr Tarr has formally requested that a debate takes place at the Full Council meeting.
- 7 To receive any further petitions or deputations from Taunton Deane Electors under Standing Orders 16 and 17.
- 8 Working with the Core Strategy - To consider the attached Motion proposed by Councillor Simon Coles and seconded by Councillor Habib Farbahi.
- 9 Public Space Protection Order, Taunton. Report of the Community and Client Services Manager (attached).
- 10 Regulatory Amendments to Statutory Protection Provisions for Statutory Officers. Report of the Legal Services Manager (attached).

- 11 Appointment of new Taunton Deane Borough Council Director to the Southwest One Board. Report of the Assistant Director - Corporate Services (attached).
- 12 Part I - To deal with written questions to, and to receive the following recommendation from, the Executive:-
- Councillor Williams - Financial Outturn 2014/2015 (attached).
- 13 Part II - To receive reports from the following Members of the Executive:-
- (a) Councillor John Williams - Leader of the Council;
 - (b) Councillor Terry Beale - Housing Services;
 - (c) Councillor Patrick Berry - Environmental Services and Climate Change;
 - (d) Councillor Mark Edwards - Business Development, Asset Management and Communications;
 - (e) Councillor Roger Habgood – Planning Policy and Transportation;
 - (f) Councillor Catherine Herbert - Sports, Parks and Leisure;
 - (g) Councillor Richard Parrish – Corporate Resources; and
 - (h) Councillor Jane Warmington – Community Leadership.

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

- 14 Proposed Compulsory Purchase of Land at Monkton Heathfield. Report of the Assistant Director - Planning and Environment (attached). Paragraph 3 - Information relating to financial or business affairs.

Bruce Lang
Assistant Chief Executive

17 August 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 M Adkins
Councillor T Aldridge
Councillor C Appleby
Councillor T Beale
Councillor P Berry
Councillor J Blatchford
Councillor R Bowrah, BEM
Councillor W Brown
Councillor N Cavill
Councillor S Coles
Councillor W Coombes
Councillor D Cossey
Councillor T Davies
Councillor D Durdan
Councillor K Durdan
Councillor C Edwards
Councillor M Edwards
Councillor H Farbahi
Councillor M Floyd
Councillor J Gage
Councillor E Gaines
Councillor A Govier
Councillor A Gunner
Councillor R Habgood
Councillor T Hall
Councillor C Herbert
Councillor C Hill
Councillor M Hill
Councillor J Horsley
Councillor J Hunt
Councillor G James
Councillor R Lees
Councillor S Lees
Councillor L Lisgo, MBE
Councillor S Martin-Scott
Councillor I Morrell
Councillor S Nicholls
Councillor R Parrish
Councillor J Reed
Councillor S Ross
Councillor R Ryan
Councillor Miss F Smith
Councillor F Smith
Councillor P Stone
Councillor A Sully
Councillor N Townsend

Councillor C Tucker
Councillor J Warmington
Councillor P Watson
Councillor D Webber
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 31 March 2015 at 6.30 p.m.

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

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council held on 24 February 2015, copies having been sent to each Member, were signed by the Mayor.

2. Apologies

Councillors Mrs Baker, Bishop, Gaines, R Lees, Mrs Lees, Nottrodt and Miss Smith.

3. Declaration of Interests

Councillors Coles, A Govier, Prior-Sankey, A Wedderkopp and D Wedderkopp declared personal interests as Members of Somerset County Council. Councillor Henley declared personal interests both as a Member of Somerset County Council and as an employee of Job Centre Plus. Councillor Hunt declared personal interests both as a Member of Somerset County Council and as one of the Council's representatives on the Somerset Waste Board. Councillor Ross declared personal interests as one of the Council's representatives on the Somerset Waste Board and as the Alternate Director of Southwest One. Councillor Mrs Hill declared a personal interest as an employee of Somerset County Council. Councillor Tooze declared personal interests as an employee of the UK Hydrographic Office and as the Vice-Chairman of the North Taunton Partnership. Councillor Mrs Herbert declared a personal interest as an employee of the Department of Work and Pensions. Councillor Wren declared a personal interest as Clerk to Milverton Parish Council. Councillor D Durdan declared a prejudicial interest as a Tone Leisure Board representative. Councillor Gill Slattery declared personal interests as a member of the Board of Governors at Somerset College, as a representative on the Parrett Internal Drainage Board and as a member of the National Steering Group for the Public Health England/Kings College, London longitudinal study into the impact of flooding on health and wellbeing. Councillor Farbahi declared a personal interest as a local owner of land in

Taunton Deane. Councillor Ms Lisgo declared a personal interest as a Director of Tone FM.

4. **Public Question Time**

- (1) Mr David Orr repeated his primary concerns about the Southwest One (SW1) contract.

It had cost the Council around £500,000 to enter into this controversial contract with IBM back in 2007 and it was likely to cost at least that to get out of the contract and implement the succession option.

The current project budget request for £47,000 was clearly a "starter for 10" and Taunton Deane could expect further costs, including a significant write down on the remaining book value of SAP.

Back in 2005, the Councils had decided that a large outsource of "back office" services in a joint venture was "the right answer" with the next two and a half years spent working backwards from that answer to try and make a viable Business Case.

Mr Orr requested the Council not to make a similar mistake by rushing into a preferred option without making sure that a clear view existed of what sort of services the Council would be delivering in future - the "New Operating Model".

If you do not know what sort of Council you wanted to be, then how would you know what sort of IT would be needed to support the Council? Or what option would be best for delivering the IT needed?

As soon as the elections were over, it was hoped that the new Council would rapidly align the Council shaping work with the Phase 1 options appraisal.

Clearly, the original SW1 Business Case was flawed, as no-one modelled for static or falling budgets. The ridiculous claims of £192,000,000 of procurement savings were never ever there. Predicting the complex and fast changing real world in a fixed written contract for 10 years was next to impossible.

Mr Orr went on to hope that a new administration would endorse the sensible and non-parochial sharing of offices with the Somerset County Council (SCC) who had recently committed capital budgets for a multi-user revamp of the site, together with the IT needed to support that. It would therefore be absurd for Taunton Deane and West Somerset to have a separate set of IT infrastructure and suppliers.

In the circumstances, he supported the Government policy that multi-sourcing with shorter and more manageable contracts was the best way forward.

- (2) Mr Nigel Behan of the Unite Union referred to the SW1 Succession Planning report which was due to be considered later in the meeting. He asked:-

- (i) Would there be joint working with SCC and West Somerset Council (WSC) for the SW1 exit strategy?
- (ii) Would there be joint ICT with SCC in County Hall when Taunton Deane relocate?
- (iii) (a) Would the review take account of the recently reported discussions about joint working between Avon and Somerset Police and Wiltshire Police?
(b) What was the outcome of the “partners” conference call (about the issues mentioned in a)) in January 2015?
- (iv) Would the Taunton Deane review also include considering creating jobs in the local economy?
- (v) Could the research reports prepared by Professor Dexter Whitfield (from the European Services Strategy Unit) - about Project ISiS becoming SW1 - be revisited for some ‘lessons learnt’ and planning for the future?
- (vi) What were the concerns in the ICT services in relation to capacity to deliver projects?
- (vii) Which projects had been affected?
- (vii) What impact had the delays in the pricing of additional work had on service delivery and the budget?

In response to Messrs. Orr and Behan, Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams stated that many of the points raised had already been addressed by the Council. However, if there were particular issues where a further response was required, they were encouraged to contact the Democratic Services Manager who would be able to arrange this.

(3) Mr Alan Debenham referred to the following matters:-

- (i) The SW1 situation was, in his view, an absolute debacle with the expected savings unlikely to be met. Why had Councillors not tracked this in detail? Why was this disaster allowed to happen?
- (ii) In preparation for Hinkley C, EDF had decimated parts of the countryside. Would this land be re-instated to its former condition if the new power station did not go ahead?
- (iii) With the elections due in just over a month’s time, it had become very clear that a significant number of electors were not currently on the Register. What was the Council doing to tackle this problem?

In response, Councillor Williams stated that SW1 had not been an unmitigated disaster and he expressed his thanks to the officers for dealing with such a complex contract. Councillor Williams also confirmed that EDF would be responsible for re-instating land should the project not proceed.

Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams confirmed that a number of reminders had been sent out to those eligible to be included on the Electoral Register. However, the Council could not compel members of the public to add their names. This was a voluntary choice.

5. **Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Position**

Considered report previously circulated, the purpose of which was to explain and obtain approval of the recommended strategy for managing the Council's cash resources including the approach to borrowing and investments.

The report also sought the formal approval of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy which had to be approved by Full Council by 31 March each year in line with the regulations.

The strategy had been prepared taking into account professional advice and information from the Council's treasury management advisor Arlingclose.

The strategy continued to prioritise security and liquidity of cash over investment returns. This year the strategy had been updated to reflect increasing treasury risks due to impact of the global economy on the financial sector and changes in regulations in respect of 'bail in' by United Kingdom banks, as failing banks would no longer be 'bailed out' by the Government.

In short, the Council's approach in response to this increased risk was to spread surplus funds through a wider range of investments and deposits and reduce the limits for amounts held with each institution.

It was noted that the Council currently had external borrowing of £92,200,000 which was all attributable to the Housing Revenue Account.

The Council's investment balances had fluctuated and currently ranged between £29,000,000 and £40,000,000.

Short-term interest rates were still at 0.5% and this rate was expected to be at this level until mid-2015.

Resolved that the 2015/2016 Treasury Management Strategy Statement, incorporating the Annual Investment Strategy, Minimum Revenue Position Policy and Prudential Indicators be approved.

6. **Centre for Outdoor Activities and Community Hub (COACH)**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the latest position with regard to the construction of the Centre for Outdoor Activities and Community Hub (COACH).

The proposed COACH facility would be both a building, including a floodable boat store and a community facility. The intention was to provide a sustainable and functional permanent home for a wide variety of clubs and Community Groups as detailed in the Business Plan previously produced by COACH.

Following a previous Full Council approval to earmark £200,000 from the Trustees proceeds from the former Taunton Youth and Community Centre land sale, Sport England had confirmed their award of grant funding of £454,000. Along with funding from some additional sources, a total of £730,000 funding had been secured.

A tendering exercise had subsequently been undertaken where five tenders had been received. However, the lowest price received had been in the sum of £1,300,000.

The Cost Plan immediately prior to the receipt of the tenders had predicted a total project cost of £860,000 which equated to a per square metre cost of £1,790/sq metre. Examination of the tenders had shown that the higher than expected prices could be attributed in part to the following factors:-

- Higher than normal overheads due to site location;
- Requirement for temporary haul road across the park and fencing to the route;
- Provision of temporary public WCs for the duration of the works;
- Increased cost of piling (extra depth) following receipt of the soils investigation report;
- Steelwork price increases;
- Abnormal materials and general labour prices increases;
- Exceptionally high cost of the zinc cladding system specified in the tender;
- The cost of the green roof (omitted from cost plan) Which had been reintroduced at the tender stage;
- Mechanical and electrical services were not designed at the tender stage. A provisional sum of £80,000 had been included however once proposals were received costs rose to £51,000 for mechanical and £57,000 for electrical;
- The structural glass balustrade to the terraces was priced at £56,000;
- The cost of the specialist electrically operated boat house door came out at £18,000; and
- The cost of the spiral staircase specified came out at £19,000.

Further reported that the project had discovered three major power cables below the proposed build location which for affordability reasons required a redesign of the scheme. The current cost forecast by the contractor was £840,000 and this represented a specification that the Trustees were happy with and included all the abnormal costs associated with the location of the site. The latest design had been arrived at in close co-operation with Sport England and their technical advisers. A revised planning application had been submitted for decision on the 16 March 2015

The revised plans had been costed by COACH's preferred contractor including a specification for the changing rooms to meet Sport England criteria. Sport England had confirmed additional funds of £30,000 taking their total grant funding to £484,000

To enable the project to maintain Sport England standards, the Business Case objectives could not be value engineered any further. Therefore the

project would require an additional £80,000 of funding to enable the project to proceed, £50,000 of which had been requested from the Council. The Trustees were confident that they would be able to attract match funding to achieve the remaining £30,000.

Resolved that:-

- (1) The contents of the report be noted; and
- (2) An additional £50,000 from the Taunton Youth and Community Centre land sale funding be assigned as funding for the COACH project.

(Councillor Mrs Waymouth declared a personal interest in the above item as a Trustee of the Bishop Fox Education Trust.)

7. **Southwest One Succession Planning**

Considered report previously circulated concerning Southwest One (SWO) Succession Planning.

The SWO contract, for the delivery of transformation and support services to Taunton Deane, Somerset County Council (SCC) and Avon and Somerset Police (ASP) was due to expire on 1 November 2017.

This milestone meant that decisions would be needed in the near future with regard to the future service delivery and ICT system arrangements for the SWO services post November 2017.

The significantly changed financial position of the Council, the Medium Term Financial Plan and service transformation challenges, together with the decreased scope of the SWO contract indicated that the Council needed to undertake a fundamental strategic review of the options open to it to inform decisions about future service delivery.

Since 1 February 2014 the following Taunton Deane services remained delivered by SWO:-

- Customer Services;
- ICT (excluding ICT Strategy);
- Finance Transactional Services
 - Accounts Payable
 - Accounts Receivable
 - Master Data for SAP
 - Cashiers and Control Team;
- HR Administration and Payroll; and
- Procurement.

These remaining services were genuinely shared services with at least one of the other authorities (for example Customer Services between Taunton Deane/SCC; and Procurement between Taunton Deane/ASP).

The annual contract price (the Unitary Charge), that was paid to SWO for providing the remaining services was approximately £1,600,000 per annum. This had reduced by approximately two thirds from 2007 levels, mainly as a result of the services taken back in-house.

The services were delivered by a mix of staff comprising: SWO employees (also known as Direct Hires); temporary agency staff; IBM staff and local authority staff who had been seconded into SWO in 2007 for the full ten years. Their Secondment Agreement provided for “assured employment” for the contract term.

The three authorities were contractually required to notify SWO of their intentions at least 18 months in advance of the contract coming to an end - by May 2016.

SWO was obligated to produce an Exit Management Plan to ensure the smooth transfer of the staff and transition of service delivery at contract end. Due to the scale of the task and complexity of issues to resolve, planning with the partners had started, including SWO, by identifying the exit actions which were summarised as follows:-

- Contracted Exit Requirements;
- Staffing Implications;
- Premises and Accommodation;
- Asset and third Party Contract Transfers;
- Communications;
- Logistics, Technical Infrastructure and System Security and Access;
- Intellectual Property and Authority Data;
- Work in Progress Transfer;
- Service Transition and Knowledge Transfer; and
- Company Dissolution.

The report further detailed that contract end would require robust project governance and the appointment of an authority exit management team including work-streams around exit management, HR, legal/contract representation, commercial, project management, communications, finance, technology and procurement. The resource requirement would be similar whichever future delivery option was selected.

The implementation of contract end would need to take place in three broad phases which were outlined in details to Members but were summarised as follows:-

Phase 1 – Detailed Options Appraisal

The purpose of this phase would be to undertake a detailed appraisal of the various options for future service delivery and understand in detail the costs and implications of these options. A detailed and costed options appraisal would be conducted which made recommendations to Members.

Phase 2 – Implementation of Chosen Option

This phase would involve the completion of commercial negotiations with SWO and agreement with the public partners to implement the option(s) agreed by Members. This phase would complete the transfer of staff and services to any agreed new service delivery option

Phase 3 – Service Stabilisation

Phase 3 recognised that, following any transfer of service delivery, there would need to be a service stabilisation period to allow services to 'bed in' to any new arrangements. Any SAP replacement would be reviewed and issues resolved and staff induction and training undertaken.

There were a number of service delivery options available on expiry of the SWO contract, for example:-

- Continuing SWO – various options;
- Outsource;
- Shared Services;
- In House; or
- Alternative Delivery Models.

Each of these options needed to be evaluated in detail so that their respective advantages, disadvantages, costs, deliverability and how they would fit with Taunton Deane's transformation objectives could be understood. The intention was to undertake the assessment over the next few months and bring back a detailed options report with recommendations to Members in the autumn for a decision.

Further reported that the SAP ICT system had been implemented by SWO in 2009 and was the Council's main platform for the delivery of its back office functions. The provision of SAP across the partnership was also key to SWO's ability to deliver shared services to all of the partners and to large organisations such as ASP and SCC.

The SAP system comprised two main elements – SAP Back Office and SAP CRM (Customer Relationship Management). In addition our website was linked to the SAP CRM module.

The system had recently been reviewed to evaluate whether it continued to be the right ICT platform to support the Council's emerging strategic agenda. This review has been independently verified.

The review had identified a number of key themes that suggested SAP was no longer the right platform for delivery of TDBC services. In view of these findings the Council needed to assess its technology options in respect of SAP, cost potential replacement systems and the impact on the SWO contract and its partners. This work would inform the contract end options and consequently needed to be undertaken in conjunction with the review of those options.

With regard to the financial Implications, the report provided details as to the

Contract Value, Exit Costs and the work required to plan for and implement succession planning which was likely to be significant and needed to be managed as a separate project from Phase 1 onwards. Noted that this project could not be delivered from existing resources.

An element of the additional resource resource required could be funded from an existing reserve. However, an additional £47,000 would be required from the General Fund Reserve.

Resolved that:-

- (i) The position with regard to the expiry of the South West One contract, system replacement challenges, and work needed to prepare Taunton Deane for contract end be noted; and
- (ii) A supplementary budget of £47,000, funded from General Fund Reserves, be approved to enable officers to undertake the necessary work in Phase 1 to produce a detailed options appraisal and recommendations for decision.

8. **New Nuclear Programme Manager – Upgrade of Post to Assistant Director**

The post of New Nuclear Programme Manager (NNPM) had been created at the request of West Somerset Council, when the new shared service structure for Taunton Deane and West Somerset was established in January 2014.

This reflected the continuing importance attached by West Somerset Council to its Corporate Priority of securing maximum benefit and a lasting legacy from the new nuclear development at Hinkley Point.

With the current arrangement having now run for over a year, it was reported that a number of key developments had occurred which, collectively, had raised the need to review the NNPM post and its remuneration within the joint management structure of West Somerset and Taunton Deane Borough Councils.

West Somerset Council had already approved this proposal at its Full Council meeting on 18 March 2015. This approval was set in the context of the latest position on the Hinkley Point C project and related staff resources.

Although the new Assistant Director post would serve on the Joint Management Team of the two authorities, it would have no financial impact on Taunton Deane Borough Council, being wholly funded by West Somerset Council through financial contributions from EDF Energy.

Resolved that the proposal to upgrade the post of New Nuclear Programme Manager to that of Assistant Director – Energy Infrastructure, with effect from 1 April 2015, be approved.

9. **Report of the Joint Independent Members Remuneration Panel**

Reference Minute No 10 from the meeting held on 9 December 2014, reported that following further discussions, the Joint Independent Members Remuneration Panel had set out its conclusions and recommendations from the early stages of a fundamental review of the Taunton Deane Scheme of Members' Allowances being carried out by the Panel.

The comprehensive report submitted included details as to:-

- **The background to the fundamental review of the Taunton Deane Scheme** – Noted that the basic principles on which Remuneration Panels worked were not legislative but there were national operational standards. In summary they included:-
 - The 50% rule (no more than 50% of Members of any individual Council should receive an Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA);
 - Any Member should only receive one SRA at any one time;
 - Basic Allowance payments should be based on a voluntary time contribution of 30% or 33% to underpin the difference between a salary and an allowance; and
 - When considering the payment of SRA's clarity was needed when considering each specific position and whether it qualified – was it a supporting one, requiring time and effort or was it a leadership role requiring evaluation, judgement and responsibility.
- **Results of the Members' Survey** – The conclusions from the Taunton Deane responses to the survey suggested:-
 - A split of views in support of maintaining the Basic Allowance (BA) at its current level and increasing the BA; and
 - Those in favour of increasing the BA made reference to the fact that in recent years the BA had not kept pace with inflation; that it might act as a disincentive to those wishing to stand for election; and the need for it to adequately reflect the commitment and time that elected Members give to their local community.
- **Basic Allowance considerations** - The Panel had recommended the following principles in respect of the BA to apply post-election in 2015:-
 - That the BA should be based on a calculation using an average number of hours worked by a councillor
 - That 20 hours per week should be the basis for this calculation and reduced by a third to reflect the voluntary element
 - That a mechanism was found to base the level of BA on an appropriate spinal point in the officers grading structure
 - That future changes in the level of BA paid should be indexed to officer pay awards. This arrangement to last for the duration of the quadrennium and reviewed as part of the next fundamental review of the scheme in advance of the 2019 district elections;

- **Special Responsibility Allowance considerations** - The Panel had recommended the following:-
 - To link SRA scheme payments to multiples of BA to provide a sound base for calculation of the SRA bands and individual payments. This would also have the advantage of creating a consistent indexing provision since increases in the BA would be reflected in increases to SRAs;
 - To minimise the number of SRA bands yet providing consistent bands across the three councils where it made sense to do so, whilst allowing provision for individual Council requirements, reflecting their culture and democratic arrangements;
 - For the Panel to bring forward recommendations for a banding structure and calculations, to the September 2015 meeting of the Council based on comprehensive benchmarking, and other evidence, having developed and considered broad assumptions about the main responsibilities of key posts. This would require the Panel to agree and recommend headline responsibilities for key posts; and
- A revised list of Approved Duties applicable for all three of the district Councils.

Reported that if the recommendations contained in the report were approved, they would form the basis for a new Members' Allowances Scheme for the Council to be brought forward for consideration in September 2015 following agreement of new democratic arrangements for the Council in May 2015.

Resolved that:-

- (1) The approach being taken by the Panel to undertake a fundamental review of the Taunton Deane Scheme and the plan for continuing reviews of the scheme be endorsed;
- (2) The principles recommended to underpin the setting of the Basic Allowance for the new Council be agreed;
- (3) The principles recommended to underpin the payment of Special Responsibility Allowances in the new Council be approved; and
- (4) The list of approved duties attached as an Appendix to the report be also approved and be applied as part of a new Members' Allowances Scheme.

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

(i) Creation of the Somerset Building Control Partnership

The Executive had recently considered a report seeking approval to create a Somerset Building Control Partnership comprising Mendip and Sedgemoor

District Councils, Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council.

The Building Control Service provided by Districts Councils was one of the Council functions that was in direct competition with the private sector (Approved Inspectors).

In recent years, services had found it more and more difficult to compete with the private sector providers of Building Control for the 'fee income' from Building Regulations applications.

The reduction in income was leaving most individual local authority Building Control Services with a choice between having a very small team with little resilience, or operating the service at a financial loss. The most effective way forward to alleviate this was for single local authority Building Control Teams to consider forming partnerships.

A comprehensive Business Case had been developed by the four partner Organisations. The key business reasons for forming the partnership were:-

- (1) To secure a sustainable Building Control Service.
- (2) To reduce costs to each partner Council.
- (3) To improve competitiveness with the private (and public) sector providers of Building Control Services – to win more business and maximise income.
- (4) To increase resilience and customer service levels – a bigger core service team rather than four small teams.
- (5) To improve professional development opportunities, to make it easier to attract and retain good quality staff.

The Business Case had projected a salary saving of £238,000 between the four partners in the first full year of the partnership, but redundancy costs would be incurred as part of the set-up. This scale of saving presented a sound financial business reason for pursuing the project, but significant further savings could be expected from:-

- Creation of a single IT system;
- Rationalising support service charges;
- Reducing the need for office space;
- The reduced head count would create additional savings in terms of computer licences, equipment, travel and other overheads;
- Improved systems;
- Improved efficiency and deployment of staff; and
- Expansion of the partnership to include other Councils and other ancillary services in the future to increase income.

The proposed governance would be through a 'Joint Committee' model as used for the Somerset Waste Partnership and the South West Audit Partnership. This involved pooling budgets and resources into a single

service managed by a Joint Management Team with a Joint Steering Committee established under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972. A detailed Inter Authority Agreement would be agreed between the Councils.

Sedgemoor District Council had been proposed to act as the host/administering authority for the Partnership. This meant that the staff from the other Councils would transfer to Sedgemoor District Council under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE).

The total Building Control fee income across the four Councils was £850,000 in 2013/2014, with approximately £200,000 in charges for statutory work.

On the motion of Councillor Edwards, it was

Resolved that:-

- (a) The creation of a Somerset Building Control Partnership as outlined in the Business Case, and subject to the approval of the other proposed partner Councils, be approved;
- (b) The creation of a 'Joint Committee' to oversee the strategic direction, performance and budget of the partnership be approved;
- (c) The Portfolio Holder and Assistant Director - Operational Delivery be nominated to represent the Council on the Joint Committee; and
- (d) Authority be delegated to the Section 151 Officer, the Monitoring Officer and the Assistant Director - Operational Delivery, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to finalise legal agreements, partnership budgets and cost/income sharing arrangements, shared redundancy payments and detailed governance arrangements.

(ii) Support and Funding for the Arts and Creative Industries

The Executive had also considered a further request for financial assistance from:-

- **The Creative Innovation Centre Community Interest Company (CICCIC)** - The CICCIC was a non-profit organisation that encouraged the participation and development of businesses and the creative industries. Through knowledge exchange, music, art, heritage and performance its events and workshops focussed on the diversity and growth of enterprise, community and culture.

The funding request was for a total of £60,000 to support the CICCIC over a three year period. This was broken down into £20,000 per annum and would support a range of activities and projects in each of the financial years.

The Executive, whilst very supportive of CICCIC, was of the view that at this stage financial support should be limited to one year rather than the three years requested. It was noted that this investment, if approved, would enable CICCIC to 'lever in' further funds of over £250,000 into the local economy.

An amendment proposed by Councillor Farbahi, seconded by Councillor Coles seeking tighter control and monitoring of CICCIC and the payment of the proposed funding in quarterly stages was put and was lost.

On the motion of Councillor Cavill, it was

Resolved that:-

- (a) A grant of £20,000 be made to the Creative Innovation centre (CICCIC), Taunton, from General Reserves with the purpose of supporting the development of local businesses in the Creative Industries sector; and
- (b) The award of a grant to the company be subject to the following conditions:-
 1. The Company enters a Service Level Agreement with the Council to deliver the outlined services for the year 2015/2016;
 2. The Company furnished the Council with a report into the size and extent of the Creative Industries sector in Taunton Deane, and the support needs of that sector; and
 3. The Company's accounts were submitted on completion of the Service Level Agreement to a suitably qualified, independent advisor to validate the use of the funding.

(iii) Discretionary Reduction in Council Tax Liability Policy and Discretionary Housing Payment Policy

The Executive had considered a report concerning the Council's approach to awarding Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) and Discretionary Reductions in Council Tax Liability.

With regard to Discretionary Reduction in Council Tax Liability, the Local Government Act 2012 had created two new discounts:-

- Local Council Tax Support Schemes under Sections 13A(1) (a) and (b); and
- 13A (1) (c) which was effectively the original 13A discounts that Taunton Deane could use to increase reductions already given under the Local Council Tax Support Schemes.

The implications under 13A(1) (a) and (b) had already been considered and agreed by Full Council.

In March 2013, as a consequence of the Collection Fund (Council Tax Reductions) (England) Directions 2013, the Portfolio Holder had agreed to amendments to the Councils procedures for discretionary discounts for Council Tax liability.

As a consequence of a decision made by the Valuation Tribunal for England (VTE) last year, it had been necessary to further amend Taunton Deane's policy to ensure it complied with the VTE judgment.

The regulations covering Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) were the Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001. This legislation had given the Council a very broad discretion.

Since April 2013, changes had been applied to Housing Benefit meaning that social sector accommodation had a size criteria applied, with any working age household deemed to be under occupying their home, receiving a reduced level of Housing Benefit. As a result of this and other changes the Government had increased its DHP funding to Local Authorities in anticipation of greater demand on their budgets. Guidance had been issued as to what the additional funding was intended to provide.

The Department for Work and Pensions had also published a Discretionary Housing Payments Guidance Manual, including a Local Authority Good Practice Guide and the Council had followed this in formulating a revised DHP Policy.

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

Resolved that the revised policies for Discretionary Reduction in Council Tax Liability and Discretionary Housing Payments be applied from 1 April 2015.

11. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item because of the likelihood that exempt information would otherwise be disclosed relating to Clause 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

12. Possible Repairs Notice Action – Heritage Buildings at Tone Mill, Milverton Road, Wellington.

Considered report previously circulated, on the possible issue of a Listed Buildings Repairs Notice in relation to heritage buildings at Tone Mill, Milverton Road, Wellington.

Full details of the circumstances that had led to possibility of such a Notice being served on the owner of the buildings was contained in the confidential report.

Resolved that the service of a Repairs Notice in accordance with Section 48 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in relation to the buildings at Tone Mill, Milverton Road, Wellington be agreed.

9. **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:-

- The Last Full Council meeting of the Quadrennium;
- New Council Housing;
- Firepool, Taunton;
- Investment in Taunton Deane;
- A358 and Proposed New Strategic Employment Site at Junction 25; and
- Blackbrook Swimming Pool Extension.

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

The report from Councillor Hunt drew attention to developments in the following areas:-

- Climate Change;
- Deane DLO; and
- Environmental Health / Licensing.

(iii) **Sports, 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:-

- Deane Housing Development : Bacon Drive, Taunton and Vale View, West Bagborough;
- Deane Housing Development : Normandy Drive, Taunton;
- Deane Housing Development : Weavers Arms, Rockwell Green, Wellington; and
- Right to Buy Social Mobility Fund.

(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;
- Customer Contact Centre;
- Health and Wellbeing;
- Legal and Democratic Services;
- Resources; 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:-

- Taunton Deane Events Group;
- Site Allocations and Development Management Plan;
- Neighbourhood Planning;
- Affordable Housing Thresholds;
- Monkton Heathfield Governance Board;
- Car Parking; and
- Communications.

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

Councillor Mrs Warmington presented the Community Leadership report which focused on all of the areas within her portfolio.

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

The general report from Councillor Cavill covered a number of specific areas within his portfolio.

(Councillor Henley left the meeting at 7.24 pm. Councillors C Hill and D Wedderkopp left at 7.30 pm. Councillors Denington, Mrs Smith, P Smith and Tooze left at 8.18 pm. Councillors Mrs Reed, Horsley, T Slattery and A Govier and Mrs Govier left the meeting at 8.23 pm, 8.30 pm, 8.32 pm and 8.35 pm respectively. Councillor Mrs Floyd and Gill Slattery left at 8.40 pm. Councillor Mrs Herbert and A Wedderkopp left at 8.44 pm.)

(The meeting ended at 9.06 pm.)

Taunton Deane Borough Council

At the Annual Meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council, held at the Somerset County Cricket Club, The County Ground, Taunton on Thursday, 20 May 2015 at 6.30 pm.

Present The Mayor (Councillor D Durdan)
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Mrs Hill)
Councillors Mrs Adkins, M Adkins, Aldridge, Beale, Berry, Bowrah, Brown, Cavill, Coles, Davies, Miss Durdan, Mrs Edwards, M Edwards, Farbahi, Mrs Floyd, Gage, Gaines, A Govier, Mrs Gunner, Habgood, Hall, Mrs Herbert, C Hill, Horsley, Hunt, James, R Lees, Mrs Lees, Martin-Scott, Morrell, Nicholls, Parrish, Prior-Sankey, Mrs Reed, Ryan, Miss Smith, Mrs Smith, Mrs Stock-Williams, Stone, Sully, Mrs Warmington, Watson, Ms Webber, Wedderkopp and Williams

The meeting was preceded by a Prayer offered by the Reverend Rebecca Harris

1. **Election of Mayor**

On the motion of Councillor Coles, seconded by Councillor Wedderkopp, it was **resolved** unanimously that Councillor Marcia Jane Hill be elected Mayor of Taunton Deane for the ensuing year. Councillor Mrs Hill made and signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

2. **Deputy Mayor**

On the motion of Councillor Williams, seconded by Councillor Mrs Reed, it was **resolved** that Councillor Vivienne Frances Stock-Williams be elected as Deputy Mayor for the ensuing year. Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams made and signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

3. **Councillor David William Durdan**

On the motion of Councillor Miss Durdan, seconded by Councillor Bowrah, it was **resolved** that the best thanks of the Council be accorded to Councillor David William for the manner in which he had discharged the duties of the Office of Mayor during his term of office.

Councillor D Durdan replied.

4. **Past Mayor's Badge**

The Mayor presented Councillor D Durdan with his past Mayor's badge.

5. **Apologies**

Councillors Appleby, Mrs Blatchford, Coombes, Cossey, Gaines, Ms Lisgo, Ross, Townsend, Mrs Tucker and Wren.

6. **Borough Council Elections – 7 May 2015**

The Democratic Services Manager, on behalf of the Returning Officer, reported that the following Councillors had been elected at the recent Borough Council Elections:-

<u>Ward</u>	<u>Persons Elected</u>
Bishops Hull	Julia Blatchford Lavender Croft, Gipsy Lane, Bishops Hull, Taunton, TA1 5LG Ian Nathan Morrell 8 Daws Mead, Bishops Hull, Taunton, TA1 5HQ
Bishops Lydeard	Alison Gunner 21 Burge Crescent, Cotford St Luke, Taunton, TA4 1NU Jane Elisabeth Beresford Warmington The Coach house, Terhill, Cothelstone, Taunton, TA4 3EB Edward Peter Watson 2 Five yards, Bishops Lydeard, Taunton, TA4 3NN
Blackbrook and Holway	William Coombes Rose Cottage, Haydon, Taunton, TA3 5AB Hazel Ruth Prior-Sankey 78 Bacon Drive, Taunton, TA1 2LH Francesca Teresa Christine Smith 5 Bourne Grove, Taunton, TA1 2TD
Blackdown	Charlotte Frances Edwards The Thatched Cottage, Trull Green, Taunton, TA3 7JW

Bradford on Tone

Roger Keith Habgood
10 Nethercott Way, Lydeard St
Lawrence, Taunton, TA4 3SG

Comeytrove

Habib Farbahi
68 Comeytrove Lane, Taunton,
TA1 5QG

Norah Mollie Floyd
The Heritage, 6 Outer Gullands,
Taunton, TA1 4SH

Simon John Nicholls
9 Barrington Close, Comeytrove,
Taunton, TA1 4YD

Eastgate

Simon Adrien Paulian Coles
8 Alfred Street, Taunton,
TA1 3HU

Richard Lees
15 South Road, Taunton,
TA1 3DT

Fairwater

Jefferson Andrew Horsley
5 The Avenue, Taunton,
TA1 1EA

Susan Lees
15 South Road, Taunton,
TA1 3DT

Daniel Michael Wedderkopp
18 Whirligig Place, Taunton,
TA1 1SQ

Halcon

Christopher Appleby
3A Shakespeare Avenue, Taunton,
TA1 2HY

Roger Michael Ryan
167 Hamilton Road, Taunton,
TA1 2EU

Federica Roberta Diana Smith

	71 Ashbourne Crescent, Taunton, TA1 2RA
Killiams and Mountfield	Terry Beale 24 Bluebell Close, Taunton, TA1 3XQ
	Catherine Avril Herbert 49 Shoreditch Road, Taunton, TA1 3DF
Lyngford	Michael Adkins 26 Dragon Rise, Norton Fitzwarren, Taunton, TA2 6FB
	Tom Aldridge 14 Northfield Gardens, Taunton, TA1 1QM
	Elizabeth Susan Lisgo, M.B.E 11 Hatchers Court, Kingston Road, Taunton, TA2 7SP
Manor and Wilton	Patrick Heald Berry 178 Kingston Road, Taunton, TA2 7ST
	Terry John Hall 8 Manor Close, Taunton, TA1 4RS
	Stephen Henry Martin-Scott The Old Rectory, Wild Oak Lane, Trull, Taunton, TA3 7JT
Milverton and North Deane	Gwilym David Howard Wren Haven House, Fire Street, Milverton Taunton, TA4 1JU
Monument	Christopher Leslie William Hill Tremlett Farm, Greenham, Wellington, TA21 OJJ
Neroche	John Raymond Williams Ivy Cottage, West Hatch, Taunton, TA3 5RS

North Curry and Stoke St. Gregory

Duncan Cossey
The Rising Sun, Lower Knapp, North
Curry, Taunton, TA3 6BG

Phil Stone
Wisteria Cottage, 27 Stoke Road,
North Curry, Taunton TA3 6HN

Norton Fitzwarren

Jean Court Adkins
26 Dragon Rise, Norton Fitzwarren,
Taunton, TA2 6FB

Andrew Sully
Kernow House, 15 Dabinett Close,
Norton Fitzwarren, Taunton,
TA2 6RT

Pyrland and Rowbarton

Thomas Davies
2 Lewis Road, Taunton, TA2 6DU

John Henry David Gage
71 Bossington Drive, Taunton,
TA2 8HG

Marcia Jane Hill
14 Triscombe Road, Taunton,
TA2 7PG

Ruishton and Creech

David William Durdan
Fair View, Ham, Creech St. Michael,
Taunton, TA3 5PA

Kelly Ann Durdan
2 Tristram Drive, Creech St. Michael,
Taunton, TA3 5QU

Staplegrove

Nicholas Townsend
Yarford Cottage, Kingston St Mary,
Taunton, TA2 8AN

Caroline Mary Tucker
Lodge Farm, Staplegrove, Taunton,
TA2 6DX

Trull

Mark Justin Edwards

The Thatched Cottage, Trull Green,
Taunton, TA3 7JW

Wellington East

James Alexander Hunt
49 Mill Stream Gardens, Tonedale,
Wellington, TA21 0AA

Gary Stuart James
6 Blackmoor Road, Wellington,
TA21 8ED

Wellington North

William Owen Brown
8 Chelston Terrace, Chelston,
Wellington, TA21 9HT

Andrew James Govier
47 Laburnum Road, Wellington,
TA21 8EN

Wellington Rockwell Green and West

Robert Bowrah, B.E.M
30 Holyoake Street, Wellington,
TA21 8LD

Janet Ethel Reed
10 Bulford, Wellington, TA21 8DE

Vivienne Frances Stock-Williams
Lane End Farmhouse, Northend
Lane, Nicholashayne, Wellington,
TA21 9QZ

West Monkton

Norman Philip Cavill
2 Hill Farm, West Monkton, Taunton,
TA2 8LW

Richard Parrish
14 Waterleaze, Taunton, TA2 8PX

Denise Gillian Webber
South Lodge, Rowford, Cheddon
Fitzpaine, Taunton, TA2 8LG

Wiveliscombe and West Deane

Edward Frederick Gaines
Tor House, Ford Road,
Wiveliscombe, Taunton, TA4 2RE

Stephen John Ross
50 Nordens Meadow, Wiveliscombe,
Taunton, TA4 2JW

7. **Election of Leader**

The Mayor invited nominations from the Council for the election of Leader for the next four years in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

Councillor Williams was proposed by Councillor Mrs Warmington, seconded by Councillor Mrs Adkins.

Resolved that Councillor Williams be elected as Leader of the Executive for the next four years.

8. **Appointment of the Executive 2014/2015**

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

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

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

15 Members, 10 Conservatives, 4 Liberal Democrats, 1 Labour or Independent.

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

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

15 Members, 10 Conservatives, 4 Liberal Democrats, 1 Labour or Independent.

(Note: Neither of these Scrutiny Committees can be Chaired by a Member of the controlling administration).

11. **Appointment of Regulatory Committees and the Staffing Board**

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

15 Members, 10 Conservatives, 4 Liberal Democrats, 1 Labour or Independent.

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

15 Members, 10 Conservatives, 4 Liberal Democrats, 1 Labour or Independent.
- (c) The appointment of a Corporate Governance Committee for the ensuing year was agreed as follows:-

15 Members, 10 Conservatives, 4 Liberal Democrats, 1 Labour or Independent.
- (d) The appointment of a Staffing Board for the ensuing year was agreed with membership being selected on a proportional basis, from a pool of Councillors.

12. Standards Advisory Committee 2015/2016

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

12. Intercessional Prayer

The meeting was closed at 8.23 pm with a prayer offered by the new Mayor's Chaplain, the Reverend Debbi Turley.

Usual Declarations of Interest by Councillors

Full Council

- **Members of Somerset County Council – Councillors Coles, A Govier, Hunt, Prior-Sankey and Wedderkopp**
- **Employee of Somerset County Council – Councillor Mrs Hill**
- **Employee of the Department of Work and Pensions – Councillor Mrs Herbert**
- **Clerk to Milverton Parish Council – Councillor Wren**
- **Tone Leisure Board representatives – Councillors D Durdan and Stone**
- **Director of Tone FM – Councillor Ms Lisgo**
- **Owner of land in Taunton Deane – Councillor Farbahi**

Receipt of Petition – Churchinford 387 Bus Service

Dear Alun

Thank you for your e-mail and enclosure; if you could please forward the petition referred to in your e-mail to my colleague Richard Bryant (who is copied into this correspondence) when you get your copy back, then he will arrange for it to go onto the agenda for the full meeting of the Taunton Deane Borough Council to be held on 14th July, 2015. At the meeting you will be given the opportunity to introduce the petition with a 5 minute statement and the councillors will be permitted a 15 minute debate on the issue.

Yours sincerely

Bruce

Bruce Lang

Assistant Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer
Taunton Deane Borough and West Somerset Councils

Tel: 01984 635200

Email: bdlang@westsomerset.gov.uk

Website: www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk

Website: www.tauntondeane.gov.uk

From: Alun Tarr

Sent: 20 April 2015 12:59

To: Bruce Lang

Cc: 'Ken Pearson'; 'Ross Henley'

Subject: PUBLIC TRANSPORT.CHURCHINFORD.387 SERVICE

Good Morning Bruce

Councillor David Reed suggested I direct correspondence to you on this matter.

You may not be aware that Devon County Council (DCC) have been consulting on public transport provision. The 387 bus service is a route under consideration. This bus service, currently funded by DCC, operates as follows:

Sidmouth - Tipton St. John - Wiggaton - Ottery St. Mary - Gittisham - Honiton - Monkton - Rawridge - Uppottery - Smeatharpe – Churchinford-Culmhead-Blagdon Hill-Staplehay-Taunton.

This DCC funded service currently has 5 stops in Somerset. This Bus service runs as one return trip daily. The proposed changes would mean that this would be reduced to once a week. Churchstanton Parish Council have written as part of this consultation process to oppose any reduction. Our response is attached.

Whilst we acknowledge that DCC currently fund the service a decision to reduce it should not be made without paying due regard to the Somerset stops and the service they provide. Information from our County Councillor, Ross Henley clearly demonstrates that Somerset do fund buses that have routes into Devon. Provision of any cross border service should be examined generally and not just with regards the

specific funding base for that Service. We would expect that dialogue between SCC and DCC should occur before any change is considered further.

Public transport provision was a fundamental tenant to Churchinford being designated a Minor Rural Centre within the TDBC Core Strategy. I would hope that TDBC show full support for this basic bus service being maintained at the current levels. If it does not, this raises a real question as to how Churchinford can be deemed a Centre for Sustainable Development.

This Community could well be caught in a 'Perfect Storm' - DCC fund the bus so will not consider the impact on the Somerset Stops. SCC will pay lip service to maintenance of the bus service but shrug their shoulders and say 'its not our decision'. TDBC whilst recognising public transport within core strategy designation distance themselves from any responsibility for maintenance of service.

I hope that TDBC will stand up to be counted. This vital link between the Minor Rural Centre of Churchinford and the County Capital needs to be maintained.

This matter has resulted in a 200 signature petition being sent to SCC Transport. Unfortunately, the petition was sent by a Parishioner without being copied. I am currently waiting on SCC sending a copy back and I will then forward that to you.

I would request that TDBC consider this matter at full Council and offer whatever support they can to ensure the service is maintained in line with the Core Strategy status of this Community. As a first step I would ask that TDBC request SCC and DCC work together on these cross border routes to ensure rural communities are not disadvantaged due to their close proximity to the County border. We are aware that Somerset and Devon have each been recently awarded approximately £300,000 to look at public transport provision. Working together to deliver an effective cross border solution would seem to have good fit with use of these significant amounts.

Please let me know how this matter can be effectively pursued through TDBC. I will also be writing to SCC along similar lines.

Best wishes

Alun Tarr
Chair. Churchstanton Parish Council.

Council Meeting – 14 July 2015

Working with the Core Strategy

Motion proposed by Councillor Simon Coles and seconded by Councillor Habib Farbahi

Taunton Deane Borough Council has proudly been one of the first Councils in the country to have put in a Land Use Strategy for the period from 2011 to 2028 to encompass the required developments needed to meet the challenge of a rising population, an older demographic, the greater requirement for smaller household units and the need to embrace growth as the means of funding this.

What we have failed to do is to convince the Government of the need to recognise that the existing residents should have a true influence on how the plans are implemented and secondly that the infrastructure needs hugely exceed the means of raising funds for it from the private sector alone.

We strongly believe therefore that Taunton Deane's future scope for increased sustainable development should be based on an holistic approach and evidence, to include master planning at the outset not after completion/towards the end of any development especially in applications in excess of 200 houses. Officers should be encouraged to enter into dialogue with current applicants and develop where possible Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Taunton Deane should take into account the impact on the neighbouring wards in terms of increased traffic, flood prevention, doctor's surgeries, school provisions and adequate freehold affordable employment land to complement the housing. We do indeed recognise that some of the above issues are within the remit of the County Council but as the Local Planning Authority we have enormous influence in shaping our Borough, to leave a legacy that our future generation will thank us for!

We therefore ask the Council to:-

1. Reinforce the Core Strategy 2011-2028, that any piecemeal development should be resisted;
2. Ensure that infrastructures such as roads, schools, flood prevention schemes and adequate Green Wedge and open space amenities are delivered at the outset;

3. Sensitively design homes so the characteristic of the area is not adversely impacted with the environment at the heart of every design;
4. Ensure that development is closely aligned to communities and their aspirations;
5. Ensure allocated land should be built on before any further developments. Retain and endorse that all schemes should contain a minimum of 25% affordable housing regardless of feasibility; and
6. Rebalance the housing numbers and employment land by providing 25% affordable employment land on or off all large sites to create one job per new household.

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Full Council – 14 July 2015

Public Space Protection Order, Taunton

Report of the Community and Client Services Manager

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Warmington)

1. Executive Summary

Taunton Deane Borough Council is proposing a Public Space Protection Order covering the town centre and surrounds (see attached map). It requires authorisation by Full Council. It is broadly a 'ban' on alcohol and new psychoactive substances – 'legal highs' - in the town. Constitutionally, Full Council must authorise this Order for it to have correct legal status. The report also includes proposals for an Order for Wellington.

2. Recommendations

- To authorise the Public Space Protection Order for Taunton;
- Delegate responsibility for signing off the Public Space Protection Order for Wellington to Portfolio Holder decision; subject to formal public consultation and approval from Wellington Town Council;
- Delegate responsibility for future amendments to either Order to Portfolio Holder decision; and
- Delegate decisions on new Public Space Protection Orders to Portfolio Holder subject to formal public consultations having taken place.

3. Background and Full details of the Report

- 3.1 Historically, Taunton Deane had a 'No Drinking Byelaw'. This made it an offence to drink alcohol in the town centre.
- 3.2 This Byelaw was replaced by a Designated Public Place Order under sections 13 and 14 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001.
- 3.3 In October 2002, a Designated Public Places Order was also introduced in Wellington.
- 3.4 The new power had very similar effects and so very little change was required except over time to the areas covered in Taunton which has been

extended to cover much of Holway and Halcon, as well as Victoria Park.

- 3.5 In October 2014, the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 was enacted. This widened the range of activities that could be covered as well as changing the name to a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO). It also meant that the existing Designated Public Place Order could continue until October 2017 but would need to be changed to the new power or revoked by that date.
- 3.6 It is intended to be a flexible power which is able to respond to local needs.
- 3.7 To introduce a PSPO, there is a burden of proof with two conditions:-

(Section) 59 Power to make orders

(1) A local authority may make a public spaces protection order if satisfied on reasonable grounds that two conditions are met.

(2) The first condition is that—

(a) activities carried on in a public place within the authority's area have had a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality, or

(b) it is likely that activities will be carried on in a public place within that area and that they will have such an effect.

(3) The second condition is that the effect, or likely effect, of the activities—

(a) is, or is likely to be, of a persistent or continuing nature,

(b) is, or is likely to be, such as to make the activities unreasonable, and

(c) justifies the restrictions imposed by the notice.

- 3.8 During 2014, it became apparent that there were two 'legal high' shops open in Taunton. This is the more common name for new psychoactive substances. Between them, they were responsible for a large spike in anti-social behaviour incidents and Taunton became well known in a short space of time for having a legal high 'problem'.

Legal highs were being openly taken in public and a great number of syringes were found, often in very public places. The Police and partners met to discuss the issue. Anecdotal evidence from the Police, parks, public toilets and even the Tourist Information Centre provided a clear outline of a problem. Several high profile incidents occurred which damaged the reputation of the town. It became clear that action was required.

The Police were able to successfully persuade one shop owner to stop selling them but the other persisted. They were served a Community Protection Notice and ultimately a Community Protection Order was upheld in Court; being renewed for a further 3 months, to make 6 months

in total. This expired in the middle of June but to date the shop has not re-opened.

3.9 The City of Lincoln was first to use the new legislation to create a Public Space Protection Order and have used the phrasing that:-

Person(s) within this area will not:

- *Ingest, inhale, inject, smoke or otherwise use intoxicating substances.*

Intoxicating Substances is given the following definition (which includes Alcohol and what are commonly referred to as 'legal highs'): Substances with the capacity to stimulate or depress the central nervous system.

Exemptions shall apply in cases where the substances are used for a valid and demonstrable medicinal use, given to an animal as a medicinal remedy, are cigarettes (tobacco) or vaporisers or are food stuffs regulated by food health and safety legislation.

Persons within this area who breach this prohibition shall: surrender intoxicating substances in his/her possession to an authorised person

This appears to cover the behaviours that Taunton Deane wishes to challenge, with our partners and so this has formed the basis of the Order.

Alcohol use remains an issue around the town and for this reason, it has stayed part of the behaviour being addressed.

3.10 For reasons outlined above, the Council is satisfied, with partners that the burden of proof for introducing the Order is met and furthermore that the benefits on the wider public of introducing such an Order outweigh the rights of individuals to behave in this way.

3.11 Home Office guidance requires consultation to have taken place before the introduction of such an Order and this was completed in April 2015, with a press release and consultation via the Taunton Deane website. Additionally, town centre businesses were made aware and Community Scrutiny Committee discussed the issue. The Police have been aware and supportive throughout, helping define the areas covered. The Police and Crime Commissioner's Office supports the move, as do the County Council through their Highways and Community Safety functions. Public response to the issue was limited to just over 30 replies but all of these were in favour of the move.

3.12 Wellington also has a Designated Public Place Order (DPPO). Wellington Town Council were consulted on what they wished to do with their DPPO earlier in June. Their desire is to convert it into a PSPO with the same terms and conditions as Taunton. The Police support this view. The Community Safety sub group of Wellington Town Council will look into the matter further. The matter will need to satisfy the same criteria. Although Wellington has not had persistent problems with legal highs, alcohol problems persist and legal high use is thought to be increasing. It is therefore likely to pass the test.

- 3.13 Consultation in Wellington with the wider public is likely to take place in September of this year. It is proposed to delegate the final decision on this to a portfolio holder's decision rather than seek the time of Full Council.
- 3.14 In the future, the Psychoactive Substances Bill may affect the legal status of these and there may be a requirement for some adjustment. The Bill began committee stage, line by line scrutiny, in the Lords on Tuesday 23 June 2015. It is likely to become law but timescales are unclear at this stage.
- 3.15 Varying the PSPO(s) is a simple matter once they are in and does not need to go back to public consultation. It is also proposed to delegate this to a portfolio holder's decision.
- 3.16 Enforcement will largely be carried out by Police officers (including PCSO's) but can also be carried out by Council officers who already issue fixed penalty notices.

4. Finance / Resource Implications

- 4.1 The costs of 300 signs for Taunton was £3,594 which was financed through an earmarked reserve of £10,000 set aside for this purpose. This will also have covered the costs of the DLO putting the signs up, although those costs have not yet come through.
- 4.2 Wellington costs are likely to be in the region of £2,000 plus the DLO.
- 4.3 Any costs over £10,000 in total can be covered within existing resources.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The use of the powers under the 2014 legislation by definition potentially represents an infringement of individuals' human rights, including the right to respect for private life and the right to freedom of assembly and association. However, it is considered that these qualified rights may in this instance be legitimately interfered with in the interests of public safety and in accordance with the law.

6. Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities

- 6.1 To achieve the vision of '*a Quality Place*', the Council has broken this down into three corporate aims. The Public space Protection Order in Taunton would contribute to each of these.

- Aim 1) Quality sustainable growth and development
- Aim 2) A vibrant economic environment
- Aim 3) A vibrant social, cultural and leisure environment

7. Environmental Impact Implications

- 7.1 None.

8. Community Safety Implications

- 8.1 This is a measure which is designed to continue tackling alcohol misuse in the town centre of Taunton, which is a long-term, successful measure.
- 8.2 Further it is intended to tackle the emerging problem of new psychoactive substances ('legal highs').
- 8.3 In Wellington, there is not the same problem with legal highs, but it is anticipated that as an adjacent town, there could be displacement here.

9. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 9.1 There are no equality and diversity implications here. This Order is not aimed at a particular group or protected characteristic.

10. Safeguarding Implications

- 10.1 The Order is likely to mean less exposure of young people to harm.

11. Risk Assessment

- 11.1 There is a low risk to the Council in undertaking this Order. This relates to potential challenge that it is unlawful or unduly restricts people's rights.
- 11.2 There would be a reputational risk in not undertaking the Order if further harms were caused in the town(s) by legal highs.

12. Partnership Implications (if any)

- 12.1 The Police have been involved in and support these measures.

13. Health and Wellbeing Implications (If any)

- 13.1 None

14. Asset Management Implications (if any)

14.1 None

15. Consultation Implications (if any)

15.1 Consultation has occurred in Taunton as described above and is anticipated to be carried out in Wellington in September.

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Taunton Deane Borough Council

Full Council – 14 July 2015

Regulatory Amendments to Statutory Protection Provisions for Statutory Officers

Report of the Legal Services Manager

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Richard Parrish)

1. Executive Summary

The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 came into effect on 11 May 2015. These Regulations amend the statutory provisions in relation to (a) the taking of disciplinary action or (b) the dismissal of the key statutory posts of Chief Executive Officer (Joint Chief Executive), Chief Finance Officer (Director – Operations and Deputy Chief Executive) and Monitoring Officer (Assistant Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer). The Regulations require all local authorities to adopt revised Standing Orders at their first 'ordinary' meeting after 11 May 2015.

The Somerset Monitoring Officers Group (SMOG) met on 21 May 2015 and agreed to recommend a consistent approach across the six Councils within the county, in response to the implementation of these regulatory requirements. This report goes on to detail why SMOG at this stage is proposing that the six Councils defer making any changes to their standing orders on this matter until later in 2015.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Chief Executive Officer, the Monitoring Officer, and the Chief Finance Officer have statutory responsibilities to discharge to their Councils. Since 2001 they have benefitted from statutory protection in the form of mandatory Standing Orders requiring any investigation of misconduct in respect of such officers to be undertaken by a Designated Independent Person (DIP). The DIP is appointed at an early stage in the procedure, when it appears to a Council that an allegation of misconduct on the part of the officer in question requires investigation. Disciplinary action may only be taken against these officers in accordance with a recommendation in a report made by a DIP. Therefore, to date all Councils have been required to have in place appropriate standing order provisions within their constitutions to reflect these requirements. The intention of these provisions was to ensure that these officers were able to discharge their duties without the potential for undue pressure of influence from elected Members, with any dismissal of such officers only following a full independent investigation.

- 2.2 The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 attempt to simplify, as well as localise, this process by removing the requirement for the appointment of a DIP. The 2015 Regulations also remove any specific enhanced protection for these posts where disciplinary action short of dismissal is proposed. In place of the DIP process, but only in relation to a proposed dismissal, the Regulations provide that a decision to dismiss a post-holder in one of these statutory posts can only be taken by Full Council. In considering such matters, Full Council must first consider any advice, views or recommendations from an independent panel, the conclusions of any investigation into the proposed dismissal, and any representations from the officer concerned.
- 2.3 Following the coming into force of the 2015 Regulations a debate amongst professional associations at national level has emerged which identifies numerous concerns about the detailed content of the Regulations. It is felt that there is a lack of clarity within certain key elements of the Regulations, with resulting legal complications. There is also felt to be a significant level of uncertainty over how the Regulations should be interpreted. These concerns have been identified at a number of local authorities and also by the Local Government Association (LGA). As a consequence, representations have been made to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG requesting clarification of and preferably amendments to the 2015 Regulations.

The issues that are causing concern are:-

- 2.4 Any reduction in the statutory protection provisions must by definition increase the risk of these posts being exposed to political pressure and of inappropriate sanctions potentially being imposed against post-holders. The lack, under the 2015 Regulations, of any specific protection for disciplinary action other than dismissal is a particular concern given the elected Member exposure that such officers have as a result of their roles.
- 2.5 A particular concern relates to the independent panel required to advise Council in relation to a dismissal. The 2015 Regulations require relevant independent persons appointed by Councils for the purposes of the Members' conduct regime under section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011 to be invited to participate in an independent Panel established to advise a Council on a proposed dismissal. The uncertainty relates to whether such a Panel should consist solely of independent persons (minimum of two required) or whether the Panel can also include elected members. The 2015 Regulations state that the Panel is a committee of the council and "may consist of such persons (whether members of the appointing authority or authorities or not) appointed for such term as may be determined by the appointing authority...." However, the letter from DCLG to Chief Executives and the explanatory memorandum which accompanied the 2015 Regulations both imply that the panel should only comprise of independent persons and should not include Members as well. Therefore the Regulations appear to be in partial conflict with related Departmental advice.

- 2.6 As stated the Council must invite relevant independent persons to be considered for appointment with a view to appointing at least two such persons to the Panel. The Council must appoint to the Panel such relevant independent persons who accept an invitation and in the following priority order:-
- (a) A relevant independent person who has been appointed by the Council and who is a local government elector;
 - (b) Any other relevant independent person who has been appointed by the Council; and
 - (c) A relevant independent person who has been appointed by another authority or authorities.
- 2.7 The particular problem and direct conflict in relation to the involvement of independent persons is that the 2015 Regulations require them to be voting members of the Panel to advise the Council on dismissal of the Statutory Officers but the Localism Act 2011 does not allow an individual to be appointed as an independent person by a Council if that individual is a co-opted voting member of a Committee of that Council. As a result, independent persons appointed by this Council would be unable to participate in the Panel advising the Council on the dismissal of a Statutory Officer.
- 2.8 The current DIP process is often incorporated into Statutory Officers' contracts of employment, so authorities will need to agree variations to such contracts in order to implement the new regime as set out in the 2015 Regulations. Any attempt to deal with chief officers in accordance with the new regime before contracts of employment have been formally revised would in effect represent a breach of contract.

In fact, for Taunton Deane and West Somerset Councils, the procedures are incorporated into protected officers' contracts of employment as they form part of the JNC Conditions of Service Handbook for Chief Executives.

There are several methods for varying or changing a contract of employment but the Local Government Association have advised that they are seeking to amend the JNC model procedures through collective agreement, thereby potentially avoiding any need to make changes at a local level.

Having established that the DIP process is contractual then, until such time as the contracts of employment are amended nationally through collective agreement or locally (through agreement by the parties or termination and re-engagement) it is necessary to ensure both the Regulations and contractual requirements are met. The Local Government Association (LGA) has proposed a potential model for

authorities to use where this is the case. This model is set out in the LGA Advisory Bulletin No. 624 relating to Workforce: Employment Relations.

- 2.9 Finally, independent persons were recruited under the Localism Act 2011 for a specific and different purpose (in connection with the then-new standards regime) and may not wish to participate (or may not have the required skills).

Therefore, taking into account the matters set out above, there is currently a lack of clarity as to how the new regulations can be enacted by councils without the serious risk of legal challenge.

Response of the DCLG to representations

- 2.10 At the time of writing this report a response has been received from an officer contact at the DCLG in answer to representations made by the Association of Democratic Officers (ADSO) specifically in relation to the make-up of the panel. This confirms the Government's intention that the advisory panel should only comprise independent persons and not elected Members and this remains inconsistent with the regulations. However, this response does not address the issues of the conflict between the legislative requirements applying to the appointed independent persons. As the situation stands SMOG is unable to identify a suitable local solution that the Councils in Somerset can apply to overcome this conflict.

Proposal

- 2.11 SMOG has considered the options available for recommendation to the six Councils at this stage as follows:-
- (a) Defer amendment of existing standing order provisions to the autumn in the hope that a satisfactory way forward can be achieved in consultation with DCLG. This carries some risk if a Somerset Council is faced with a relevant disciplinary or dismissal situation in advance of any changes being formally agreed to a Council's constitutional arrangements. Given that this sort of situation is rare the view of SMOG is that this is a risk worth carrying at this stage on the basis that if a situation arises that requires a panel to be established then a Chief Executive can use his or her emergency powers to agree a suitable way forward in consultation with Members as required by that Council's Constitution and depending on national developments. This was the preferred option identified by SMOG and forms the basis of the recommendation in this report. As has already been referenced, the LGA has issued guidance on this matter that could be followed if required; or
 - (b) Each Council proceeds with the establishment of a panel comprising independent persons or a mix of independent persons and elected members. Either of these options runs a significant risk of not being compliant with the new regulations or in conflict

with other legislative requirements and would require considerable work to put in place locally.

The consensus was that option (a) was the more appropriate way forward at this stage and that there was strength and sense in the six Councils applying a consistent approach to this course of action.

3. Legal Comments

3.1 Covered in the background information (above).

4. Environmental and Community Safety Implications

4.1 None in respect of this report.

5. Equalities Impact

5.1 None in respect of this report.

6. Risk Management

Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
By not changing standing orders as required under the new regulations, the council could be open to challenge	3	4	12
<i>This risk is clearly acknowledged and considered less of a risk than to adopt a process that could be legally flawed; there is also a process in place to deal with any allegation that may need to be considered in the interim</i>	2	4	8

The scoring of the risks identified in the above table has been based on the scoring matrix. Each risk has been assessed and scored both before and after the mitigation measures have been actioned.

7. Health and Wellbeing

7.1 None in respect of this report.

8. Asset Management Implications

8.1 None in respect of this report.

9. Crime and Disorder Implications

9.1 None in respect of this report.

10. Consultation Implications

10.1 None in respect of this report.

11. Recommendations

11.1 That Council defer agreeing revisions to the existing Standing Order provisions relating to the statutory protection arrangements for the posts of Chief Executive, Director - Operations and Deputy Chief Executive and Assistant Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer to the December 2015 Full Council meeting for the reasons outlined in Section 2 of this report.

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Background Papers

Local Government Association Advisory Bulletin No. 624 Workforce:
Employment Relations

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Full Council - 14 July 2015

Appointment of new TDBC Director to the Southwest One Board

Report of the Assistant Director – Corporate Services, Richard Sealy

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

1. Executive summary

<p>The purpose of the report is to recommend the appointment of Councillor Terry Hall as the Authority's new Director to the board of the Southwest One Partnership.</p>
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2. Background

- 2.1 The Council entered into a contract in 2007 with Somerset County Council and IBM to form the Southwest One 'joint venture partnership' company. The Avon and Somerset Police subsequently joined the partnership in 2008.
- 2.2 Under the terms of the contract the Authority is entitled and required to nominate a Director to sit on the board of Southwest One. The intention within TDBC has always been that the Director should be a Member. To date the Member appointed has always come from the ruling group.
- 2.3 Prior to the election the role was filled by Councillor Bruce Nottrodt. However, as Councillor Nottrodt is no longer a Councillor and following his resignation as our Southwest One Board Director we need to appoint a new Director. The purpose of this report is to recommend that Full Council appoints Councillor Terry Hall as our new Director to the Southwest One Board.

3. The process for nominating a new Director

- 3.1 The decision to appoint a new Director needs to be taken by Full Council in its capacity as the Taunton Deane 'Shareholder' in respect of the Southwest One contract. The new Director will then be authorised to attend the Southwest One Board.
- 3.2 The next meeting of the Southwest One Board is scheduled for Thursday 30 July 2015. Consequently it is important that we appoint a new Director in advance of the next board meeting in order to ensure that the Council is formally represented.
- 3.3 Once appointed the Director can nominate an Alternate Director to act on their behalf in respect of any board meetings which they are unable to attend.

4. The role of the Director

- 4.1 The Board of Southwest One is comprised of a Director from each of the partner Authorities, three IBM appointed directors and an independent Chair.
- 4.2 The primary obligation of each of the Directors is to the Southwest One company and specifically to ensure the smooth running of the company so as to deliver its objectives. Additionally, the Directors represent their respective shareholders. In the case of this Authority the 'Shareholder' is Full Council and, as such, any key decisions relating to the contractual 'reserved matters' would have to be agreed by Full Council. Guidance has previously been provided and will be provided to new members regarding their roles and responsibilities whilst sitting on outside bodies and on how to handle any potential conflicts of interest.

5. Finance comments

- 5.1 The Authority's Director plays a key role in the high level monitoring of the financial status of the Southwest One partnership. IBM, under the contract and as the majority shareholder, provide a guarantee in respect of Southwest One to the public authority shareholders and effectively underwrite the company.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 It is vital that the Authority has a nominated Director in place at all times in order to ensure the Council is adequately represented on the Southwest One board.

7. Links to corporate aims

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

8. Environmental and community safety implications

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

9. Equalities impact

- 9.1 There are no equalities impacts resulting from this proposal.

10. Risk management

- 10.1 Failure to have a Member nominated as the Authority's Director for Southwest One would leave the Council without representation on the Southwest One board.

11. Recommendations

11.1 Members are recommended to appoint with immediate effect Councillor Terry Hall to act as the Authority's Director to the Southwest One Board.

Contact

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Taunton Deane Borough Council

Council Meeting – 14 July 2015

Part I

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

Councillor John Williams

Financial Outturn 2014/2015

The Executive has now had the opportunity to consider the Council's financial outturn for revenue and capital expenditure in 2014/2015 for the Council's General Fund (GF), Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and trading services.

Effective financial management forms an important part of the Council's overall performance management framework. It is also vital that the Council maintains strong financial management and control in the face of continuing and unprecedented financial pressures as funding for Council services is squeezed, and our community continues to face up to effects of wider economic pressure.

The outturn figures are provisional at this stage. The financial outturn will be taken into account when preparing the Council's Statement of Accounts, which is due to be approved by the Strategic Director (Section 151 Officer) by the end of June, and is then subject to review by the Council's External Auditor. Should the External Auditor identify any changes to the Accounts these will be reported to the Corporate Governance Committee later in the year.

The outturn position reported for the General Fund contains some estimated figures for Government subsidies on Housing Benefit and the total of Business Rates retention funding. These are based on unaudited claims, and it is possible that final figures post-audit could change.

2014/2015 Financial Performance

Members will be aware from previous experience that the position can change between 'in year' projections and the final outturn position. As with any forecast there is always a risk that assumptions and estimates will differ from the eventual outcome, and a number of risks and uncertainties have been highlighted in previous quarterly reports. The outturn has been reasonably close to forecast in the majority of budgets. However, there are high value differences on a small number of budgets that have contributed to the overall change since Quarter 3.

There have been a number of significant challenges faced by the Council this year, and these have had an impact on the overall financial position for the authority.

These include:-

- The new Business Rates Retention scheme has presented some challenges during the year for the authority. This is a high risk area which may impact on The Council's ability to accurately forecast the financial position. The new regime has again proved to be volatile. There has been a huge increase in appeals by rate payers to the Valuation Office in March 2015, which has adversely affected our funding position at the year end.
- Forecasting for demand-led services has continued to be a challenge especially in the current economic climate. The Council has directed more focus on the higher risk / more volatile areas, with accountants supporting Budget Holders with more detailed trend analysis to further improve forecasting in the future.
- The Council has undertaken major restructuring throughout the year with the implementation of joint management and shared services (JMASS) with West Somerset. This has required significant changes to accounting arrangements including restructuring of cost centres and budget accountability to support the new structure of the Councils.

A summary of the Outturn is as follows:-

General Fund Revenue

The General Fund (GF) Revenue Outturn for 2014/2015 is a Net Expenditure position of £13,901,000, which is a £222,000 (1.7%) underspend against the Final Net Budget for the year. The financial position in respect of Retained Business Rates has again highlighted the significant risks to this funding stream through appeals and refunds, with net outstanding appeals increasing from Gross Rateable Value £34,000,000 in March 2014 to £48,000,000 in March 2015. Provisions related to a large increase in appeals lodged in March 2015 has effectively fully allocated the Council's contingency for Business Rate funding volatility. It is therefore proposed to allocate the £222,000 underspend to the Business Rates Smoothing Reserve. Carry Forwards of £443,000 are also proposed.

The GF Reserves balance as at 31 March 2015 stands at £2,109,000. This balance will reduce to £1,887,000 if the allocation of the 2014/2015 underspend to the Business Rates Smoothing Reserve is approved. The balance remains above the minimum reserves expectation within the Council's Budget Strategy (£1,500,000).

The Earmarked Reserves balance as at 31 March 2015 is £15,308,000, representing funds that have been set aside for specific purposes to fund expenditure in 2015/2016 or later years. This has grown largely in respect of funds committed to support future capital programme spending, a new Business Rates Smoothing Reserve, and funding set aside to support service restructuring and transformation projects and provide service resilience. The majority of this is planned to be spent in 2015/2016.

Deane DLO Trading Account

The DLO had made an overall profit of £109,000 after contributing £101,000 to the

General Fund. This surplus had been transferred to the DLO Trading Account Reserves increasing the reserve balance to £314,000.

Deane Helpline Trading Account

The Deane Helpline had reported a net deficit of £49,000 for the year, which was an underspend of £34,000 against the final budget and represented the net cost of the service to the General Fund.

General Fund Capital

The General Fund profiled Capital Programme at the end of 2014/2015 was £4,365,000. The profiled expenditure on Capital Programmes during 2014/2015 was £2,351,000, with £2,374,000 being carried forward to support delivery of approved schemes in 2015/2016.

Housing Revenue Account Revenue

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a 'Self-Financing' account for the Council's Housing Landlord function, which is budgeted to 'break even' (net of approved transfers to/from HRA Reserves). The HRA Outturn for 2014/2015 is a net underspend of £1,269,000 (4.8% of gross income). Approval is sought for a number of proposals which, if approved, would allocated £776,000 of the net underspend to support investment in housing services.

The HRA Reserve balance as at 31 March 2015 stands at £3,484,000, which is above the minimum level (£1,800,000) set within the Council's Budget Strategy and HRA Business Plan. This balance would reduce to £2,708,000 if the allocations of £776,000 are approved.

The HRA Earmarked Reserves balance as at 31 March 2015 stands at £2,222,000. This includes £112,000 related to the Social Housing Development Fund, which is earmarked for a range of purposes including to fund investment in new social housing provision within the Council's own housing stock, capital funding, the Community Development Fund, and maintenance contracts.

HRA Capital

The HRA approved Capital Programme at the end of 2014/2015 was £24,907,000. This relates to schemes which will be completed over the next five years. The actual expenditure on Capital Programmes during 2014/2015 was £9,869,000, with £14,793,000 for planned investment to implement approved schemes in future years. The underspend reported in 2014/2015 against the overall programme is £245,000, related to disabled facilities adaptations. A Carry Forward of £9,583,000 is also proposed.

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee considered the Financial Outturn at its meeting on 25 June 2015 and the views expressed by Members had been taken into account by the Executive. The Scrutiny Committee had supported the proposals outlined.

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

- (a) The reported General Fund Revenue Budget underspend of £222,000 in 2014/2015 and the General Reserves Balance of £2,109,000 as at 31 March 2015 be noted;
- (b) The transfer of £222,000 from General Reserves to the Business Rates Smoothing Reserve at the beginning of 2015/2016 be approved;
- (c) The General Fund Revenue Budget Carry Forwards totalling £443,000 be approved;
- (d) A General Fund Capital Programme Budget Carry Forward totalling £2,374,000 be approved;
- (e) A Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme Budget Carry Forward totalling £9,583,000 be approved; and
- (f) £776,000 of Supplementary Budget allocations for the Housing Revenue Account, utilising 2014/2015 underspends be also approved for the following areas:-
 - i. £150,000 to fund a full review of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan in 2015/2016;
 - ii. £160,000 to fund Pre-Void and Tenant Inspections in 2015/2016 and 2016/2017, with any balance across financial years held in an earmarked reserve;
 - iii. £100,000 to fund a Lettings Contingency Budget in 2015/2016 and 2016/2017, with any balance across financial years held in an earmarked reserve;
 - iv. £60,000 to fund a Sheltered Housing Project Management to October 2016;
 - v. £41,000 to fund Mental Health Support for tenants;
 - vi. £138,000 to fund Employment and Skills Development in 2015/2016, 2016/2017 and 2017/2018, with any balance across financial years held in an earmarked reserve; and
 - vii. £127,000 to fund a One Team Co-ordinator post in 2016/2017 and 2017/2018, with funding to be held in an earmarked reserve.

Council Meeting – 14 July 2015

Report of Councillor John Williams – Leader of the Council

1. The First Full Council Meeting of the Quadrennium

- 1.1 May I wholeheartedly welcome all new Councillors and those re-elected for this quadrennium. I look forward to working with you all and please be assured we welcome good ideas from any Councillor whatever the party affiliation. I am available to discuss any queries or points you may have just let me know and time will be found. In saying this I am very conscious of the large influx of new Councillors to the Council and the loss of so many years of experience that either chose to stand down, or were not re-elected. The numbers are adequately covered in Councillor Mrs Warmington's report but I must comment on the excellent service of Councillors Meikle and Bishop with cumulative years of experience lost to the Council of 99 years. This is truly above and beyond the call of duty, congratulations to both of them.
- 1.2 We were elected on a positive manifesto to drive Taunton forward and that is our intention. We have been given a strong mandate and it is now up to us to deliver, which we intend doing. I cover some of the initiatives continuing or planned as follows.

2. Investment and Growth Initiatives

- 2.1 The sale of the old TYCC (Taunton Youth and Community Centre) has been concluded to LIDL and they have lost no time in commencing work on site. They are investing heavily in the new site with larger trading premises as they cannot keep up with demand in their existing Wood Street premises. Once the existing premises are vacated the existing shop will be demolished and I understand will be replaced with retirement homes. An excellent use of this brown field near the town centre site fronting the riverside.
- 2.3 I am delighted to report that Quantock House, Paul Street, Taunton is now scheduled for redevelopment. We have worked with the purchasers, The Quantum Group, to resolve historic title issues as we owned the land it is built on, pre 1962. These issues have now been satisfactorily resolved and it is proposed to redevelop the site with "Extra Care" accommodation for the elderly. A great use for a town centre site and adjacent our beautiful heritage park, Vivary Park.
- 2.4 Redevelopment of the site is almost certainly to involve demolition of

the existing buildings, something that can only be welcomed as the present structures are an eyesore in this prominent position.

- 2.5 West Park, Chelston, Wellington continues to perform extremely well with commercial units being taken before construction is completed. The Care Home is under construction and going well. The Sturgeon Farm is hopefully soon to commence. All very good news for Wellington and Taunton Deane.
- 2.6 Works have commenced on the railway station upgrade which is all part of the multi million pound remodelling and refurbishment programme. We have already secured £4,600,000 which will see major changes including the relocation of the ticket offices to the Firepool side of the tracks. This will improve vastly the main entrance to Taunton by rail, away from the awful, almost subterranean, entrance that now exists under the bridges, to the high side of the station with views across Taunton. A further £3,000,000 has been secured to construct a multi-storey station car park that will help cater for the increase in rail passengers projected as being up 40 % by 2020. Securing the development and funding has been achieved by close partnership working and is to be welcomed that we have achieved so much. In addition, we have just endorsed and supported a further bid for £1,000,000 to allow commercial development to proceed from the Station Commercial Project Facility Fund
- 2.7 Firepool Site - The final design and land acquisition is nearing conclusion. We should be in a position to commence public consultation in August with a planning application shortly after. It was hoped that public consultation would have taken place by now but resolving all the complex issues around this site have taken longer than anticipated. The proposals will be in accordance with the "Taunton Town Centre Rethink" document agreed by Full Council earlier this year. It will also see the design of the long planned "Boulevard" which is key to the railway station upgrade as it will provide the much needed improved gateway to Taunton.
- 2.8 The housing development on the old Priory Bridge Road Car Park has now commenced and this will deliver 49 new homes in this lovely riverside location. This adds to the potential number of homes on this site, the East Goods Yard and the old Livestock market site of near 700 homes on brown field land, nearly 25% of which are affordable homes.
- 2.9 Deane DLO relocation – We have now agreed the sale of the old depot to Helston Motors which consolidates them on this site and assures their future in Taunton. This will allow the company's expansion in Taunton bringing investment in this high quality business together with additional jobs. We have identified suitable alternative sites for the DLO which we are in the process of negotiations to acquire. One of the sites is much larger than required which will, if acquired, allow us to provide freehold serviced sites for employment use so help drive the

economy. It is a much heard plea from businesses for readily available freehold employment land which will be great if achieved.

3. Infrastructure

- 3.1 The Northern Inner Distributor Road works are progressing and I am discussing with Somerset County Council (SCC) the likely timetable and will circulate to Members as soon as I am advised.
- 3.2 Monkton Heathfield - The Western Relief Road planning application is approved and land assembly needs completing together with agreement of a delivery programme. One thing is certain - this new road link in the overall network is essential to accommodate what will be greatly increased traffic as the new development grows.
- 3.3 Junction 25 of the M5 motorway expansion and upgrade - £13,000,000 grant funding has been allocated from the LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) from the Growth Fund to carry out this work and design work is continuing by SCC. Once the design has been prepared the Business Case can then be agreed and funding released. The upgrade of this junction is essential to progressing the proposal to create a 25 hectare strategic employment site adjacent the motorway.
- 3.4 A358 dualling and Henlade Bypass - Highways England (HE), formerly the Highways Agency, have now appointed a Project Manager to commission the design and implementation of this major £274,000,000 project. Regular liaison meetings are held with them particularly to ensure whatever works are carried out at Junction 25 are compatible with the new route and design of the A358. HE Project Manager is very keen to meet stakeholders along the route of the A358 and hear their views and we will be doing all we can to encourage this.

4. LGA (Local Government Association) Conference

- 4.1 I attended the above conference in Harrogate together with Councillor Eddie Gaines and it was extremely well attended with "devolution" being the major topic. What was obvious was the acceptance it is not a case of "one size fits all" but that economic areas should consider how best they could combine resources to create their own "powerhouse" to drive growth locally. This needed to come from the bottom up, not be driven from the centre.
- 4.2 Government Ministers made it clear that re-organisation of Local Government, ie Unitary, was not on the agenda but local authorities were expected to cooperate by sharing services to create "powerhouses" for growth right across the country. The clear brief is to agree what powers can be devolved, governance required, the budget required to go with it and the benefits it will deliver. The Government

will then assess it on its merits and advise. To take this forward a meeting of local authorities from across the West Country is being arranged by SCC to see if any appetite for delivering a “West Country” Powerhouse and what form it might take.

- 4.3 It was made clear by Ministers that although they expected elected Mayors for the major “City Deals” being considered currently, it was not a prerequisite for urban centres with large rural areas. However, whatever proposal was made would have to deliver clear governance arrangements and a sustainable future.
- 4.4 Ministers delivered a clear message that that the Government had been given a clear mandate in the election so they fully intended delivering their election pledges. This includes the reduction in funding of Local Government, right to buy extension and 1 to 1 replacement, devolution and to substantially increase the rate of housebuilding to meet demand, to name but a few. From their responses I do not see the capping regime being lifted or amended.
- 4.5 I attended a very interesting meeting arranged by the Local Government Boundary Commission particularly as we are on the list for a future review. I believe there is a case to be made for a reduction in the number of Councillors to ensure that we as elected Members, contribute towards budget reductions in the future. Any proposed review will be subject to full consideration by Members.

5. The Deane House Relocation Project

- 5.1 Work is progressing on agreeing requirements so full details can be brought before Members for final approval as follows.
- 5.2 **Space Requirements Analysis and Summary** - DTZ have continued to analyse the staffing data obtained from Service Managers and have produced a summary document calculating work station requirements. From the data obtained, three levels of analysis have been applied. We are currently basing our requirements on Level 2 which equates to 173 work stations.
- 5.3 **Space Planning** - DTZ have made a start on planning the Taunton Deane back office space within Block A2 at County Hall.
- 5.4 **Statement of Requirements** - With feedback from various stakeholder groups on the initial Forum design, we have produced a ‘Statement of Requirements’ document. This document prioritises Taunton Deane’s requirements using the following rating system and was submitted to SCC on the 30 June 2015:-

- Must Have
- Should Have

- Nice to Have

- 5.5 **Concept Designs** - The next stage of the design process is for the SCC Architects to analyse the feedback from all partners and to produce 'Concept Designs' we are due to receive the Concept Designs from SCC on the 15 July 2015 and will have until the 31 July 2015 to review, comment and sign off. During this period we plan to share the designs with as many stakeholder groups as possible.
- 5.6 **Due Diligence** - DTZ continue to seek more information from SCC in relation to the Due Diligence of 'A Block'.
- 5.7 **Heads of Terms** - In preparation for the final decision DTZ have started work on the draft heads of terms.

6. **New House Completions**

- 6.1 I am pleased to report that housing completions for last year come to a grand total of 778. This is excellent news as it means for the first time since the adoption of the Core Strategy we have met and exceeded the plan target (by 78 units). To put it into context this is the highest completions figure since 1999/2000 when for the only time in more than 30 years more than 1,000 homes were built. Prior to that we need to go back to 1989/1990 for the last time 800 completions were exceeded.
- 6.2 Perhaps most encouragingly, there were more than 500 completions recorded for Taunton itself, the first time anything like that number has been achieved in the town for a significant time. This evidence would certainly point to a recovery in the market locally.
- 6.3 Of the total 778 houses completed, 602 were open market and 176 were affordable equating to 29% affordable houses being delivered - an excellent achievement.

Councillor John Williams

Council Meeting – 14 July 2015

Report of Councillor Terry Beale – Housing Services

1. Deane Housing Development

- 1.1 The Phase 1 Council Housing development scheme has been completed with the completion of eight units at Normandy Drive, Taunton. This is in addition to the four units at Bacon Drive, Taunton and seven units in West Bagborough (completed 2014- 2015)

Creechbarrow Road

- 1.2 The building programme is being closely monitored with handovers scheduled for late Summer. The Knightstone Housing Association area of the site has had issues which have delayed the handover of this particular site.
- 1.3 There has been a delay in availability of the new play area so we are putting in place alternative options to cover this.

Weavers Arms, Rockwell Green, Wellington

- 1.4 A Planning application has been submitted for this site with an anticipated determination in September 2015.
- 1.5 There is continuing support to facilitate the two remaining decants and provide a vacant site.
- 1.6 The tender documents are being prepared to enable us to select a contractor.

Further Development Opportunities

- 1.7 A development pipeline is progressing with new schemes to come forward for Full Council approval later in the year. There will be a consultation with local residents who may be affected before any announcement is made.

2. Affordable Housing

- 2.1 I am pleased to report that 187 affordable homes have been completed in the financial year 2014/2015. Some of these schemes have slipped into 2015/2016, which currently shows anticipated targets of over 250 affordable homes.

2.2 The provision of much-needed homes is welcome news not only for Taunton Deane but also for the New Homes Bonus earned in these years, which could receive a boost.

3. Welfare Reform Visits

3.1 The number of tenants affected this month are 339. However, this is subject to change on a daily basis due to tenants moving in and out of employment.

3.2 The breakdown of tenants that have now downsized are as follows:-

- 2 Direct Match approved completed
- 47 successful moves on CBL completed
- 0 successful bids on CBL pending
- 0 Mutual Exchange processed
- 23 Mutual Exchanges completed
- 1 move to private sector completed

4. Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)

4.1 All affected tenants are being offered advice on DHP and assistance to help them complete the application form.

4.2 The Revenue and Benefits Team are completing End of Year reports and gearing up for the introduction of Universal Credit.

4.3 Since the start of the financial year, 47 DHPs have been awarded to Taunton Deane tenants.

5. Rent Arrears

Date	Welfare Reform Rent Arrears	No. of Tenants	Change on Previous Month
1 st April 2015	£41,483.73	179	n/a
1 st May 2015	£44,874.09	192	+ £3,390.36
1 st June 2015	£41,762.32	184	- £3,111.77
1 st July 2015	£38,152.16	162	- £3,610.16

6. Universal Credit (UC)

- 6.1 Universal Credit went live on 20 April 2015 and, to date, eight Taunton Deane tenants have submitted a claim. We have been working closely with the tenants and have noted that the level of help and support needed is substantial. This support needs to be tailored to the claimant dependant upon their personal circumstances.
- 6.2 Currently, only single and newly unemployed people are able to make UC claims. This only accounts for a small number of tenants at this time, however, as UC expands to involve families, the number of tenants claiming UC will increase significantly.

Councillor Terry Beale

Council Meeting – 14 July 2015

Report of Councillor Patrick Berry – Environmental Services

1. Environmental Health / Licensing

1.1 Food Hygiene:

- Free Coaching : Twenty food business premises across Taunton Deane and West Somerset, which performed poorly on the last food hygiene inspection, benefitted by being offered a free coaching visit by the Food Standards Agency. The visits focused on hygiene practices, cross contamination and hand washing. Since their coaching, eight of these businesses have been re-inspected and all improved their standard, going from food hygiene rating scores of 2 or below to either 4 or 5 out of a possible score of 5.
- Food Inspections are now all up to date, the back-log from the previous quarter having been cleared.

1.2 Licensing:

- The shortage of fully skilled Licensing Officers has been addressed with two temporary appointments (covering Taunton Deane and West Somerset). This should enable the backlog to be reduced and delays to be minimised within acceptable levels. This area will remain under scrutiny until the back-log comes down.
- Thanks to the efforts of Licensing Chairman, Councillor Kelly Durdan and others, the Taxi Forum has been restarted and will address some of the issues being raised by the taxi operators. A regular programme of meetings has been arranged where perceived “unfair practices” can be discussed in a fair and informal way.

1.3 Environmental Health:

- Blackbird 3 Hinkley Point Emergency Exercise: Officers from both Taunton Deane and West Somerset were involved in the Blackbird 3 Emergency Exercise on Tuesday, 9 June 2015. An emergency control room was set up at West Somerset House and officers were dispatched to the Avon and Somerset Police HQ at Portishead to liaise with the Police, Fire and Ambulance and organisations such as Wessex Water, the Meteorological Office, the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Environment Agency, Sedgemoor District Council and Somerset County Council.

2. Climate Change

2.1 Solar Power/ Photovoltaic Panels:

- PV is currently being installed on two projects:-
 - The first is the new Swimming Pool complex at Blackbrook. This is part and parcel of the construction which is reported elsewhere.
 - The second is a Housing Revenue Account project to retrofit panels on 350 existing Council homes across Taunton Deane. This project is due to be completed in September 2015. Specific addresses have to be approved by Western Power Distribution to connect to the National Grid. Connection of too many homes in one specific area may result in disturbances of supply. The Feed In Tariff (FIT) received by the Council for electricity generated will go towards paying for the cost of the panels, which is predicted to be within 12-13 years. The FIT is guaranteed for 20 years, which means Taunton Deane receives a positive cash flow from years 13-20. This amount is estimated to be worth £1,200,000. Carbon savings are estimated to be in the region of 11,000 tonnes over 20 years.

2.2 External Wall Insulation (EWI):

- 40 Cornish type non-traditional homes are being installed with EWI to provide better insulation. The substandard existing cladding is being removed, concrete inspected by a specialist and EWI installed to the walls. The aim is to prevent heat loss from the properties, therefore increasing thermal comfort and reducing heating bills for tenants.

3. Somerset Waste Partnership

3.1 Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) met on 19 June 2015.

- In order to raise awareness of the need to recycle, SWP organised a Recycle Week during last month.
- SWP are now executing a detailed analysis of the trials carried out around Somerset for recycling of additional materials. The analysis will include the examination of options to help increase the amount of recycled material, and reduce the non-recyclable black bin refuse. Overall cost reduction is the eventual target.

4. Deane DLO

4.1 Street Sweeping and Toilet Cleaning:

- The current street cleaning campaign with its small additional budget

continues to show good results.

- The DLO has brought in, free of cost for a six week trial period, two new solar powered compactor bins which have been installed near the Market House at the end of High Street in Taunton and a second one in Wellington. The manufacturers claim that this new type of bin will contribute savings in the cost of collecting refuse. The bins, which are powered by solar panels and batteries, compact the rubbish. They will therefore hold as much rubbish as eight regular bins. When full, they send a message to the DLO depot that they need to be emptied.

5. Crematorium

- 5.1 The Cemeteries Department is currently developing four new burial sections at Taunton Deane Cemetery. Some works have already been completed such as drainage, paths, water supply etc. Planting will be carried out during the Autumn and Winter period when it is hoped to start using the burial sections.

Councillor Patrick Berry

Council Meeting – 14 July 2015

Report of Councillor Mark Edwards - Economic Development, Asset Management, Arts and Tourism and Communications

Firstly I want to pass my sincere thanks to my predecessor Councillor Norman Cavil, for his support and for agreeing to recently attend a few key meetings where he has had invaluable knowledge of the projects being progressed.

I have spent this initial period assessing the plans in place and better understanding some of the issues at hand.

The one clear message I have given all officers is that I want the Council to look outwards and speak with a loud voice for all of Taunton Deane and for Taunton as the County Town of Somerset.

We will be proactively pursuing companies and highlighting the benefits of Taunton Deane as a destination for their business. We need to speak out clearly and robustly. Whatever organisation or group we are members of, only we can properly sell ourselves as a key destination at the heart of the South West. Whilst very important it is not enough to have a website or a good social media presence. It is vital to get out, knock on doors and introduce what we have directly to companies.

We have been given a very clear mandate by the electorate and we already have much to be proud of but so much we want to achieve and I am determined we will realise our potential.

I am fully satisfied we have the team to achieve what is required and I will do my utmost to make sure Taunton Deane's voice is heard.

Activities and services progressed over the past two months within the Economic Development service are outlined below.

1. Local Business Support and Networks

Local Investor Support

- 1.1 Continuing liaison is carried out with businesses in Taunton Deane, particularly larger businesses looking to expand and grow. Recent meetings include EPS Services in Wiveliscombe, Claims Consortium UK, Relyon and Swallowfield.
- 1.2 Amongst those businesses, I was pleased to note that EPS Services was successful last month in securing Government funding under the Regional Growth Fund (RGF). The business manufactures and services bandsaws, and is one of only three companies in the UK in that industry. The grant of £25,000 will assist the business to purchase new machinery at its factory in Wiveliscombe. Members will be pleased to

note that the Council's Economic Development team signposted the business towards the RGF.

Account Management

- 1.3 The Economic Development Team is currently introducing an Account Management approach to engaging with our 40 larger businesses. Led by the Director and Assistant Director, the team will aim to visit each of those businesses at least once per year with a view to strengthening relations with each, and positioning the Council better to respond to their needs.

Taunton Deane Business Directory

- 1.4 Working with the national publisher, Burrows, the Economic Development Team is currently producing a new business directory, featuring a printed directory of larger employers, and an on-line business directory. Funded by advertising, the directory is a useful vehicle to promote the advantages of investing in Taunton Deane, at no financial cost to the authority. The publication is due to be issued in the Autumn and features adverts from a cross section of organisations, including many of our larger and more prestigious businesses.

Taunton Deane Business Conference

- 1.5 Officers are currently in the early stages of planning a large conference to be held in November 2015 at the County Cricket Ground. The event is intended to celebrate the diversity of the area's businesses and to raise awareness of Taunton Deane's strengths as an investment location. This is an early indication of my challenge to officers to look outwards and I welcome this initiative.

Research

- 1.6 The team has commissioned Somerset County Council to carry out research into the growth sectors within Taunton Deane. The research will be completed in July and will inform targeted policy interventions to support those sectors showing the most growth potential.

Social Media Workshops for Businesses

- 1.7 In excess of 50 businesses have recently attended Social Media and Search Engine Optimisation workshops delivered by Cosmic. Businesses picked up many hints and tips to help make themselves stand out on Social Media. The Council supported the learning events financially and in organisation, and will be bringing a programme of similar events across Taunton Deane over the forthcoming months - more details to follow.

Taunton Town Centre Ambassador

- 1.8 I am delighted to announce that Councillor David Durdan has agreed to take up the role of the Taunton Town Centre Ambassador. I can't think of a better person to engage with the town centre businesses after the success he had as Mayor and, in particular, with the Dragon Trail. I am awaiting his next big idea for our area..... I wish him well and will give him all the support I can to make his role develop and benefit the County Town of Somerset.

2. Supporting inward investment and fulfilment

New enquiries have been received from eight businesses, either inward investors or smaller local businesses with specific property enquiries, since 1 April 2015. All have been responded to positively and are being progressed. The team is also liaising with a further 18 businesses to assist their expansion.

Into Somerset

- 2.1 On 1 April 2015 the delivery of the Into Somerset service transferred to the Somerset County Council, drawing upon the support of all the districts in the County. The new service has appointed consultants to manage and redesign the website, and is currently planning a full promotional campaign for the County. To date one enquiry has been received via the Into Somerset website, although it is essential that effective enquiry handling and fulfilment systems are in place in anticipation of EDF's decision over the new Nuclear Plant at Hinkley Point.
- 2.2 The team is also liaising with the heart of the South West Local Economic Partnership (LEP) to ensure that local marketing and fulfilment activities are coordinated across the LEP area, particularly to benefit international investors.

www.taunton.uk.com

- 2.3 Extensive work has been undertaken within the team since March to improve the functionality and enhance the Taunton Deane inward investment website. The work is now completed and the site has much greater usefulness.
- 2.4 A consultant was appointed in 2014/2015 to review the team's marketing activities, including the branding the Council uses for inward investment and the tools it has available to provide a responsive and quality marketing and fulfilment service. That work is continuing, and is due to be completed in July.

Employment sites

- 2.5 The team is currently producing a comprehensive audit and summary of Taunton Deane's available employment sites. The work will, firstly, assist in the marketing of the Borough, and, secondly, will enable targeted interventions to bring 'blocked' sites to the market. The work is continuing.
- 2.6 In recent months Taunton Vale Business Park has been presented to the market at Monkton Heathfield.

3. Place Based Regeneration

Coal Orchard Redevelopment

- 3.1 In April MACE was appointed to progress a design brief for this key town centre site, drawing upon consultation with local businesses and stakeholders. Consultation activities and events are currently underway, and Members will be consulted over the Summer. The consultants are due to have produced their recommendations to the Council in October 2015.

The Market House

- 3.2 The refurbishment and disposal of The Market House has progressed extremely well in recent months (see Visitor Centre relocation below). The restaurant chain Wildwood has now opened and has been well received by visitors and other businesses in the town, driving up the quality of food in the town and enhancing the evening economy. Discussions are continuing with other tenants in the property.
- 3.3 The area outside The Market House on Fore Street has been 'decluttered', with benches and other street furniture removed (mostly relocated to elsewhere in the town) to create a new town centre open space. This space was used for the first time to great effect in the recent Somerfest celebrations.

4. Marketing the Area through Culture

Somerfest

- 4.1 This year's Somerfest was bigger and even better than last year's, attracting greater numbers of visitors to the town centre, and involving a greater number of partner organisations, including the Somerset Wildlife Trust who part funded the event. The planning and delivery of the event was outsourced this year to FUSE Performance, a local company that works with young people to engage them through the performing arts. The event included activities on all of the town centre's open spaces as well as the High Street and The Brewhouse. A full review is currently under preparation and will be circulated to Members.

Events Support

- 4.2 Working through the Taunton Events Group, which I Chair, the Economic Development Team has lent its support to numerous cultural events already delivered, or planned over the next few months. These have included:-
- Taunton Live 2015, bringing classical music and the visual arts together into one week-long extravaganza between 18 and 25 July.
 - The Dragon Boat Race in May, which was very well organised by Headway Somerset, attracting 25 business sponsors to take boats.
 - Parrot in the Park in August, hosted by 40 Commando in partnership with the Apple and Parrot Pub, the pop concert should attract around 1,500 people to Castle Green.
 - 10 year anniversary of Stand Against Violence in September, with a day of events on Castle Green.
 - Santander business event on Castle Green in July.
 - Make Taunton Sparkle Christmas season in November and December

The Brewhouse Theatre

- 4.3 The Taunton Theatre Association has recently made two key staff appointments to the Theatre, which will enable full time expertise to be brought to the facility. The new Chief Executive, Vanessa Le Francois is due to start in July, while a Technical Manager has already started. Repair works have been commenced on the roof of the Gallery to make the room safe. Upon completion, the lease can be amended to extend the demise of the property to cover that room.

5. Marketing the Borough to Visitors

New Taunton Visitor Centre

- 5.1 The Visitor Centre Team has worked hard in preparation of the move of the centre from the existing premises on Paul Street, to the newly refurbished centre in The Market House. The new centre will provide an opportunity to redesign the service, and Visitor Centre staff are discussing how to enhance income streams as well as build on the quality of the information services delivered to date. The service is due to relocate in mid July and is on budget.

6. Other activities

South West Audit

- 6.1 A full audit of the Council's business grants is currently being carried out, due to report back in July. The review looked in considerable detail at the New Business Grant and the Investment Grant, and tested the governance and delivery processes of both schemes.

Economic Development Service Plan

- 6.2 A service plan for the Taunton Deane side of the Economic Development Team is currently being finalised for 2015/2016, and will be circulated to all Members once signed off by the Executive Portfolio Holder.

7. Communications

Social media

- 7.1 Twitter was very usefully deployed during the elections in May, both in the run-up and for the results. We were able to post messages reminding people to vote and to pick up queries.
- 7.2 On the night of the General Election count we posted updates throughout the night and were able to announce the result immediately.
- 7.3 On the night of the local election counts we tweeted throughout as results came in and increased our following substantially. This increase has seen incremental growth – we are now heading towards 1,600 followers.
- 7.4 The Visitor Centre Team continue to lead on the promotion of the area through social media. The Facebook account (TauntonTown) currently has over 1,600 likes. @moreTaunton on Twitter has nearly 4,000 followers and we have recently added Instagram to our promotional channels with already over 100 likes.
- ### **Town Centre Marketing Project**
- 7.5 Destination CMS continue to promote Taunton Town Centre for us. Through their brand-maker's regular visits to retail businesses in the town, their social media and PR team are promoting these special offers, promotions and events through our destination website (www.visitsomerset.co.uk/taunton) and social media channels.

Visit Wiveliscombe leaflet

- 7.6 The team are working with the Wiveliscombe Business Group to create a leaflet to promote the Walkers Welcome, businesses and things to do in the town.

Traditional media

- 7.7 This continues to be busy, with both proactive and reactive communications. News that the council is trialling solar powered waste bins prompted considerable interest with regional media picking this up. We were able to promote some strong messages on keeping our town centres clean and tidy.

Internal communications

- 7.8 The One Team newsletter continues to be well received and content is over-subscribed at times! Feedback on improvements would be welcome please contact myself or Debbie Rundle directly.

Councillor Mark Edwards

Council Meeting – 14 July 2015

Report of Councillor Roger Habgood – Planning Policy and Transportation

1. Site Allocations and Development Management Plan

- 1.1 As previously reported the Council has completed its publication period on the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan. Officers analysed the responses and as Portfolio holder I have now signed the plan off subject to minor amendment in readiness for submission to the Secretary of State and The Planning Inspectorate within the next week.
- 1.2 Once the Plan is submitted an Examination in Public will be scheduled towards the end of September / early October before the Plan is formally adopted in December.

2. Neighbourhood Planning

- 2.1 Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone Neighbourhood Plan is out for wider consultation before entering its final regulatory stages.
- 2.2 Stakeholder responses to the plan are being sought by the Neighbourhood Plan Group. Responses are due back with by 3 August 2015.
- 2.3 The Council expects Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone Neighbourhood Plan Group to submit their Plan to the Council later in year.
- 2.4 Trull and Staplehay Neighbourhood Plan Group are considering all the comments they received from their wider consultation before submitting their Plan to the Council for pre-examination consultation and examination.
- 2.5 Officers are considering the submitted Staplegrove Framework Master Plan with a view to taking this item back to Members in the coming months. This document will guide the future development of this mixed-use urban extension of around 1,500 new homes setting a framework for decision-making with planning applications expected in late Summer / early Autumn.

3. Custom-build Register of Interest

- 3.1 Officers have been considering a response to the Self-build and Custom House Building Act (March 2015) under which the Government placed a duty on Councils to understand the demand for self-build or custom-build projects in the area.
- 3.2 Officers met with the Department of Communities and Local Government and National Custom and Self Build Association Leaders for Custom Build research to plan its response to this new Act.
- 3.3 The Council undertook its first Custom-build Register of Interest in May 2015. The responses did not reveal any discernable trends, therefore we are unable to translate this into policies or allocations at present.
- 3.4 The Council will continue to monitor demand for custom-build, as it does for other land uses. Depending on capacity, the Council may pursue the preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document on Custom-build later in the year.

4. Sport, Recreation and Open Space

- 4.1. Strategies for Children's Play and Community Halls have been updated. Produced jointly with Leisure Development, the strategies are evidence base for planning policy, leisure development and parks work.
- 4.2 An update of strategies for Green Space, Allotments and Playing Pitch is continuing.

5. Gypsy and Traveller Provision

- 5.1 A County-wide Project Group is looking into residential and transit provision across Somerset. The project aims to identify the ideal range and geographical spread for provision, establish criteria for acceptable sites, identify potential sites and scope the requisite finance sources.
- 5.2 A report will be brought to Members for consideration in due course.
- 5.3 The bi-annual statistical caravan count is being undertaken by Planning Enforcement with help from Planning Policy around 16 July 2015. It is a Central Government requirement to record local data on the number (authorised and unauthorised) and the seasonal movement of caravans from the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showmen cultures.

6. Car Parking

Orchard Car Park

- 6.1 Refurbishment of the stairways and lobbies of the Orchard Car Park is continuing, with Level 2 to 5A completed and the Ground and Level 1 areas currently being revamped. Once completed, work will commence to refresh the single stairway.
- 6.2 The specification of the refurbishment is to reflect that of the stairways and lobbies under the control of the Orchard Shopping Centre.
- 6.3 As part of this project the Council is investigating the feasibility of implementing an external contract for the cleaning of these areas and the general car park.
- 6.4 New security gates and a barrier at the bottom of the entrance ramp have now been installed.

Continuing Projects:-

- 6.5 Currently there are four Major Projects involving the Taunton Car Parks:
- Orchard Car Park - major repairs;
 - Signage review (including VMS) – work has commenced;
 - Pay at exit at four major car parks – linked to signage review;
 - Taunton Rethink (proposed closure of Coal Orchard car park) – Project Team in place.

Priory Bridge Car Park

- 6.6 Development work has now commenced on the former Priory Bridge Road Car Park. The access road for the residents and permit holders will remain in place until the Northern Inner Distributor Road is opened.

Shopmobility

- 6.7 The transaction of service providers from PLUS to Compass Disability Services on the 1 April 2015 went extremely well. All participants' worked together to ensure uninterrupted service to Shopmobility Customers.

Phone and Pay (PnP)

- 6.8 The change from “Ringo” to “Phone and Pay” occurred on the 1 April 2015 with 532 motorists using the system to pay for their car park on that day. Between April and June there have been £45,000 transactions using the PnP system.

Councillor Roger Habgood

Council Meeting – 14 July 2015

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

1. Parks

- 1.1 I think you will agree that the floral displays are looking glorious again this year. The sunshine has certainly made them look their best and it has also meant our parks and play grounds have been busy.
- 1.2 We will have had the Britain in Bloom judging day by the time we meet, so I hope the sun will have shone on Thursday 9 July to help our town look its best.
- 1.3 The bandstand concerts in Vivary Park are in full swing now and continue on many Sundays through to early September. We have also hosted Tone FM who 'broadcast from the bandstand' for their breakfast show a couple of weeks ago.
- 1.4 Maintenance is continuing across our estate all year. So far this year we have undertaken the following; Cleaned Vivary Gates, repainted the Vivary Fountain, repaired the fountain pump, repairs to Wellington Bandstand, replaced the gates on Wellington Park Lodge and repairs to the ha-ha wall in Wellington Park. Soon to come is a new gate for Wellington Park, repainting of the Wellington Bandstand interior and repainting of Taunton Bandstand.

2. Community Leisure and Play

Hudson Way

- 2.1 This is one of the most exciting play projects we have undertaken for a long time! Funding for this £256,000 project has come from Section 106 Agreement off-site children's play contributions from the developments at Silk Meadows and 245 Staplegrove Road. The tender to install the equipment was won by Parsons Landscapes Limited of Stoke St Mary who have won previous contracts to install playgrounds for the Council so they are tried and tested, although this will be the largest children's play project Taunton Deane has carried out.
- 2.2 You will see from the attached images the centrepiece pirate ship and other equipment to be installed. The ship is bespoke and designed following consultation with the local children. The spinning wheel will be, as far as we are aware, only the second one in the United Kingdom, the other one is in a theme park.

- 2.3 The ship is in two parts, one for older children and one for younger, being linked by a net tunnel. The play area will also contain toddler swings, roundabout, zip wire, pod swing and two trampolines.
- 2.4 Work is due to commence on-site towards the end of August. The children from Staplegrove School are to be invited onto site to witness the build as it progresses. The existing “tired” play area will be removed after the new one has been installed.

Fields in Trust – Centenary Fields

- 2.5 The Royal British Legion and Fields in Trust (formally National Playing Fields Association) are leading a nationwide initiative aimed at securing recreational space in perpetuity in honour of the memory of the millions of people who lost their lives in World War 1. The objective of the programme is to encourage every local authority in the United Kingdom to nominate at least one recreational space to be dedicated as a Centenary Field. We identified three sites within the local area, one of which - Wellington Park - was suggested by Fields in Trust due to the current War Memorial in the park.
- 2.6 Work is underway to dedicate Wellington Park and Hamilton Gault Park as Centenary Fields in Trust. Wellington Park’s dedication work is further advanced than Hamilton Gault.
- 2.7 Dedication of parks under this programme will not only secure these vital recreational spaces for future generations to enjoy, it will also open the potential to apply to the Centenary Fields Programme for improvement grants, a welcome source of potential funding.

3. Tone Leisure (Taunton Deane) Limited Activities

Tone continues to develop and support a number of community outreach programmes:-

Community Development

Wellington News

- 3.1 Tone has recently appointed a new Active Lifestyles Officer, Amy Colwill. Amy is working with the Children’s Centre and Community Empowerment Officers from Taunton Deane Borough Council and Knightstone in Wellington to plan a programme of summer activities. Tone are encouraging people to get active in their local parks and outdoors by running a six week programme of Buggy Walks for parents and carers with young children (0-5 years) over the summer holidays. For children aged 9-16 years Tone are delivering a six week programme of sports activities in Howards Road, Wellington. The summer season will be finished with a family Summer Olympics at Dobree Park, Wellington.
- 3.2 For adults, Amy ran a successful Health Awareness Event in the WHERE Centre in Wellington in partnership with Age UK, Active Living and Bluebird

Carehome. Fifteen health and lifestyle checks were carried out on adults aged 60+ years.

Play Forum Information

- 3.3 Tone support Somerset Play Forum through hosting their development worker and supporting the organisation of their annual Play Conference, which was held at Huish Woods, Taunton in April. Over 80 people attended the outdoor play workshops, inspiring play workers from across the county to take new ideas and inspiration back to their childcare/play/school settings.

Health Development

- 3.4 A series of monthly health events are planned to be delivered, starting on Wednesday, 1 July at Priorswood Community Centre. Service users will be educated about how healthy eating and physical activity can assist in preventing and managing chronic diseases such as Coronary Heart Disease and Diabetes.

Healthy Eating, Physical Activity and Weight Management Tender

- 3.5 Somerset County Council has recently commissioned various weight management, physical activity and healthy eating programmes for the whole of Somerset. Tone Leisure has submitted a tender for these programmes and the results will be announced in August.

Ruishton Walks

- 3.6 Tone is now managing the Ruishton Walks scheme, which has an average monthly attendance of 50 walkers. The scheme runs fortnightly at Creech St. Michael and Ruishton.

Facility News

Wellsprings Leisure Centre

- 3.7 In May Wellsprings had a full house for the comedian Jimmy Carr. Wellsprings also hosted for the first time the children's TV Channel Five production of Milkshake, with over 520 children enjoying the show.
- 3.8 The Friday 'Vibe' Youth Nights continue to grow from strength to strength. Attendance numbers are now regularly exceeding 80 youngsters, with a record attendance of 104 on 12 June 2015. The average age is 12-14 years with a 60:40 split of boys and girls. The most popular activity is Parkour. The sessions are attracting young people from all over Taunton including Holway, Inner/Outer Circle and Galmington.

Taunton Pool

- 3.9 Following the refurbishment of Taunton Pool a number of new aquatic activities have been introduced to the swimming programme. These include:-

- a Junior Masterclass/Stroke Improvement course which takes place on Monday evenings from 7.30-8.00 pm. This small group session is designed for children aged between 8 and 15 years old and targets specific swimming skills and techniques to help children reach their goals;
- a Junior Tri Fitness session which takes place every Wednesday from 7.00-8.00 pm. The session is designed to introduce children to triathlon swim training and the demands of competing in triathlons. While this session is designed to work on swimming technique and fitness, it also has a focus on being fun and engaging. It is aimed at children aged between 10 and 15 years of age, or Tri Star levels 1, 2 and/or 3 and is also suitable for juniors who want to keep fit through swimming but have no plan to complete in triathlons;
- adult Learn to Swim which takes place every Wednesday from 8.00-8.30 pm. Taking place in the privacy of 'adults only' swimming, this small group session helps teach fundamental swimming techniques and build water confidence. This session is suitable for adults who cannot swim two continuous lengths at Taunton Pool; and
- adult Triathlon Fitness which takes place every Monday from 8.45-9.45 pm. This Instructor led session works on the technical and fitness (stamina, speed, power etc.) aspects of triathlon swimming, including open water swimming drills. The training follows an annual plan and is broken down into the preparatory, competitive and transition phases of training. While this is a specific session for Triathletes, it is also suitable for anyone who wants to improve their swimming fitness. Customers must be able to swim a minimum of 200m in any recognised stroke. On average there are 25 customers attending these sessions on a weekly basis.

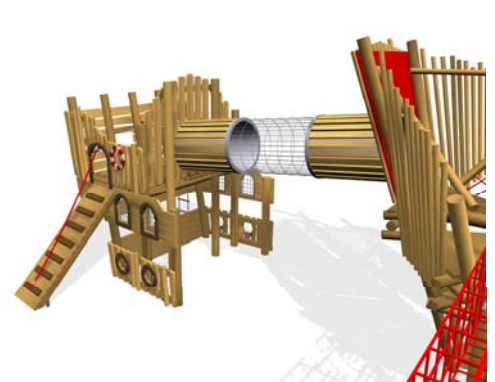
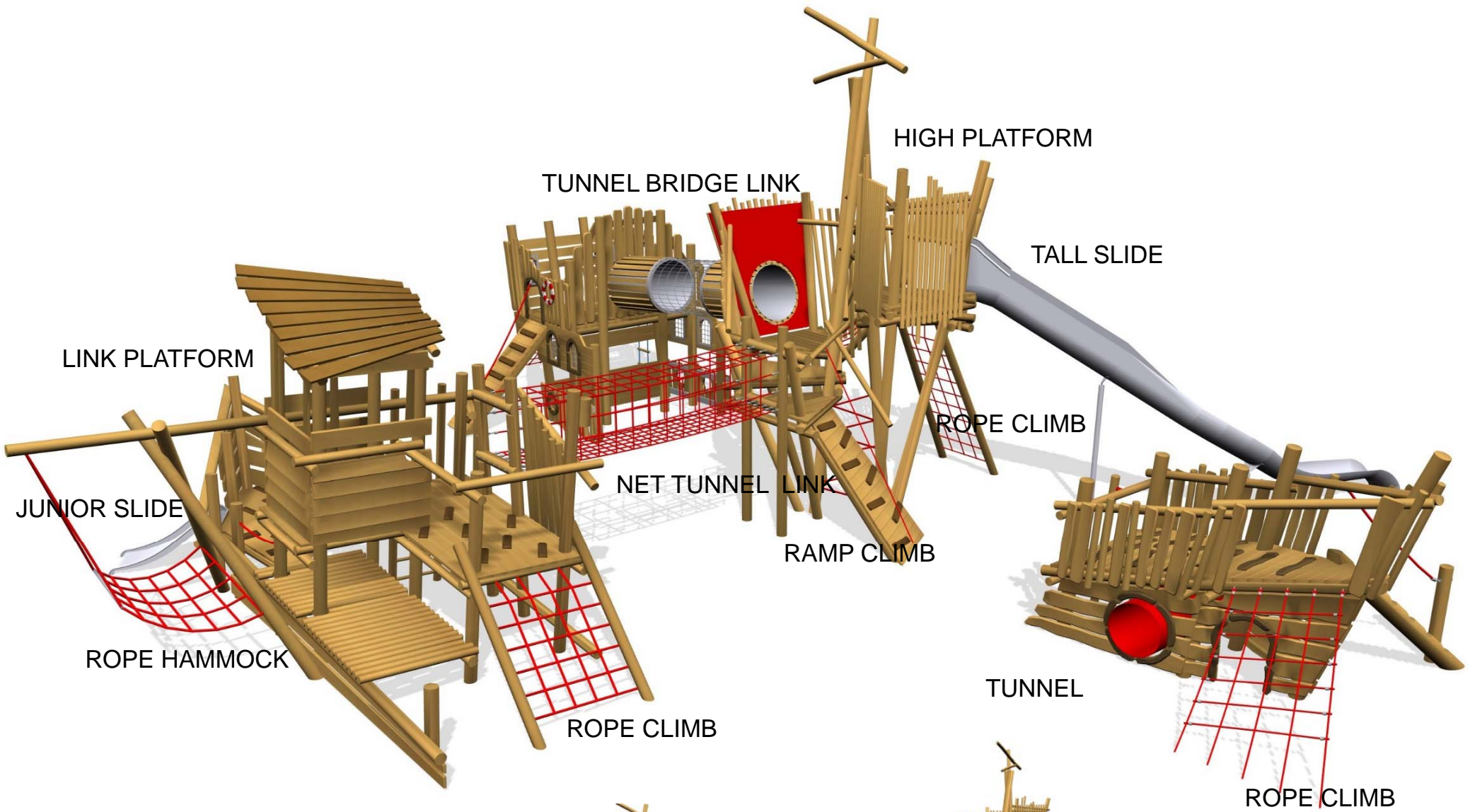
Blackbrook Pavilion

- 3.10 The Blackbrook Sports Hall has seen an £11,000 refurbishment investment, as the facility was showing its age. Due to customer feedback the Council have reintroduced the soundproof boards around the perimeter to improve the acoustics. The facility is now looking much improved.

Vivary Park

- 3.11 Footgolf - This season 300 customers have kicked, sliced and toe-punted their way around Vivary Golf Course. Half the visits took place in May, with a very strong uptake during the school half term. There are plans for mini leagues, tournaments and working with local football clubs to assist with a pre-season training programme to boost individual fitness. This will see a round of Footgolf combined with a Boot Camp fitness session.

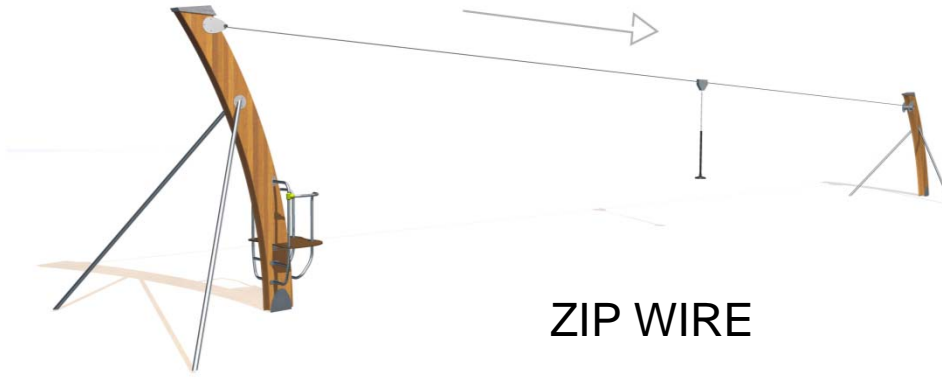
Councillor Catherine Herbert



TWO PIRATE SHIPS ONE FOR OLDER PLAY AND THE OTHER FOR YOUNGER PLAY BUT WITH A TUNNEL LINK



SPINNING WHEEL



ZIP WIRE



INCLUSIVE ROUNDABOUT /
ROCKER



TWO TRAMPOLINES



TODDLER SWINGS



BASKET SWING



MINI SPRINGY DINGHY



TWO LINKED PIRATE SHIPS

Council Meeting - 14 July 2015

Report of Councillor Richard Parrish – Corporate Resources

1. Corporate Strategy and Performance

- 1.1 Quarter 4 Performance Report has been reviewed by the Joint Management Team and is progressing through the Scrutiny and Executive review process.
- 1.2 The Annual Governance Statement 2014/2015 has been drafted and reviewed by both the Corporate Governance Committee and the Standards Committee. This is now due to be signed off by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive prior to the process being completed before the September deadline.
- 1.3 Complaints Process – A new database has been introduced to monitor complaints and officers are implementing a new joint complaints process with West Somerset Council. This system is anticipated to have time saving implications for both Councils whilst providing an improved service to customers. The maximum time for dealing with complaints is to be brought in line with the Freedom of Information Act response time.
- 1.4 Quarterly Performance reporting for 2015/2016 – Work is under way on collecting the data for Quarter 1 and is due to be reviewed by the Joint Management Team on 28 July 2015 prior to being presented to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee in August.
- 1.5 New Corporate Priorities – Preliminary work is being undertaken to start the engagement process with Members over the Summer to identify the new priorities for both Councils. Members will be invited to attend workshops during August and outcomes reported for consideration by the Joint Project Advisory Group.
- 1.6 Data Transparency – The Council has now delivered the majority of the additional requirements (e.g. publishing details of land and property assets, our waste services contract) and had a favourable follow-up audit which is encouraging. It is recognised that the Council's web site requires updating on entries of spending over £500 but due to pressure on officer time, there is likely to be a delay on achieving this.
- 1.7 Freedom of Information Requests (FOI's) – Taunton Deane continues to deal with significant numbers of increasingly more complex requests – 700 in 2014/2015. This is undoubtedly putting strain on Council resource.

2. Customer Contact

2.1 The Key Performance Indicators for 2014/2015 remained on target:-

- Percentage of calls answered in 20 seconds = **84.87% (previously 81.49%)**;
- Percentage of calls resolved at first point of contact = **97.44% (previously 95.8%)**; and
- Abandoned call rate = **1.25% (previously 3.1%)**.

2.2 This service continues to operate very well and shows improved performance. There are no other significant issues to report.

3. Facilities Management and Business Support

3.1 Office moves – The remaining office moves to support the JMASS Phase 1 restructure are in the process of being completed. This will see the Housing Property Services Team move from Priory Depot to the vacant ICT Office on the ground floor of The Deane House and is expected to be completed on the 15 and 16 July 2015.

3.2 Security Evacuation Procedures – The procedures have recently been updated and are being rolled out to staff and managers. This is an improvement for the safety and security for staff, customers and property.

3.3 Fire Wardens – Additional Fire Wardens have been identified and trained to ensure we have adequate cover at all sites.

3.4 Pool Cars – Two additional VW Up pool cars have recently been added to the existing four pool two seat vans at The Deane House. This enables more than two persons to travel in a vehicle and has potential cost savings to the Council.

4. Human Resources and Organisational Development

4.1 Absence Management – Officers continue to monitor closely and to work with managers to manage individual cases. Last year's figure was 7.89 days per employee, which was lower than the previous year (8.39) and better than the target figure of 8.2 days. Figures relate to staff employed as of 31 March each year.

4.2 Staff health checks have been organised in conjunction with the NHS and are being offered during July to staff over 40 years of age. The checks will monitor such things as life style habits, blood pressure, body mass index etc. I have asked for prostate disease information posters to be provided to staff lavatories.

- 4.3 Organisation Development Plan – Work has commenced on delivering the plan for 2015/2016 and is currently focussing on the development of a Management Development Programme which will be delivered in two programmes - one commencing in September and the other in October. Both will last for nine months.
- 4.4 Online e-learning solution known as Learning Pool – Work is currently underway to get this set up and tested in advance of the rollout to staff in September and to Members later in the year. This system will provide a valuable audit trail to identify staff/Member training deficits.
- 4.5 Project Support continue to provide HR support to a number of key projects such as the Accommodation Project, Southwest One (SW1) exit strategy and the staff terms and conditions review. The Chief Executive has held meetings with staff to brief them on possible changes and a survey has been conducted with 500 employees. Results from the survey are currently being evaluated. This is also reported as part of Transformation Programme Management below.

5. ICT and Information

- 5.1 ICT Strategy – A draft strategy has been produced, which is to support the potential accommodation move and Transformation Programme – Officers are currently in the process of obtaining expert external challenge to the draft strategy to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- 5.2 Potential SAP replacement – Supporting the SW1 Succession project with a review of alternative SAP system options.
- 5.3 Staff workshops – Currently in the process of undertaking interactive workshops with staff to ensure all staff are clear on how to access systems across both Councils.
- 5.4 Mobile Data Management – Officers are working with the SW1 ICT service to prioritise the development and implementation of a Mobile Data Management solution.

6. Transformation Programme Management

- 6.1 JMASS Phase 1 Transition Plan – Continuing to implement the plan including the Terms and Conditions Review.
- 6.2 Phase 2 – Work is underway to develop Phase 2 and the necessary programme governance to support this which incorporates key projects such as the Accommodation Project and SW1 Succession planning.
- 6.3 One Team Newsletter – continues to put a lot of focus into this as a key

communication tool.

- 6.4 Staff Communications Survey – Undertaken during June 2015, the results are currently being collated.

7. Southwest One (SW1) Succession Planning

- 7.1 Following the update given to Members in March the project is progressing well and it is on track to deliver the options report and recommendations to Members in the Autumn.

8. Law and Governance - SHAPE Partnership Services

- 8.1 In terms of legal services, it is relatively early days for the new Shape Partnership Services – Law and Governance which started in operation from 1 April, 2015. It can be reported that in the first three months of operation there have been 100 formal referrals from Taunton Deane and a breakdown of the subject areas are set out below.

- 8.2. 2015/2016 Q1 Report on Instructions Received from Taunton Deane:-

Instructions received from TDBC	100
Instructions received from WSC	30
Total	130

TDBC

Commercial , Contract and Procurement <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advice on Existing Contracts• Advice on New Contracts	8
Electoral Law <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advice	1
Employment <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advice on Law and procedure	1
Enforcement/Prosecutions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advice on enforcement• High Hedges/Anti-social behaviour	4
Housing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• General Advice	13
Information & Complaints	2

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice re FOIA/DPA/EIR 	
Litigation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debt Recovery • Homelessness Appeals • Housing/Property repossessions 	7
Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Advice - TCPA • General Advice – Building Regulations • Compulsory Purchase • Road Naming Orders • S106 Agreements 	24
Property <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreements • Leases • Advice on Property Law • Purchases • Sales • RTB 	40
TOTAL	100

9. Electoral Services

9.1 Taunton Deane Borough Council was part of the sample of Returning Areas whose performance the Electoral Commission was monitoring at the May 2015 polls and this involved the submission of a series of monitoring returns.

9.2 The Council has been advised that further to a review of their proposed assessments by a panel of members of the UK Electoral Advisory Board and senior members of the Electoral Administration team, the Electoral Commission has confirmed that Taunton Deane has been assessed as meeting all the standards. Officers are to be commended for this achievement.

- 9.3 The process of undertaking a canvass of the Electoral Register (with a new register required to be published on 1 December, 2015) will commence at the end of July.

10. Democratic Services

- 10.1 The induction programme for new (and where appropriate returning) Members is well underway and will continue over the coming weeks/months. This programme has been both extensive and engaging for Councillors. Feedback from attendees has generally been positive.
- 10.2 A system for audio recording formal Council/Committee meetings has been installed in the John Meikle Room and will officially take effect from the Full Council meeting on 14 July, 2015.

11. Finance and Procurement

- 11.1 The Finance Service has been working through the financial year end period – always a particularly busy time of year. This has been the first “year-end” process undertaken since the completion of the organisation-wide restructuring under JMASS, which was completed in February 2015. This is also the first time the ‘One Team’ for Finance Shared Service has worked through year-end jointly for the two Councils.
- 11.2 The financial outturn position against budget has been confirmed for the last financial year, with details of performance against budget reported to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 25 June and to the Executive on 8 July 2015. Overall, financial performance is positive with net spending remaining within budget and adequate reserves maintained.
- 11.3 As well as monitoring the position against the budget we have produced the Annual Statement of Accounts for 2014/2015 and these were approved by the Director of Operations on 30 June 2015 in line with statutory deadline. These accounts are now subject to examination by the external auditor, with the audited accounts then scheduled to be presented to and approved by the Corporate Governance Committee in September. In future, the year-end process will be even more challenging with the statutory deadline for completing the unaudited accounts being brought forward to 31 May, and audited accounts approved by 31 July, from 2017/2018 onwards.
- 11.4 The service is also gearing up for the new financial year, and the team have recently delivered training to staff on budget monitoring process and cost sharing arrangements.
- 11.5 In May, Members were provided with an introduction to the Council’s financial position as part of the Members Induction Programme. Further financial awareness training – open to all Members – was provided on 13 July 2015.

- 11.6 A review of the Council's 5-Year Medium Term Financial Plan is also currently underway and updated financial forecasts will be reported to Members in August, setting out the estimated scale of the financial challenge ahead.
- 11.7 Working with the SW1 Strategic Procurement Service we have also recently rolled out training for staff to help embed social value considerations as part of our procurement process. This will be a continuing process with opportunities being identified on a case by case basis, and captured to build a 'library' of best practice. A progress update was reported to Community Scrutiny Committee on 30 June 2015.

12. Revenues and Benefits Service

- 12.1 The Revenues Team have sent over 51,000 Council Tax bills for 2015/2016 with a combined value in excess of £56,000,000. At 30 June 2015 nearly £20,000,000 (34.91%) had been collected. For Business Rates over 4,000 bills with a value of nearly £42,000,000 have been dispatched. So far 32.2% has been collected meaning we are slightly behind target, but are confident we will improve on this position as the year progresses.
- 12.2 The average time for the Benefits Team to work out a new claim and changes in circumstances for Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support is six days. Nearly 80% of customers accessing the "There and Then" service at The Deane House have been able to receive an immediate decision on their claim.
- 12.3 The phased implementation by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) of Universal Credit started in our area on 20 April 2015. We are providing local support on Universal Credit to assist customers needing help to complete their claim online, as well as extensive support for vulnerable customers or those with more complex claims.
- 12.4 On 1 June 2015, two staff employed in the Revenues and Benefits Service transferred to the DWP's Single Fraud Investigation Service. We are hoping to launch a Corporate Fraud Investigation Service in August 2015 in partnership with South Somerset District Council and the South West Audit Partnership.
- 12.5 Consultation on five options for our Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme in 2016/2017 started on 1 July 2015. These options are:-
1. No change to the existing Council Tax Support Scheme;
 2. Reducing the Capital Limit to £6,000;
 3. Setting a Minimum Income for Self Employed People;
 4. Limit support to a maximum of 80% of a Band D Property; and
 5. Increase income taper from 20% to 65% for applicants with no earnings.
- 12.6 Everyone liable to pay Council Tax pays for the CTS Scheme through their Council Tax payments, so it is important to get the views of all Council Tax

payers regardless of whether they receive CTS or not. Therefore, I would ask all Members to encourage residents to participate in this consultation exercise.

- 12.7 More information and a link to the consultation can be found on:
www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/benefitconsultation.

Councillor Richard Parrish

Council Meeting - 14 July 2015

Report of Councillor Mrs Jane Warmington - Community Leadership

1. New Councillors

- 1.1 Welcome to all 22 new Councillors successfully elected in May who are now serving on Taunton Deane Borough Council and representing their Wards. The continuing challenge will be our diminishing budget with which to provide the statutory services we depend upon and the non-statutory services which we value so much.
- 1.2 The Council has already begun to adapt in order to do this and we need to continue to modernise (transform) and create simpler processes with better tools (IT) to meet the challenge. We have already shown that by thinking differently and doing things differently we can be more efficient and also be more effective.
- 1.3 Increasingly closer working with our other public sector partners and the voluntary sector should help us achieve this. There are examples of good practice developing locally (for example One Teams) and others from farther afield and one in particular is being more looked at more closely (Eastbourne Borough Council).

2. Retiring Councillors

- 2.1 Ten Councillors have retired with 198 years of service between them.
- 2.2 Councillors Bruce Nottrodt, Mrs Umi Palmer and David Reed have served for 4 years, Mrs Elaine Waymouth for 8 years, Councillors Tony Beaven and Ken Hayward for 12 years, Councillor Bryan Denington for 16 years and Councillor Mrs Jean Allgrove served for 24 years with one break.
- 2.3 The “grand-daddies” of them all though are Councillor Cliff Bishop who has served for 42 years and Councillor John Meikle who has served for 56 years and was Leader of the Council for many years. Both have devoted over half their lives to help shape the Taunton Deane we know and love and they deserve our grateful thanks for this astonishing feat of public service.
- 2.4 We say goodbye to twelve Councillors who were not re-elected this time around and had served an impressive 98 years between them. Most notably Councillors Ross Henley (24 years), Tim Slattery (16 years) and Alan Wedderkopp (12 years) who had all held office at Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC). Councillor Henley was also Leader for three years and led the Liberal Democrat group in opposition. Councillors Peter Smith, Miss Louise James, Mrs Nicci Messenger, Ben Swaine, Gill Slattery, Paul Tooze, Mrs Justine Baker, Mrs Jackie Govier and Mrs Judy Gaden all served on Council for between 9 months and 2 years.

3. Community Leadership

- 3.1 A resume of the Community Leadership Portfolio during the last quadrennium has been circulated to all new Members for information. The current list of Executive Members Portfolios and key responsibilities includes the following (in bold) for Community Leadership which are expanded upon here:-
- 3.2 **Taunton Deane Strategic Partnership** (TDSP) pulls together many partners to collectively focus on our **Priority Areas** (both urban and rural) and more recently to join-up and deliver services for vulnerable residents; to solve problems, improve outcomes and **develop communities** to become resilient in the future enabling them to be more independent and self-reliant.
- 3.3 These are now largely achieved through our three urban **One Teams** and the rural **Village Agents** project both established during the last four years. Oversight of both is provided by the TDSP through its combined public and voluntary sector membership. The TDSP Executive (Silver) is made up of managers with tactical responsibility and TDSP Board (Gold) is made up of leading Members and officers with strategic responsibility.
- 3.4 **Community safety** is complex and tackled at many levels. The county-wide Safer Somerset Partnership is at the top with a strategic and a tactical group both with recently expanded memberships. This was to establish formal missing links with the Health and Wellbeing Board, Safeguarding Board, Adult and Children's Services and Registered Housing Providers.
- 3.5 Local Authorities Community Safety leads sit on the Tactical Group and often support Executive Members on the Strategic Group alongside other partners. The top tier authority Somerset County Council (SCC) leads on Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR) under the chairmanship of the Strategic Group.
- 3.6 Safer Somerset Partnership outcomes are to identify and prevent vulnerability in our communities and reduce the demand through preventative activity. Much has been put in place to start to achieve this through the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) with services being reconfigured or recommissioned. Suffice to say there is greater emphasis on reducing reoffending, rehabilitation and victim support.
- 3.7 Avon and Somerset Police Constabulary (ASPC) are pioneers with their Impact programme for offender management in Bristol and the PCC has recently set up integrated victim support (Lighthouse). Demands on the Police Force are changing though with increasing concerns around child sexual exploitation and cyber crime with traditional crime reducing.
- 3.8 **Community safety** at district level is mostly concerned with frontline delivery. We support this through our CCTV coverage, an excellent working relationship with our local Police Force (ASPC) at several levels, the related local forums (domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour are two good examples), support for the South West Businesses Against Crime initiative and recently through our One Teams.

- 3.9 Successes include the One Team pilot in Halcon with £750,000 awarded from the Home Office Police Innovation Fund to establish two more and continue to innovate in Halcon; the prompt use of new legislation around anti-social behaviour which led to the second closure in the country of a shop selling so called legal highs; the Taunton Town Centre Wardens Pilot over the Christmas period last year; the second Public Spaces Protection Order in the country to be put in place (in Taunton and Wellington will hopefully follow); and mention by the Home Secretary of Taunton's part in her decision to ban so called legal highs (New Psychoactive Substances) following a visit with our (then prospective) Member of Parliament Rebecca Pow.
- 3.10 The county-wide **Health and Wellbeing** Board has officer and Member representation from each district as Public Health is now part of both Local Authorities responsibilities. There is a determination to enable a more preventative approach as well as improved support for those with long term health problems.
- 3.11 The Better Care Fund is a pooled budget that shifts resources into Social Care and Community Services to support transformation and integration of Health and Social Care services to ensure local people receive better care. These budgets sit within County Hall.
- 3.12 Taunton Deane responded to the wider County Health and Wellbeing Strategy with its own review of health and wellbeing to ensure it is threaded through whatever we tackle. We regularly attend the Taunton Deane GPs Health Forum and GP Federation events. The Assistant Director of Housing and Communities now sits on the county Safeguarding Board. Our successful Troubled Families model (which now sits with County) has resulted in our Strategies and Partnership Lead Mark Leeman being invited to sit on their Commissioning Board.
- 3.13 The **Voluntary and Community Sector** are supported by our representation on many of them (Outside Bodies), in Partnerships, through Service Level Agreements and from the various small grants pots across several Portfolios within the Council.
- 3.14 Grants help grow both small and larger businesses; help establish and equip local sports clubs and leisure activities; improve village halls and local play areas; support the Quantock Hills and Blackdown Hills advisory services; part fund community centres and the activities they run; group projects including **youth diversion**; support community safety through our CCTV cameras and recent town wardens pilot; fund equipment, projects and youth activities in the Unparished Area; and the same to benefit our tenants.
- 3.15 **Equalities and diversity** are implicit in all we do and this is reflected in our Equalities and Diversity Strategy which may be referred to in the Members Room or found our website. The lead officer for these is Mark Leeman.
- 3.16 Similarly a **Safeguarding Strategy** has been produced primarily for staff. The lead officer in the Council responsible for safeguarding is Simon Lewis (Assistant Director for Housing and Communities) who also sits on the Safeguarding Board.
- 3.17 In my view the greatest impact of partnership working for our communities is being felt through the work of the One Teams with individuals and families whose chaotic lives are beginning to improve, as one by one their problems start to be solved. Our

frontline Housing Officers (Estate, ASB, Supported, Temporary and Welfare Reform) are key one team members. Taunton Deane and ASP together lead on the One Teams.

- 3.18 This work is being independently evaluated and benchmarked by Bath Spa University from August with the final report expected near the end of next year, paid for by the Police Innovation Fund.
- 3.19 Before then we hope to persuade Social Care, Education and Health to fully engage in the process and get a proper grip of early intervention, plan long term future provision to sustain improvements and foster independence, to reduce overall costs to the public sector which should then become manageable.

Councillor Jane Warmington