

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 11 July 2017 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 11 April 2017 and of the Annual Meeting of Council held on 11 May 2017 (attached).
- 2 To report any apologies for absence.
- 3 To receive any communications.
- 4 Declaration of Interests  
To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or personal or prejudicial interests, in accordance with the Code of Conduct, in relation to items on the agenda. Such interests need to be declared even if they have already been recorded in the Register of Interests. The personal interests of Councillors who are County Councillors, Town or Parish Councillors will automatically be recorded in the minutes.
- 5 To receive questions from Taunton Deane Electors under Standing Order 15.
- 6 To receive any petitions or deputations under Standing Orders 16 and 17.
- 7 Statutory Protection for Statutory Officers. Report of the Assistant Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer (attached), to be presented by Councillor Richard Parrish.
- 8 Trull and Staplehay Neighbourhood Development Plan formal adoption as a Development Plan Document for Taunton Deane Borough Council. Report of the Planning Policy Officer (attached), to be presented by Councillor Roger Habgood.
- 9 Regeneration of Coal Orchard, Taunton - Request for Indicative Borrowing Approval. Report of the Assistant Director - Business Development (attached), to be presented by Councillor Mark Edwards. See also Confidential Appendix at agenda item No. 12.
- 10 Part I - To deal with written questions to the Executive.

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

- (a) Councillor John Williams - Leader of the Council;
- (b) Councillor Catherine Herbert - Sports, Parks and Leisure;
- (c) Councillor Richard Parrish - Corporate Resources;
- (d) Councillor Jane Warmington - Community Leadership;
- (e) Councillor Terry Beale - Housing Services;
- (f) Councillor Patrick Berry - Environmental Services and Climate Change;
- (g) Councillor Mark Edwards - Economic Development, Asset Management, Arts and Culture, Tourism and Communications; and
- (h) Councillor Roger Habgood - Planning Policy and Transportation.

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.

- 12 The Coal Orchard, Taunton - Confidential Appendix B (attached). See also agenda item No. 9. Paragraph 3 - Information relating to financial of business affairs.

Bruce Lang  
Assistant Chief Executive

07 August 2018

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Full Council, Executive, Committees and Task and Finish Review agendas, reports and minutes are available on our website: [www.tauntondeane.gov.uk](http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk)



The meeting rooms at both the Brittons Ash Community Centre and West Monkton Primary School are on the ground floor and are fully accessible. Toilet facilities, with wheelchair access, are available.

Lift access to the Council Chamber on the first floor of Shire Hall, is available from the main ground floor entrance. Toilet facilities, with wheelchair access, are available through the door to the right hand side of the dais.



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

**For further information about the meeting, please contact Democratic Services on 01823 219736 or email [r.bryant@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:r.bryant@tauntondeane.gov.uk)**

If you would like an agenda, a report or the minutes of a meeting translated into another language or into Braille, large print, audio tape or CD, please telephone us on 01823 356356 or email: [enquiries@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

## **Council Members:-**

Councillor H Prior-Sankey (Chairman and Mayor of Taunton Deane)  
Councillor J Adkins  
Councillor M Adkins  
Councillor T Aldridge  
Councillor T Beale  
Councillor P Berry  
Councillor J Blatchford  
Councillor C Booth  
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 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 R Henley  
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 D Mansell  
Councillor S Martin-Scott  
Councillor I Morrell, BA LLB  
Councillor S Nicholls  
Councillor R Parrish  
Councillor J Reed  
Councillor R Ryan  
Councillor F Smith  
Councillor F Smith-Roberts  
Councillor V Stock-Williams  
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 11 April 2017 at 6.30 p.m.

Present      The Mayor (Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams)  
                  The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Prior-Sankey)  
                  Councillors Aldridge, Beale, Berry, Mrs Blatchford, Bowrah, Brown,  
                  Cavill, Coles, Coombes, Davies, D Durdan, Farbahi, Mrs Floyd, Gage,  
                  Gaines, Govier, Habgood, Hall, Henley, Mrs Herbert, Mrs Hill, Horsley,  
                  Hunt, James, R Lees, Ms Lisgo, Morrell, Parrish, Mrs Reed, Ryan, Mrs  
                  Smith, Sully, Townsend, Mrs Tucker, Mrs Warmington, Watson,  
                  Wedderkopp, Williams and Wren

Mrs A Elder – Chairman of the Standards Advisory Committee

### **1. Apologies**

Councillors Mrs Adkins, M Adkins, Booth, Miss Durdan, Edwards, Mrs Gunner, C Hill, Mrs Lees, Martin-Scott, Nicholls, Ross, Miss Smith, Stone and Ms Webber.

### **2. Minutes**

Subject to Councillor Mrs Hill's apologies being recorded, the Minutes of the meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council held on 23 February 2017, copies having been sent to each Member, were signed by the Mayor.

### **3. Communications**

The Mayor drew the attention of Members to the following:-

- (i) Councillors were requested to return their completed Related Party Transaction declarations as soon as possible to the Finance Section;
- (ii) A large number of Easter Eggs had already been collected for distribution to the Taunton Association for the Homeless later in the week. It was not too late for further eggs to be donated if Councillors wished to do so;
- (iii) The Citizenship Award Ceremony was scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 26 April 2017 in the County Room at the Somerset County Cricket Club. Councillors were welcome to attend; and
- (iv) Councillor Habgood would be participating in a 100 kilometre walk over the hills surrounding Taunton Deane on 22 April 2017 to raise funds towards the Musgrove Park Hospital Scanner Appeal. If anyone wished to sponsor him, they were encouraged to contact him direct or sign the sponsorship form in Democratic Services.

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

Councillor Prior-Sankey (Deputy Mayor) declared a personal interest as a Friend of Hestercombe. She also declared a prejudicial interest as the

Hestercombe Gardens Trust was to be one of her charities when she became Mayor of Taunton Deane next month. She left the room during the discussion of agenda item No. 8. Councillors Cavill, Habgood, Mrs Herbert, Mrs Hill, Horsley, Sully, the Joint Chief Executive, the Director – Operations and the Democratic Services Manager also declared personal interests as Friends of Hestercombe.

Councillors Coles, Henley, Hunt, Prior-Sankey and Wedderkopp declared personal interests as Members of Somerset County Council. Councillors Bowrah, Brown, Cavill, Gaines, Govier, Henley, Hunt, James, Mrs Reed, Mrs Stock-Williams, Townsend, Mrs Warmington and Watson all declared personal interests as Members of Town or Parish Councils.

## 5. **Public Question Time**

- (a) Councillor Adrian Jones of Norton Fitzwarren Parish Council drew attention to the continuing delay in Section 106 Agreement financial contributions being released to improve play facilities in the Parish. This unfortunate situation had been running since 2005 and the Parish Council was increasingly frustrated with the delay in the funding – which amounted to over £300,000 - being made available to them.

Councillor Jones had dealt with a number of officers over the years who had all promised to move the matter forward but, for various reasons, had not been able to do so. The time had arrived whereby someone had to be accountable for this sorry situation. He therefore asked Councillors to intervene.

In response, Councillor Habgood stated that he was aware of some of the background to this matter. Once he had been fully briefed by officers he would be happy to meet up with representatives of the Parish Council with a view to resolving the issue.

- (b) Beverley Milner-Simonds drew the attention of Members to the forthcoming 'Eat Taunton' event on 12 and 13 May 2017.

She was aware that many local people had no idea of the quality of food produced by local businesses. The idea of the event was to showcase up to 60 primary food producers, all within 25 miles of Taunton to persuade people to shop locally rather than travelling further afield.

A launch party had been arranged on 26 April 2017 and this would be followed by a small 'taster' event on Castle Green on the evening of 11 May 2017 to celebrate Somerset Day.

The main 'Eat Taunton' event would take place over the next two days between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. also on Castle Green.

Ms Milner-Simonds asked Councillors to accept the invitation to attend the launch party and the event itself and provide feedback on what they had experienced.

The Mayor thanked Ms Milner-Simonds for her entertaining presentation/'question'.

- (c) Mrs Dorothea Bradley requested Councillors to engage with their residents to:-
- (i) Explain simply what Taunton Deane was trying to do for them; and
  - (ii) Listen and respond to members of the public.

This was partly about perception but it was important as it was very much where we were now.

The 21st Century - even in Taunton - was a different world, with the Government's Top Down approach which had been in existence since the end of the Second World War seemingly being rejected by way of the last General Election and then the EU Referendum.

So we were now left with the Bottom Up approach which would involve us all; hence my request for dialogue and communication. The younger generation saw themselves as entrepreneurs, refusing to support a system (including Councils) which they felt was obsolete but, nevertheless, still wished to make a difference. Currently, people felt blocked off from contributing.

Therefore, Mrs Bradley asked Councillors to:-

- Acknowledge emails – preferably responding to them where possible; and
- Keep their residents informed about what was going on and encourage them to attend Consultations.

In response, Councillor Williams stated that a huge amount of information was already communicated by the Council and that the Transformation process currently being undertaken would result in better engagement with the public.

## 6. **Appointment of Section 151 Officer**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the appointment of another Section 151 Officer in the light of a change in working arrangements.

Members had previously been notified that certain changes were being made in relation to the current roles of the Senior Management Team which included the current Section 151 Officer - Shirlene Adam (Director – Operations) who was being seconded to work full time to direct the Transformation Programme.

As part of the arrangements to accommodate this change, it was recommended that Paul Fitzgerald – who already acted as Deputy Section



151 Officer – should be moved from his current Assistant Director – Resources post to provide the Section 151 Officer role for the Council.

As required under the Constitution, the Council was required to agree the proposed change which if agreed, would be implemented no later than 21 April, 2017.

**Resolved** that Paul Fitzgerald be appointed as Section 151 Officer for the Council.

## 7. **Proposed Loan to the Hestercombe Gardens Trust**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning a proposal to provide a capital loan to the Hestercombe Gardens Trust (HGT) of up to £80,000.

The loan would provide leverage to enable Hestercombe House and Gardens to take the next steps in delivering an £8 million investment in the site through the creation of the Hestercombe Centre for Arts and Landscape.

The development was likely to be funded from a range of sources including the Heritage Lottery Fund, Arts Council for England, Membership subscribers and match funding to an endowment.

The Arts and Landscape Project aimed to create an exciting new centre which would enhance the garden's offer and widen its appeal with the following elements:-

- Creation of 12 Artists' Studios in an underutilised wing of Hestercombe House;
- Creation of a new associated retail outlet;
- Linked Exhibitions which showcased this new output in addition to general access to the public to see artists at work;
- Conversion of the former head gardener's house known as Combe Lodge to create 12 units of accommodation to be used by visitors and artists; and
- Creation of a new garden for the 21st Century.

It was anticipated that the new project would enable the HGT to build on its exiting visitor base enhancing the £4 million spend which they delivered to the local economy and, in the process, move the House and Gardens forward consolidating it as a major regional and national visitor attraction

As with any investment this was not risk free, however the risks were considered to be acceptable. There were financial benefits for the Council, particularly through increased investment income. This would be augmented by the leverage with other organisations that the loan would create.

Reported that the Corporate Scrutiny Committee had debated the issues and the principle of making the loan at its meeting on 23 March 2017. The debate covered a range of issues but the main points raised were on the issue of security and the proposed fixed interest rate of 2.75%.

At the meeting, the Hestercombe Finance Director explained that the Heritage Lottery Fund and other key funders required first charge and indeed these were in place on the House. However, there was wider value in the HGT holdings which would become available if Hestercombe failed which was an unlikely eventuality.

In terms of the issue of the interest rate, Members were advised that this proposal had been made based on financial modelling, the nature of the development and the context of this loan being 'seed funding' for wider development. Nevertheless, the Committee requested the Executive and Full Council to review this rate prior to any decision.

The Executive had duly considered this request but had noted that the proposed loan offer had been subject to financial modelling and sensitivity testing. The Executive was therefore of the view that the rate was proportionate to the development and should not be altered.

**Resolved that:-**

- (a) The principle of a 10-year fixed rate unsecured investment loan to Hestercombe Gardens Trust of up to £80,000 at beneficial terms to the Council be approved; and
- (b) An £80,000 Supplementary Budget in the Council's 2017/2018 Capital Programme in respect of the loan which was to be treated as capital expenditure, to be financed by revenue resources utilising uncommitted funds within the Business Incentive Earmarked Reserve, be also approved.

## **8. 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:-

- Submission to the Government – Proposal to Create a New Council;
- Transformation Programme;
- Toneway Funding;
- Defibrillator Funding;
- Affordable Homes for Rent;
- Connecting the Deane Digitally;
- The Brewhouse Theatre 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary;
- University of Somerset;
- Junction 25 Upgrade and Dualling of the A358; and
- Broadband Installation and Progress to date.

### **(ii) Corporate Resources (Councillor Parrish)**

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

- Corporate Strategy and Performance;
- Customer Contact Service;
- Facilities Management;
- HR and Organisational Development;
- ICT and Information;
- The Mayoralty and Democratic Services;
- Electoral Services;
- Southwest One Exit and SAP Replacement;
- Finance and Procurement – Financial Year End and New Finance System; and
- SHAPE Partnership Services – Law and Governance;

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

Councillor Mrs Warmington presented the Community Leadership report which focused on the following areas within that portfolio:-

- Community Defibrillators;
- New Text Number to help combat Rural Crime – 07492 888109;
- Halcon One Team Coordinator; and
- Customer Care Training.

(Councillor Ms Lisgo declared a personal interest as a member of the North Taunton Partnership during the discussion of the above item.)

(iv) **Housing Services (Councillor Beale)**

Councillor Beale submitted his report which drew attention to the following:-

- Deane Housing Development – Creechbarrow Road, Taunton; Weavers Arms, Rockwell Green, Wellington; Laxton Road, Taunton; 12 Moorland Close, Taunton – Community Centre and 3 units plus 4 unit conversion at 121-123 Outer Circle; Oake; Off-Site Manufacture; Development Pipeline; and Photo-Voltaics;
- Welfare Reform – Discretionary Housing Payment and Universal Credit; and
- Anti-Social Behaviour Service – Performance and Casework.

Councillor Beale also announced that a total of 284 affordable homes had been provided in the Taunton Deane area during the past financial year.

(Councillor Henley declared a personal interest as an employee of the Department of Works and Pension during the discussion of the above item.)

(v) **Environmental Services and Climate Change (Councillor Berry)**

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

- Environmental Health – Food Hygiene Inspections; Private Water Supplies; Air Quality; Safety Advisory Groups; Anti-Social Behaviour; Dog Fouling Issues; and Staffing;
- Licensing – Performance; Appeals; Ombudsman Complaint; Service Request Trends; and Reducing Red Tape for Businesses;
- Street Sweeping and Toilet Cleaning – IdVerde Contract;
- Somerset Waste Partnership – Recycle More; Easter Collections; and Taunton Priorswood Recycling Centre; and
- Cemeteries and Crematorium.

(vi) **Economic Development, Asset Management, Arts and Culture, Tourism and Communications (Councillor Edwards)**

The report from Councillor Edwards covered:-

- Business Development - Launch of Nexus 25 – Strategic Employment Site at Junction 25; Heart of the South West Productivity Plan; Nuclear South West Inward Investment Group; Brewhouse Sponsor; Taunton Deane Business Awards; and Launch of the University Centre for Somerset;
- Destination, Events, Retail Marketing and Visitor Centre – Destination Marketing, Events; Retail Marketing; and Visitor Centre;
- Town Centre Regeneration - Coal Orchard Redevelopment;
- Asset Management Service General Fund Activities – Estate Management Work; and Asset Strategy Work;
- Media, Marketing and External Communications.

(vii) **Planning Policy and Transportation (Councillor Habgood)**

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

- Planning Policy Team in line for National Honours;
- Neighbourhood Planning – Trull and Staplehay;
- Placemaking – Garden Town;
- Planning Development – Firepool; Coal Orchard; Staplegrave; The M5 Strategic Employment Site at Junction 25 – Local Development Order; and Planning response to the Housing White Paper;
- Transportation – Car Parking Performance; and Car Park Works;
- Highways England A358 Dualling;
- Cycling;
- Taunton Town Centre Public Realm; and
- West Somerset Railway.

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

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

- Parks and Open Spaces;
- Community Leisure – Play and Recreation; Summer Sunday Bandstand Concerts; Fields in Trust – Centenary Fields; and Monkton Heathfield New Community Hall; and
- GLL (Taunton Deane) – Community Sport
  - Teenage Yoga for Mental Health; Buggy-a-cise; Hillside Children's Centre Swimming Case Study; Zumba for Wellbeing; Trampolining for Wellbeing; February Heart Month; Children's Activity Day; Wellsprings Hosts Somerset Humdinger Half and Hurtle; Lyngford Park Primary School Consultation; Mayor Presents Olympic Medallists with Local Awards; Fit and Fed Training; Walk Well in Wellington; and Volunteers in Play.

(Councillors Morrell, Govier, Henley and Farbahi left the meeting at 7.44 p.m, 8.12 p.m, 8.30 p.m and 8.44 p.m. respectively.)

(The meeting ended at 8.53 p.m.)

## Taunton Deane Borough Council

At the Annual Meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council, held at The County Room, Somerset County Cricket Club, The County Ground, Taunton on Thursday, 11 May 2017 at 6.30 pm.

**Present** The Mayor ((Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams)  
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Prior-Sankey)  
Councillors Mrs Adkins, M Adkins, Aldridge, Beale, Berry, Booth, Cavill, Coles, Coombes, Davies, D Durdan, Farbahi, Mrs Floyd, Gage, Gaines, Govier, Habgood, Hall, Mrs Herbert, C Hill, Mrs Hill, Hunt, James, R Lees, Mrs Lees, Nicholls, Parrish, Mrs Reed, Ryan, Mrs Smith, Mrs Smith-Roberts, Stone, Sully, Townsend, Mrs Warmington, Watson and Williams

The meeting was preceded by a Prayer offered by the Reverend Prebendary Christopher Rowley.

### 1. **Election of Mayor**

On the motion of Councillor Mrs Adkins, seconded by Councillor Coles, it was **resolved** unanimously that Councillor Hazel Ruth Prior-Sankey be elected Mayor of Taunton Deane for the ensuing year. Councillor Prior-Sankey made and signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

### 2. **Deputy Mayor**

On the motion of Councillor Beale, seconded by Councillor Berry, it was **resolved** that Councillor Catherine Avril Herbert be elected as Deputy Mayor for the ensuing year. Councillor Mrs Herbert made and signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

### 3. **Councillor Vivienne Frances Stock-Williams**

On the motion of Councillor Williams, seconded by Councillor Govier, it was **resolved** that the best thanks of the Council be accorded to Councillor Vivienne Frances Stock-Williams for the manner in which she had discharged the duties of the Office of Mayor during her term of office.

Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams replied.

### 4. **Past Mayor's Badge**

The Mayor presented Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams with her past Mayor's badge.

### 5. **Apologies**

Councillors Mrs Blatchford, Bowrah, Miss Durdan, Edwards, Mrs Gunner,

Horsley, Ms Lisgo, Martin-Scott, Morrell, Ross, Ms Webber, Wedderkopp and Wren.

**6. Appointment of the Executive 2017/2018**

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

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

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

15 Members, 9 Conservatives, 4 Liberal Democrats, 2 Labour or Independent.

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

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

15 Members, 9 Conservatives, 4 Liberal Democrats, 2 Labour or Independent.

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

**9. 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, 9 Conservatives, 4 Liberal Democrats, 2 Labour or Independent.

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

15 Members, 9 Conservatives, 4 Liberal Democrats, 2 Labour or Independent.

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

15 Members, 9 Conservatives, 4 Liberal Democrats, 2 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.

**10. Standards Advisory Committee 2017/2018**

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), 3 Parish Members (Mr M Marshall, Mr B Wilson and 1 vacancy) and 3 independent co-optees (Mrs A Elder, Mr L Rogers and 1 vacancy).

11. **Intercessional Prayer**

The meeting was closed at 8.13 pm with a prayer offered by the new Mayor's Chaplain, the Reverend David Manning.



## **Usual Declarations of Interest by Councillors**

### **Full Council**

- **Members of Somerset County Council – Councillors M Adkins, Coles, Govier, Hunt, Prior-Sankey and Wedderkopp**
- **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, Gage and Stone**
- **Director of Tone FM – Councillor Ms Lisgo**
- **Councillor Beale declared personal interests as a Board Member and Director of Tone FM and as a Governor of the South West Ambulance NHS Trust.**
- **Councillor Edwards declared a personal interest as the Chairman of Governors of Queens College.**
- **Councillor Farbahi declared a personal interest as the owner of land in Taunton Deane.**
- **Councillor Hall declared a personal interest as a Director of Southwest One.**
- **Councillor Coombes declared a personal interest as a Stoke St Mary Parish Councillor and the owner of an area of land at Haydon, Taunton.**
- **Councillor Richard Parrish declared a personal interest as the District Council’s representative on the Somerset Pensions Committee.**
- **Councillor Mrs Hill declared personal interests as a representative on the Board of Directors of Apple FM**

**and as a Trustee of Hestercombe House and Gardens and the Somerset Building Preservation Trust.**

- **Councillor Federica Smith declared a personal interest as Chairperson of Refugee Aid from Taunton.**
- **Councillor Ross declared personal interests as one of the Council's representatives on the Somerset Waste Board, as a member of the Wiveliscombe Area Partnership and as a Governor of Wiveliscombe Primary School.**
- **Councillor Coles declared a personal interest as a Devon and Somerset Fire Authority Member.**

# Save the Model Railway in Creech st Michael & Vivary Park Taunton



**Francesca Smith**  
Taunton, United Kingdom

443  
Supporters

The Miniature Railway has been running in Vivary Park for decades and is a valuable community asset, the railway also runs at Creech St Michael Park. The railways are both well used and appreciated by the public and especially young children and is part of summertime spent in the park. The Taunton Model Engineers are going to leave the parks due to a disagreement with the site owners, TDBC and Creech Parish Council. We would like Taunton Deane Borough Council to work with Taunton Model Engineers to come to an acceptable compromise so that the railway is retained in both parks, as it is a benefit for the public users of both parks.

**This petition will be delivered to:**  
Taunton Deane Borough Council

[Read the letter](#)

## Updates

Keep your supporters engaged with a news update. Every update you post will be sent as a separate email to signers of your petition.

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Full Council – 11 July 2017

### Statutory Protection for Statutory Officers

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor R Parrish

Report Author: Assistant Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer

#### 1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

This report recommends changes to the statutory protection arrangements to be applied where the Council is proposing to dismiss the Head of Paid Service, the Section 151 Officer or the Monitoring Officer. It seeks to bring the constitutional provisions into line with the Local Authority (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 (the Regulations).

#### 2 Recommendations

2.1 That Council approves amendments to the disciplinary provisions to be applied where the Council proposes the dismissal of a post-holder holding the position of Head of Paid Service, the Section 151 Officer or Monitoring Officer.

2.2 That Council grant delegated authority to the Assistant Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources to make the necessary amendments to the Constitution and HR procedures to give effect to recommendation 2.1.

#### 3 Risk Assessment

##### Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
The Council is currently not complying with the requirements of the regulations in relation to the disciplinary and dismissal procedures for the statutory officer posts and could leave itself open to claims being made on the basis of a flawed/non-compliant dismissal process	3	4	12
<i>The report proposes making amendments to the process to make the Council legally compliant</i>	1	4	4

## Risk Scoring Matrix

<b>Likelihood</b>	5	Almost Certain	Low (5)	Medium (10)	High (15)	Very High (20)	Very High (25)
	4	Likely	Low (4)	Medium (8)	Medium (12)	High (16)	Very High (20)
	3	Possible	Low (3)	Low (6)	Medium (9)	Medium (12)	High (15)
	2	Unlikely	Low (2)	Low (4)	Low (6)	Medium (8)	Medium (10)
	1	Rare	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)	Low (5)
			1	2	3	4	5
			Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
<b>Impact</b>							

<b>Likelihood of risk occurring</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Description (chance of occurrence)</b>
1. Very Unlikely	May occur in exceptional circumstances	< 10%
2. Slight	Is unlikely to, but could occur at some time	10 – 25%
3. Feasible	Fairly likely to occur at same time	25 – 50%
4. Likely	Likely to occur within the next 1-2 years, or occurs occasionally	50 – 75%
5. Very Likely	Regular occurrence (daily / weekly / monthly)	> 75%

## 4 Background and Full details of the Report

### Statutory Protection for the Head of Paid Service, Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer

- 4.1 The Local Authority (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 amended the statutory protection provisions that apply to the posts of Head of Paid Service, the Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer. Since the implementation of the Regulations, Council has deferred making any changes pending a review by the Somerset Monitoring Officers Group because of concerns over the requirements of the Regulations.
- 4.2 Counsel's opinion has been obtained, guidance has been received from the Local Government Association and from the recently published Joint Negotiating Committee for Local Authority Chief Executives' National Salary Framework & Conditions of Service Handbook. This has enabled a set of proposals to be developed in conjunction with Councils across Somerset so that the Council can be confident that it meets the requirements of the Regulations in so far as they can be understood or interpreted.
- 4.3 The history behind this issue is contained in the Local Authority (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 which amended the statutory protection

provisions that apply to the posts of Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer.

4.4 As a reminder the problem areas of the Regulations are:

- (a) The replacement of the requirement to appoint a Designated Independent Person (DIP) to advise the Council on any allegation of misconduct with a provision that a dismissal decision can only be taken by Full Council, after consideration of the advice, views or recommendations from a Panel which includes a minimum of two Independent Persons (IPs). This significantly reduced the statutory protection provisions for these post-holders but as this was provided for by the Regulations the Council has no choice but to bring its constitutional arrangements into line.
- (b) The requirement to involve local IPs in a panel appointed by the Council to advise on Member conduct issues raised concerns because of a concern about potential conflict between the two sets of regulations detailing their roles. There was also a lack of clarity about elected member involvement in a panel involving IPs.
- (c) The fact that the DIP process is often incorporated into statutory officers' contracts of employment and where this is the case amendments could be required to the contractual arrangements to bring them in line with the Regulations.

4.5 In detail the Regulations

- (a) Require a minimum of two IPs to be appointed to a Panel (being a Committee of the Authority) to consider a dismissal proposal. The Panel can comprise more than 2 IPs and there is the ability to involve IPs appointed by neighbouring councils on the Council's Panel in addition to those appointed by the Council.
- (b) Removed all statutory protection for disciplinary action against these statutory post-holders short of dismissal.
- (c) Require the Panel involving the IPs to be appointed at least 20 working days before the meeting of the Authority which is to consider any proposal to dismiss the Officer.
- (d) Require a Council before it votes on whether or not to approve such a dismissal, to take into account, in particular:-
  - any advice, views or recommendations of the Panel involving the IPs;
  - the conclusions of any investigation into the proposed dismissal; and
  - any representations from the relevant Officer.
- (e) IPs who take part in a Panel can be paid an additional allowance which must not exceed what they are currently paid for their role as an IP advising on complaints against Members.

4.6 There was much detail missing from the regulations including:

- (a) The numbers or voting membership of the Panel – including whether councillors need to or should be involved.
- (b) The absence of any requirement for it to be a standing committee, or for its members to receive any training.

- (c) The absence of any requirement to provide independent legal advice or support to the Panel, even where this is requested.
- (d) The absence of any requirement to allow the officer who is subject to the proposed dismissal to be able to attend or make representations to the Panel.

4.7 It is important in the absence of such provisions that the Council's arrangements should provide for best practice in such situations to ensure that the officer concerned gets a fair hearing. The recommendations below therefore include provisions beyond what is provided for in the Regulations.

#### Current Constitutional provisions:

4.8 The 'Officer Employment Procedure Rules' Section of the Constitution sets out the current arrangements for dealing with dismissal or disciplinary action in regard to the Head of Paid Service, the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer. The changes proposed to the dismissal provisions for the statutory posts which are the subject of this report will therefore require amendments to this Section of the Constitution.

4.9 Counsel's advice provided helpful guidance and confirmation on the following matters:

- The involvement of IPs in the process, where it was confirmed that there is no conflict between the two sets of Regulations that apply to their roles. This leaves the Council free to include its IP and the Deputy IP in the Panel arrangements. The view of officers is that the Panel should comprise of a minimum of 3 IPs so there is a need for the Council to have access to other locally appointed IPs as provided for by the Regulations.
- The inclusion of elected members in a panel including IPs. On this issue the Government's intention is that the Panel advising the Council on a proposed dismissal of one of these statutory post-holders should only comprise of IPs.

4.10 Outside of this the Council is free to put in place provisions that best fit its local circumstances and culture. The Local Government Association has also issued helpful guidance which accords with the proposals set out in this paper.

4.11 Proposed dismissal of the Head of Paid Service, the Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer recommendations

In view of the above, the proposals set out below detail the proposed provisions that will be recommended to all six Somerset Councils, as well as those recommendations specific to the Council's arrangements.

#### All Councils

- (a) The six Councils agree to form a Somerset IP 'pool' from which IPs would be invited to form an IP Panel to advise a Council on a proposed dismissal of a Head of Paid Service, Section 151 Officer or Monitoring Officer. Invitations to IPs to participate in a Panel will be issued in accordance with the Regulations.

- (b) It is proposed that at least three IPs need to convene in order for a Panel meeting to be quorate. *The legislation requires a minimum of 2 IPs to participate in a Panel but allows more to be appointed.*
- (c) An IP Panel should appoint its own chairman for the duration of a dismissal process.
- (d) IP Panel meetings will have professional officer support available to advise on process.
- (e) The IP Panel will report its recommendations direct to Full Council. The Panel's role will be separate from any elected member involvement in the process in advance of consideration by Full Council.
- (f) The officer who is the subject of the proposal dismissal shall be given the opportunity to make representations to the IP Panel before it makes its recommendations to Full Council in addition to his/her right to make representations to Full Council before a decision on a proposed dismissal is made.

#### Local Provision

- 4.12 In view of the current partnership arrangements for the sharing of staff with West Somerset Council(WSC), it is proposed that the Leader and/or relevant portfolio holder of WSC will have the right to present the Council's views on the matter in writing or in person to the IP Panel before it makes its recommendations to Full Council.

#### Remuneration of IPs

- 4.13 It is further recommended that IPs used on an IPs Panel should be entitled to claim expenses for attending meetings of the Panel in accordance with the Scheme of Members' Allowances and shall receive a one off payment per involvement in a Panel equivalent to 20% of their annual co-opted members' allowance paid by their respective Council.

#### Conclusion

- 4.14 Members will be aware that Council – at its meeting held on 14 July, 2015 - has previously deferred making any changes to the constitutional arrangements in relation to the statutory protection provisions for the posts of Head of aid Service, Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer because of concerns over the requirements of the 2015 Regulations.
- 4.15 The Council has chosen not to give effect to the Regulations since their implementation in the hope that the government would respond to the many concerns submitted nationally about the contents and implications of the regulations. No changes have been made or appear to be planned by the government and in the interests of moving this issue forward to enable the Council to comply with the Regulations the advice of Counsel has been sought on the options.
- 4.16 At all stages of these considerations the intention has been to agree with a unified approach across Somerset Councils in so far as is possible as the Regulations apply to all Councils and a successful solution for each Council is dependent on a degree of collaboration within Somerset.



- 4.17 This paper sets out recommendations for revised arrangements that Council can be confident meet the requirements of the Regulations and which provide consistent arrangements across the 6 councils where it makes sense to do so. Similar reports will be taken through other Somerset Councils.

## **5 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities**

- 5.1 The proposals set out in the report are necessary to ensure that the Council is compliant with the relevant Regulations relating to this matter.

## **6 Finance / Resource Implications**

- 6.1 The only financial implications associated with agreeing the recommendations is that in the event of the proposed Independent Panel being convened then there would be some modest expenses to cover as referenced in Section 4.

## **7 Legal Implications**

- 7.1 The proposals set out in the report are necessary to ensure compliance with the Local Authority (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015.

## **8 Environmental Impact Implications**

- 8.1 None in respect of this report.

## **9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications**

- 9.1 None in respect of this report.

## **10 Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 10.1 *The three aims the authority must have due regard for are:-*

- *Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation;*
- *Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;*
- *Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.*

*There are no direct equality and diversity implications in respect of this report.*

## **11 Social Value Implications**

- 11.1 None in respect of this report.

## **12 Partnership Implications**

- 12.1 As can be seen the proposal does demonstrate partnership working with other local authorities in Somerset to agree a mechanism to draw on a pool of Independent Persons to form a Panel as required.

## **13 Health and Wellbeing Implications**

13.1 Consideration has been given to :

- *People, families and communities taking responsibility for their own health and wellbeing;*
- *Families and communities are thriving and resilient; and*
- *Somerset people are able to live independently.)*

13.2 There are no health and wellbeing implications in respect of this report.

#### 14 Asset Management Implications

14.1 None in respect of this report.

#### 15 Consultation Implications

15.1 The issue has been discussed on a regular basis at meetings of the Somerset Monitoring Officers Group who have collaborated to develop the proposal put before Council and progress was reported to an earlier Council meeting in July 2015.

15.2 The affected post-holders have been kept informed of developments.

#### Democratic Path:

- **Scrutiny / Corporate Governance or Audit Committees – No**
- **Cabinet/Executive – No (**
- **Full Council – Yes**

Reporting Frequency :  Once only  Ad-hoc  Quarterly

Twice-yearly  Annually

#### Contact Officers

Name	Bruce Lang	Name	
Direct Dial	01984635200	Direct Dial	
Email	bdlang@westsomerset.gov.uk	Email	

Name		Name	
Direct Dial		Direct Dial	
Email		Email	

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Full Council – 11 July 2017

### Trull and Staplehay Neighbourhood Development Plan formal adoption (“made”) as a Development Plan Document for TDBC

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Roger Habgood

Report Author: Ann Rhodes (Planning Policy Officer)

#### 1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

1.1 Trull & Staplehay Neighbourhood Development Plan is a community led planning document which has been produced by Trull Parish Council. The document and its evidence base passed an Independent Examination and was supported by 78.53% of those who voted in the referendum. The Trull & Staplehay Neighbourhood Development Plan should be formally adopted (made) to enable it to be used to help it decide planning applications in the Trull & Staplehay Neighbourhood Plan Area.

#### 2 Recommendations

2.1 That Full Council is **recommended** to formally adopt the Trull and Staplehay Neighbourhood Development Plan as a Taunton Deane Borough Council Development Plan Document, and used in the planning application decision making process for the Trull Parish area.

#### 3 Risk Assessment (if appropriate)

##### Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
As there are no legal reasons not to formally adopt (“made”) the Trull & Staplehay Neighbourhood Development Plan, to not adopt risks Judicial Review	4 (Likely)	4 (Major)	16 (High)
As there are no legal reasons not to formally adopt (“made”) the Trull & Staplehay Neighbourhood Development Plan, to not do adopt fails to implement Legislation	5 (Certain)	3 (Moderate)	15 (High)
As there are no reasons not to formally adopt (“made”) the Trull & Staplehay Neighbourhood Development Plan, therefore risks the credibility of TDBC with the Qualifying Body undertaking the Neighbourhood Plan, and the community supporting it.	5 (Certain)	4 (Moderate)	20 (Very High)

### Risk Scoring Matrix

<b>Likelihood</b>	5	Almost Certain	Low (5)	Medium (10)	High (15)	Very High (20)	Very High (25)
	4	Likely	Low (4)	Medium (8)	Medium (12)	High (16)	Very High (20)
	3	Possible	Low (3)	Low (6)	Medium (9)	Medium (12)	High (15)
	2	Unlikely	Low (2)	Low (4)	Low (6)	Medium (8)	Medium (10)
	1	Rare	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)	Low (5)
			1	2	3	4	5
			Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
<b>Impact</b>							

Likelihood of risk occurring	Indicator	Description (chance of occurrence)
1. Very Unlikely	May occur in exceptional circumstances	< 10%
2. Slight	Is unlikely to, but could occur at some time	10 – 25%
3. Feasible	Fairly likely to occur at same time	25 – 50%
4. Likely	Likely to occur within the next 1-2 years, or occurs occasionally	50 – 75%
5. Very Likely	Regular occurrence (daily / weekly / monthly)	> 75%

## 4 Background and Full details of the Report

- 4.1 The Localism Act introduced Neighbourhood Development Plans to the planning system, giving communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape a locally distinctive development plan which reflect the growth needs and priorities of their communities.
- 4.2 The Localism Act, the National Planning Policy Framework, Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017, Housing and Planning Act 2016 and various Neighbourhood Planning Regulations provide the regulatory framework for neighbourhood planning.
- 4.3 From inception Neighbourhood Development Plans are community led development plan documents with the Local Planning Authority providing advice and assistance, and taking regulatory decisions at key legislative stages set out in the Act's and Regulations.
- 4.4 A Neighbourhood Development Plan must be predominantly land-use based (i.e. use of land, type and scale of development, allocate land for development). It cannot be contrary to National and Local Planning Policy (National Planning Policy Framework, TDBC Core Strategy, TDBC Site Allocations and Development Management Plan), nor

can it conflict with European Legislation (Equalities, Environmental and Ecological). A Neighbourhood Plan cannot restrict development but it can shape development that has been allocated through local Planning Policy and allocate land for development.

- 4.5 Trull Parish Council began the process of developing a Neighbourhood Plan in November 2011. An application was received from them in February 2012 to produce a neighbourhood plan and for the designation of the Parish of Trull as a Neighbourhood Plan Area. The application was published for statutory consultation between 3<sup>rd</sup> August and Friday 14 September 2012 (six weeks and one days) in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Neighbourhood Plans (General) Regulations.
- 4.6 A parish council are authorised to act in relation to a neighbourhood area if that area consists of or includes the whole or any part of the area of the council. In accordance with Section 61F of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) Trull Parish Council are therefore a “relevant body” for the purpose of producing a neighbourhood development plan.
- 4.7 In accordance with Section 61G of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and taking account of Government guidance TDBC formally designated the entirety of the Parish of Trull as the Neighbourhood Plan Area on 17 September 2012.
- 4.8 The Trull & Staplehay Neighbourhood Development Plan was developed through an iterative process over five and a half years using quantitative (e.g. factual studies and statistics) and qualitative (e.g. surveys, consultation and engagement) data. The Trull & Staplehay Neighbourhood Development Plan contains 15 policies:
  - S1: Sustainability Statement;
  - E1: Local Green Space;
  - E2: Woodland, Trees and Hedgerows;
  - F1: Reducing flood risk;
  - H1: Sustainable Housing;
  - H2: Housing ‘in keeping’;
  - H3: Affordable Housing;
  - H5: External Space;
  - H6: Development within Trull and Staplehay village;
  - H7: Development on Brownfield sites and selfbuild development;
  - EE1: Retaining and Developing Employment;
  - EE2: Homeworking and Live/Work Development;
  - EE3: Retail;
  - EE4: Residential Institutions;
  - EE5: Farm Businesses;

There are also two Community Actions. Whilst these matters did not meet the Basic Conditions legal tests required for Neighbourhood Development Plans they were important matters that could be retained as Community Actions, aims for the Parish Council to promote and support.

- CA1: Flood Performance;

- CA2: Internal Design;

A copy of the Trull & Staplehay Neighbourhood Plan is available for inspection in the Members' Room or from the Taunton Deane website.

- 4.9 The Trull & Staplehay Neighbourhood Plan and its supporting documents was submitted to TDBC on 9 September 2015. In accordance with Regulation 16(v) of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations it was subject to regulatory consultation, which ran from 1 October till 13 November 2015, (six weeks and one days). 13 representations were received during the period of consultation which were submitted in their entirety to the independent examiner in accordance with Regulation 17(d).
- 4.10 In accordance with Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and in the Neighbourhood Plans (General) Regulations 2012 an Independent Examiner, Nigel McGurk, was jointly appointed by TDBC and Trull Parish Council to carry out an independent examination of the Trull & Staplehay Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 4.11 The examination was conducted by written representations. The Independent Examiners report was received on 5 October 2015. The report concluded that:
- The T&SNDP is compliant with European Convention of Human Rights;
  - The T&SNDP is compatible with EU Environmental Obligations (Strategic Environmental and Habitats Assessment) and does not breach Convention Rights;
  - The T&SNDP, subject to modifications, meets all the Basic Conditions;
    - Has regard to national policies and to advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
    - Contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
    - Is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area [TDBC adopted Core Strategy];
    - Does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, European Union (EU) obligations;
    - Is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects;
    - Ensure that 'prescribed conditions' are met and 'prescribed matters' [the correct processes and procedures] have been complied with in plan preparation and submission.

and that,

- As such the T&SNDP can progress to referendum and the referendum area should not extend beyond the Neighbourhood Area to which the Plan relates [the Parish of Trull].

Neighbourhood development plans are subject to similar legal tests as the Boroughs planning policy documents and in terms of evidence, viability, being positive and not

restricting development. The recommendations made in the Examiner's report were to make the plan compliant with planning legislation, and thereby enable it to be effectively applied to development proposals in the Parish of Trull and reduce the risk of challenge.

- 4.12 Having considered each of the recommendations made in the Examiner's report, and the reasons for them, TDBC decided accept the recommendations and make modifications to the draft plan to ensure that it meet the basic conditions set out in legislation. This decision was published in the weekly bulletin on 6 October 2015, Record of Decision taken by an Executive Councillor.
- 4.13 In accordance with the Localism Act 2011, Neighbourhood Planning (Referendum) Regulations and Neighbourhood Planning (Prescribed Dates) Regulations the Trull & Staplehay Neighbourhood Development Plan was subject to a referendum, on 8 June 2016, which poses the question *Do you want Taunton Deane Borough Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Trull & Staplehay to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?*.
- 4.14 Persons on the electoral register in the referendum area who were eligible to vote in a local election for that area were entitled to vote. There are 1828 electorate in the Trull & Staplehay Neighbourhood Plan Area and 1486 persons, 81.29%, voted. The results of the referendum were:
- Yes 1167 78.53%;
  - No 282 18.98%;
  - Rejected ballot papers 37 2.49%.
- 4.15 The Planning Guidance states that following a referendum TDBC, as the local planning authority, must decide whether the Neighbourhood Plan should be made (brought into legal force). This must within 8 weeks of the referendum. There are a narrow circumstances where the local planning authority is not required to make the neighbourhood plan. These are where it considers that the making of the neighbourhood plan would breach, or otherwise be incompatible with, any EU or human rights obligations.
- 4.16 Officers recommend to members of Scrutiny that the Trull & Staplehay Neighbourhood Plan be made. The Independent Examiner's report said that the Trull & Staplehay Neighbourhood Plan was compliant and compatible, subject to changes, which the Portfolio Holder accepted and those recommendations were applied to the Plan. The correct processes and procedures have been complied with in the plan preparation and submission.

## **5 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities**

- 5.1 The decision of Member's relates to a statutory duty. In addition to this, The Trull & Staplehay Neighbourhood Plan has policies on:
- S1: Sustainability Statement;

- F1: Reducing flood risk;
- CA1: Flood Performance;
- H3: Affordable Housing;
- CA2: Internal Design;
- H5: External Space;
- H6: Development within Trull and Staplehay village;
- H7: Development on Brownfield sites and selfbuild development;
- EE1: Retaining and Developing Employment;
- EE2: Homeworking and Live/Work Development;
- EE3: Retail;
- EE4: Residential Institutions;
- EE5: Farm Businesses;

and therefore links to the following TDBC Corporate Strategy 2016-20 aims:

- Theme 1b People - a range of additional housing types suitable in particular for single person households, young people in rural communities and elderly people;
- Theme 1c People - support the wellbeing of an older population and our most vulnerable residents;
- Theme 1d People - Facilitate the creation a broad range of high quality employment opportunities...to provide local people with more rewarding futures;
- Theme 2a Business and Enterprise - Encourage inward investment and the promotion of the district as a place in which to visit and do business;
- Theme 2b Business and Enterprise - Further develop the offering of the Deane in terms of social, leisure and culture in order to make the area an even more attractive proposition for investment;
- Theme 3g Our Place - Work with others to introduce measures that reduce the risk of flooding within our communities.

## **6 Finance / Resource Implications**

- 6.1 The Parish of Trull will receive 25% of Community Infrastructure Levy receipts if the Trull & Staplehay Neighbourhood Development Plan is made (brought into legal force) through formal adoption by TDBC. Areas without a neighbourhood plan receive 15%.
- 6.2 There are no known resource implications if the Trull & Staplehay Neighbourhood Development Plan is made (brought into legal force) through formal adoption by TDBC.
- 6.3 If TDBC do not adopt the Trull & Staplehay Neighbourhood Development Plan the Council would be open to Judicial Review, with its associated financial and recourse costs, because the Plan is deemed compliant and compatible with The Localism Act, the National Planning Policy Framework, Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the various Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.



## **7 Legal Implications**

- 7.1 The Trull & Staplehay Neighbourhood Development Plan would become a statutory TDBC Development Plan Document and therefore given material weight in the Development Management process. Applications for planning permission in the Neighbourhood Plan Area would be determined in accordance with it, unless (as any other development plan document) material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.2 If TDBC did not adopt the Trull & Staplehay Neighbourhood Development Plan it may be open to Judicial Review, because the Plan is deemed compliant and compatible with The Localism Act, the National Planning Policy Framework, Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017, Housing and Planning Act 2016 and the various Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.

## **8 Environmental Impact Implications**

- 8.1 The Trull & Staplehay Neighbourhood Development Plan was subject of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), which included consultation with the three SEA statutory consultees (Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England). The report was conducted by an independent environmental consultancy. There are no individual, or cumulative, adverse impacts on the environment as a result of the Plan.

## **9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications**

- 9.1 No known implications

## **10 Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 10.1 No known implications

## **11 Social Value Implications**

- 11.1 No known implications

## **12 Partnership Implications**

- 12.1 No known implications

## **13 Health and Wellbeing Implications**

- 13.1 Trull & Staplehay Neighbourhood Development Plan supports the Health & Wellbeing Objectives through policies on
- S1: Sustainability Statement;
  - E1: Local Green Space;
  - E2: Woodland, Trees and Hedgerows;
  - H2: Housing 'in keeping';

- CA2: Internal Design;
- H5: External Space;
- EE4: Residential Institutions;

## 14 Asset Management Implications

14.1 No known implications

## 15 Consultation Implications

15.1 Throughout the development of the Trull & Staplehay Neighbourhood Development Plan and after its submission to TDBC, the consultation has been undertaken in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Localism Act), Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations and Neighbourhood Planning (Referendum) Regulations, and in the case of its accompanying SEA report the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

## 16 Scrutiny Comments / Recommendation(s)

16.1 The Neighbourhood Development Plan was discussed at the meeting of the Community Scrutiny Committee on 27 June 2017 where it received unanimous support.

### Democratic Path:

- **Scrutiny – Yes**
- **Executive – No**
- **Full Council – Yes**

Reporting Frequency:     **Once only**             **Ad-hoc**             **Quarterly**  
 **Twice-yearly**     **Annually**

### List of Appendices

Appendix A	Trull & Staplehay Neighbourhood Development Plan
------------	--

### Contact Officers

Name	Ann Rhodes	Direct Dial	01823 346484
Email	a.rhodes@tauntondeane.gov.uk		

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Full Council – 11 July 2017

### Regeneration of the Coal Orchard, Taunton – Capital Investment

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Mark Edwards

Report Author: Ian Timms, Assistant Director Business Development

#### 1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The report outlines the steps undertaken in the past two years to enable the Council to invest in the redevelopment of the Coal Orchard, Taunton. The report gives an overview of this process and the broad rationale for the selection of two key delivery options. These options are outlined in the report to determine which offers the best return on investment for the Council. The report examines in depth the financing requirements related to each option, explores risks associated with each and applies due diligence to both options. This assessment links directly to the evaluation of impacts on existing Council budgets.
- 1.2 This examination provides a proposal for the recommended delivery option and the financing associated with that option. This report aims to enable the Council to authorise a capital investment budget approval funded through borrowing to deliver this key growth programme site.

#### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is **recommended** that:-
  - (a) The development of Coal Orchard, Taunton be delivered “in principle” by Taunton Deane Borough Council through a direct contracting approach. Final sign off to be subject to consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder; and
  - (b) A Supplementary Budget within the Capital Programme for the preferred option be approved in line with total investment costs summarised in the Confidential Appendix B, to be funded by capital borrowing.

## Risk Assessment

	<b>Risk Description</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>Risk Mitigation Measures</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Overall</b>
i	The Council is unable to service the loan due to a lack of revenue from the development. This may occur due to market changes relating to retained elements.	3	5	15	<i>a) Adopt Clear lettings policy  b) Utilise specialist marketing and asset management individuals company to deliver policy  c) Early disposal of Housing at Market rates  d) Retain flexible tenure options and ability to dispose of all components  e) Retain Car park as underpinning income stream</i>	3	3	9
ii	Post Occupancy Management The Council does not have the necessary skills in house to undertake the management, letting and marketing required. Consultant procurement will be required	4	5	20	<i>Commission specialist multiuse property asset management and marketing company to manage on behalf of the Council. Or consider recruiting and employing in-house skills.</i>	4	2	8
iii	Market Conditions The current market is buoyant for both construction and sales, a 5% swing in either direction will impact upon costs.	4	4	16	<i>Set an appropriate contingency sum within the project bid to cover 5% increase of cost.</i>	4	2	8
iv	Determine option and progress at appropriate pace to ensure build costs do not inflate	3	3	9	<i>Procure via Build partnering contract with a fixed sum and contract timescale, with open book accounting to allow Value Engineering and Value Management reviews. Mainly determined as part of procurement and scoping pre construction stage. Support through robust project management arrangements.</i>	3	2	6

## Risk Matrix

**Risk Scoring Matrix**

<b>Likelihood</b>	5	Almost Certain	Low (5)	Medium (10)	High (15)	Very High (20)	Very High (25)
	4	Likely	Low (4)	Medium (8)	Medium (12)	High (16)	Very High (20)
	3	Possible	Low (3)	Low (6)	Medium (9)	Medium (12)	High (15)
	2	Unlikely	Low (2)	Low (4)	Low (6)	Medium (8)	Medium (10)
	1	Rare	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)	Low (5)
			1	2	3	4	5
			Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
<b>Impact</b>							

### 3 Background and Full details of the Report

- 3.1 The redevelopment of the Coal Orchard has been an element of Council plans for the centre of Taunton for a significant period of time. The intention to create a new development in this location is described in the Council's Town Centre Action Plan adopted in 2008. This was further reinforced by the Taunton Rethink adopted in late 2014 which confirmed the importance of this site as a central point in the town centre growth plans.
- 3.2 The scheme is a central part of the council's regeneration plans for the town centre. The evolution of the Coal orchard has focused on providing a quality regenerative site which provides a genuine link to the town centre. This will align well with emerging plans to upgrade The Brewhouse providing a venue which can serve the need of the Garden Town.
- 3.3 In the autumn of 2015 councillors approved a delivery strategy for the site to create "a new place on the river". This decision initiated the survey work necessary to develop an outline planning application for the site. This was allied with consideration of site viability and development of the outline business case.
- 3.4 The outline work progressed through late 2015 and the first six months of 2016. This foundation enabled the Council acting as landowner to approve the submission of an outline planning application at its meeting in October 2016. A further report was requested to fully examine the financial aspects of the development.

- 3.5 Through the course of the work to develop the planning application a number of delivery options have been considered with two being discounted at an early stage. These were essentially to do nothing or to dispose of the site for a capital receipt.
- 3.6 The option of doing nothing clearly does not accord with the Council's long held plans to develop the site as part of the regeneration of the area. The site occupies a key position within the town centre with a significant river frontage providing opportunities to deliver the Council's vision. This option was therefore discarded at an early stage.
- 3.7 The potential for capital receipt was considered against the aspirational vision for the site which is regenerative in nature. This aspiration to create a cultural hub in this area means that the Council is seeking a mix of uses that delivers on this rationale, combined with a high quality design to deliver the vision. This regeneration approach and desire to control the development quality therefore influences the consideration of options.
- 3.8 As members will recall from previous reports the development toolkits that the Council applies to comparable development sites were used in assessing this option. An evaluation of the receipt indicated that it would be circa £765,000 which in itself appears attractive but is actually marginal in terms of site value. This evaluation is based on the constraints within the site which are similar in nature to similar sites in the town centre.
- 3.9 Significantly though a sale of this nature would mean that the Council would in effect lose direct control over the design and delivery timescale for any development on the site. Site ownership would pass to a third party who would then develop the area in line with their own approach. It could be argued that caveats may have been placed on the new owner in any sale document but if market conditions changed the nature of any development could be significantly altered by any purchaser.
- 3.10 The conclusion therefore was that whilst this approach could create a receipt the aspiration relating to this site made the option unattractive. The option in essence does not create the broader value that the Council seeks from the site so was consequently discounted at the initial stages of the work.
- 3.11 The Executive in considering the outline planning submission instructed that further work be carried out to examine the business case to enable detailed due diligence to be applied to the remaining options. This report examines the key routes to delivery of the site.
- 3.12 There are in essence two main development options:
- A joint venture (JV) with a partner to deliver the site. This may be seen as a traditional arrangement to deliver the site. A partner would be sought and a

development agreement signed with them following procurement to deliver a development on the site.

- Local authority direct contracting. The development will be delivered by the Council through the engagement of a specialist team to manage the project. This team would deliver the scheme providing a design to enable a fixed price build contract to be procured.

3.13 The detailed examination of the business case for each option is intended to enable the Executive and subsequently the Council to select its preferred choice for delivery of the development.

3.14 The choice of option is informed by an analysis of the relative risks and rewards offered by each option. This includes consideration of the best approach taking into account the council's adopted design principles. In this case particular consideration has been given to design principle C within the adopted corporate plan.

*“The Council will embrace the principles of a Social enterprise – acting commercially to deliver surplus to reinvest in the delivery of our priority outcomes and services”*

3.15 Whichever delivery route is taken in following this principle we should seek to generate an appropriate surplus within a reasonable time to complement this delivery principle.

3.16 In order to understand how these options work it is important that Members consider what the Council is seeking to achieve on the site. The development proposal is composed essentially of 6 build components which are:

- Residential – 36 units
- Restaurant – Food and Beverage
- Offices/Workspace
- Retail
- Car Park
- High Quality Public Realm

3.17 These components combine to create a viable, sustainable development proposition which delivers a quantum of development that accords with the Town centre area action plan. The components differ in value which is reflected in the analysis of the options available for development. As with all developments the residential element is most valuable and therefore is the core component when choosing an option.

3.18 The **Joint Venture (JV)** option is a delivery mechanism which is well understood by the Council in terms of a tried and tested route to market. In essence the

Council would go to market with the scheme once outline planning permission is secured to seek a development partner. A partnership would be entered into with the Council retaining oversight and control through a project sponsor role. Therefore the significant costs around employment of specialists and build risks would be carried by the JV partner. The contractual arrangements, as a minimum, would need to drive delivery timescales and lay out clear requirements around final design quality.

- 3.19 This option by its nature weights risk relating to the development towards the JV partner. The outcome of this is of course that the JV partner will require an appropriate level of profit to deliver the site. In terms of modelling this option it has been presumed that as a minimum the Council would wish to retain income from the car park component. Any JV would then need to be structured around the remaining components and appropriate profit share arrangements. Profit generated from this option would be dependent on the JV development agreement.
- 3.20 In modelling this option we have assumed that the development partner would seek an appropriate level of return which is effectively generated by the housing component and we have therefore presumed that the value associated with this is taken by the JV partner.
- 3.21 **Local Authority (LA) Direct Contracting.** The Council would appoint a project management team with necessary expertise to deliver its plans. The Council's procurement team is reviewing this approach to ensure that due legal process is applied to appointment of the resource.
- 3.22 The Council would utilise this team to complete the process of securing the necessary reserved matters planning consent and complete any land assembly. In parallel, building contractors would be procured to deliver and construct the final design. This would be through the use of a design and build, fixed price contract. Once the construction of the development is complete the facility would pass over to the Council to maintain, operate and market. The Council will need to consider whether the expertise to undertake this role is available in house or whether outsourcing was appropriate and make appropriate appointments.
- 3.23 In this approach the Council carries all of the build risks but in return owns the asset on completion of the project. This would enable full value to be realised from all elements of the development. The recommended approach would be to realise the value of the residential element soon after completion by sale of this element. The housing market is currently strong with no visible effect from Brexit so value is expected to remain in this component of the scheme. This minimises the risk around taking this option.
- 3.24 This approach has been modelled in the attached finance section of the report. The other variation that has been modelled in the LA direct contracting option is



to retain ownership of the whole site and realise value from the rental value of each element. The Council though could seek to realise value through sale of any or all of the elements but this would of course lead to loss of control over occupation policies, and loss of revenue income generation opportunity.

- 3.25 The report therefore evaluates two variants of the LA direct contracting option to illustrate possible options, although there are a myriad of variant options available.
- 3.26 It should be noted that whichever development route is chosen the Council does need to factor the broader aspirations for the site into its decision. This does determine what value it wishes to secure through the development. Clearly the principles for development of the Coal Orchard area have at their core a desire to achieve a good design and build quality. The intention is to place outstanding public realm at the centre of this approach to create a strong sense of place. This in turn supports the broader concept of cultural aspirations in this area enabling these to become a reality.
- 3.27 This quality aspect will be paramount but will have a corresponding effect on build costs which will inevitably be greater than a basic design. How this quality environment is occupied will also be key to the success of the site. Creating a strong lettings approach will also be a strong feature of the delivery strategy to aid in delivering on the aspirations for the site. This activity will be carried out as an early part of the process to inform the final design process. Market advice has already been obtained from local agents and this will continue as the scheme progresses into the next phase. This knowledge will be vital in the LA direct contracting option to ensure that the return on investment is realised.
- 3.28 Combining a quality environment with a clear lettings approach will create a positive environment within the Coal Orchard. It is also worth noting that whilst this development stands up well as a proposition in its own right it is one half of the Coal Orchard site. The development has been designed and planned on this basis which will enable further growth of The Brewhouse to create an improved cultural offer across the site. The plan to redevelop The Brewhouse is being progressed strongly in parallel with the area covered in this report. The approach to enhancing the public realm will also significantly provide a strong link through the site, north to south from the redeveloped Station to the Town centre.
- 3.29 The development will of course produce a number of jobs through the construction phase. It is also expected that the employment spaces will create a range of jobs across the site. The build itself is a significant investment and this will be further enhanced by incoming businesses who will invest in the town. The residential apartments will also provide new residents living in the town centre who will utilise local amenities.
- 3.30 There are several junctures at which the Council will need to evaluate spend so

will commit the expenditure in stages. This will be managed through the existing Programme Board arrangements. The stages are:

- Appointment of a project management and design team to undertake a reserved matters application
- Tendering a design to a Contractor
- Appointing a preferred Contractor to undertake the build
- Post completion – operate/market the development

3.31 Appendix A of this report gives an indicative high level timeline for both of the main options and illustrates how the development could be delivered.

#### **4 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities**

4.1 The creation of a new development at the Coal Orchard is a specific target contributing to delivery of key theme 2 (b) of the Corporate Plan. This has two components within the corporate strategy:

- Secure detailed planning consent by 30 November 2017
- Decommission St James St Pool by 31 December 2017

4.2 This report therefore directly contributes to delivery of the Corporate Plan through delivery of these two corporate strategy targets. Timescales will need to be monitored and adjusted according to the progress on the adopted approach and this links to the financial appraisal.

#### **5 Finance / Resource Implications**

5.1 The Finance implications are reviewed in Confidential Appendix B of this report.

#### **6 Legal Implications**

6.1 The decision relating to this report will enable the commencement of legal work to deliver the necessary development approach.

6.2 The choice of option will also enable procurement processes to commence, which deliver that option. This will ensure that the council is fully compliant with the appropriate legislation.

#### **7 Environmental Impact Implications**

7.1 The environmental implications will be addressed through the planning process which runs parallel to this decision.

#### **8 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications**

8.1 None related directly to this report. As stated above these issues will be dealt with through the planning process and final design considerations within the

build.

## **9 Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 9.1 This report relates to financing the development. The equality and diversity implications of the development are addressed through the design and planning process.

## **10 Social Value Implications**

- 10.1 At this stage we have not carried out a detailed analysis in this area. However we are aware that when we seek a delivery partner there will be opportunities to explore social value within the procurement and building elements of the project. We will ensure social value is taken fully into account in later stages of the project whichever option is taken.

## **11 Partnership Implications**

- 11.1 These implications will be dependent on the option chose by members. The nature of partnership arrangements will be dictated by that choice. In both options there will be contractual arrangements put in place with partners. The financial arrangements though and direct effects will differ as outlined elsewhere in this report

## **12 Health and Wellbeing Implications**

- 12.1 No known implications in this report.

## **13 Asset Management Implications**

- 13.1 The land which is proposed for development is in the ownership of the Council. This detailed business case and the chosen development option will therefore be key to future management or disposal of the asset.
- 13.2 The Asset Management Team will be involved in the project and have acted as advisors throughout the production of the outline planning application.

## **14 Consultation Implications**

- 14.1 This report relates to the choice of method for delivery of the Coal Orchard regeneration by the Council. The decision is therefore one for councillors acting as a developer to determine so does not require wider community consultation. Any issues relating to nature and design of the development are dealt with through the statutory planning processes.

## **15 Scrutiny Comments / Recommendation**

- 15.1 Scrutiny supported the initial recommendation to Executive that further work was

carried out to assess the business case and apply due diligence to it. This report therefore is an outcome of both the Executive and Scrutiny Committees request for this further work to be provided for consideration.

**Democratic Path:**

- **Executive – Yes**
- **Full Council – Yes**

**Reporting Frequency: Once only**

**List of Appendices**

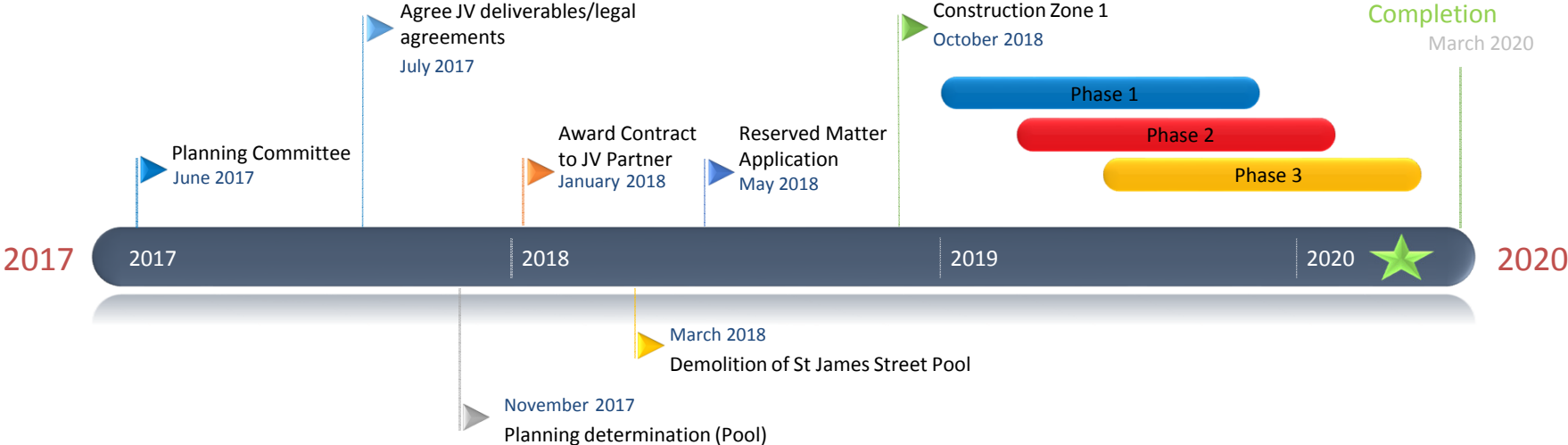
Appendix A	Simplified build programme
Appendix B	Finance implications - CONFIDENTIAL

**Contact Officers**

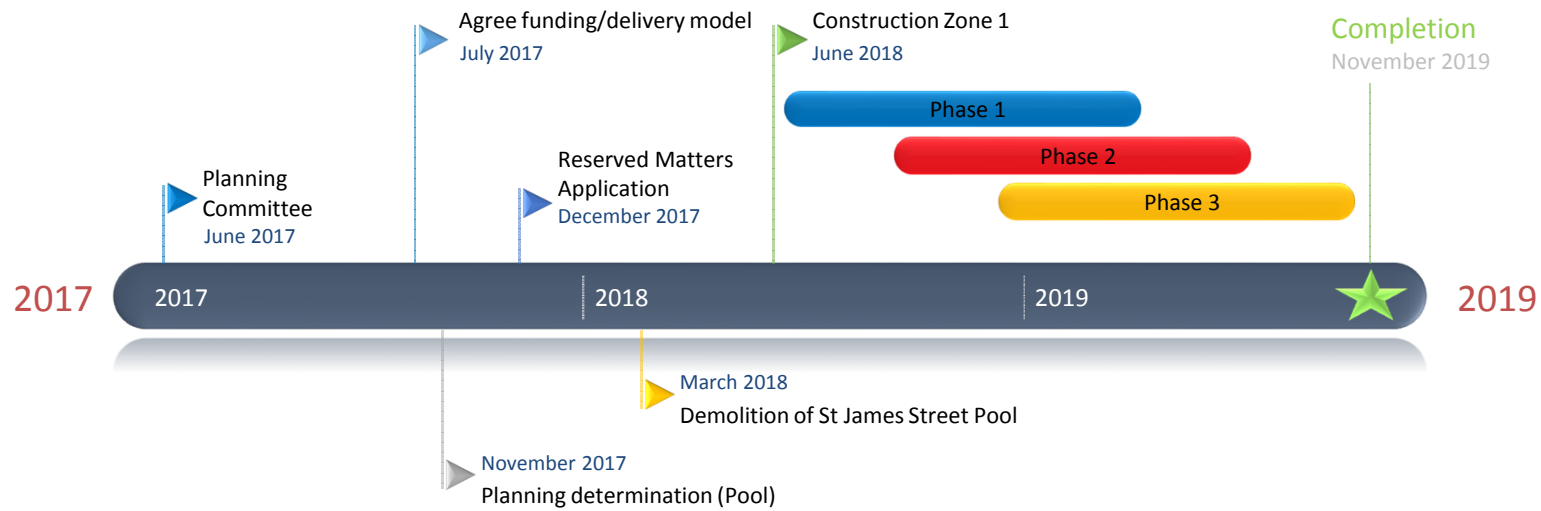
Name	Ian Timms
Direct Dial	01823 356577
Email	itimms@westsomerset.gov.uk

Name	Jo Nacey	Name	Les Owen
Direct Dial	01823 356537	Direct Dial	
Email	j.nacey@tauntondeane.gov.uk	Email	l.owen@tauntondeane.gov.uk

# Coal Orchard - JV Programme



## Coal Orchard – Self Delivery Programme



# Full Council Meeting – 11 July 2017

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

### 1. Fire Safety

- 1.1 Words cannot describe the tragedy at Grenfell Tower, the loss of life and the terrible suffering. As a Council, we take our role as landlord extremely seriously and want to make sure tenants feel reassured that we put their safety and security first. We do not own or manage any properties that could be classified as high-rise. We have a clear compliance plan and that enables us to keep our tenants safe.

### 2. Transformation

- 2.1 The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government acknowledged receipt of our submission in April 2017. Following his recent reappointment to this role, we have been in touch with the Rt Hon Sajid Javid to request engagement on our proposal to create a new District Council for the area currently served by Taunton Deane and West Somerset Councils. We will update on progress when we know more.
- 2.2 In the meantime, we are progressing our Transformation ambitions. The focus of recent weeks has been on mobilising the team to deliver this and we now have a programme in place. We have engaged external support on change management, and are currently out to procurement for the technology that will support us working in a very different way.
- 2.3 We are making excellent progress on our plans for refurbishment of The Deane House and I hope many of you took the chance to attend the briefing recently held by the team to share early thinking on the future design of the building. Watch out for future updates and chances to get involved. Thank you to those Members involved in the two Member Working Groups (Technology and New Council) that are supporting this work – a significant time commitment but it has delivered some excellent work and is really helping ensure that Members are involved – at ground level – in this important task.
- 2.4 The focus over the next few months is to move to “implementation” of the plan. We will be starting work on process re-design, rolling out training to ensure our employees are in the strongest position possible for the changes that are coming, and working on the design of our new organisation.
- 2.5 Engagement with our staff team is continuing and we will be doing some “different” things too – watch out for further video style briefings, wall art and “#start the conversation” activity throughout our buildings. We have great talent in our pool of employees and we will be using this to make sure we are

“doing things differently” and getting quality engagement and feedback from staff.

- 2.6 Members will very shortly be offered the opportunity to join our employees on some Customer Training – which is quite unlike any training we have done before as it focuses on behaviour rather than the usual skills training approach. I encourage you all to take this opportunity and really think about how this can make a difference to our roles as Councillors and ultimately make things better for all our customers, as well as receive some excellent training alongside our staff.
- 2.7 Later in the summer we will also be sharing some training on “commerce” which will stimulate our thinking on what we can do as a Council, and again I encourage you all to take up this opportunity when it comes.

### **3. A358**

- 3.1 Highways England had originally planned to close their consultation on the A358 scheme in May but due to the General Election they have extended the consultation until the 16 July 2017. The Community Scrutiny Committee considered a report on 16 May 2017 setting out the principles of a response. I am pleased that the report was well received and a number of the Parish Councils have thanked us for the thoroughness of the report and agree with the concerns we have highlighted.
- 3.2 Somerset County Council (SCC) was somewhat hampered by the Election period and have recently published their draft response which was considered by their Place Scrutiny Committee last week and they have made a non-key decision to respond to the consultation using their report as a basis for doing so. Our officers have collaborated and shared information so, helpfully, the two Councils are raising similar issues. Councillor Edwards and I met with Councillors Fothergill and Hall a couple of weeks ago and have agreed that we will try and submit a combined response by the new deadline.
- 3.3 Highways England have, after the General Election, been invited to present their proposals to various Parish Councils and community gatherings (previously they refused all such requests citing Purdah for both the SCC Elections and the General Election). Taunton Deane presented its views on the consultation at a very well attended meeting arranged by Hatch Beauchamp Parish Council and will attend where possible other Parish / Community based meetings to help people to understand the proposals and offer our views in line with the Scrutiny Committee Report.

### **4. Firepool, Taunton**

- 4.1 Taunton Deane Borough Council has received a revised outline planning application for development on land at Firepool in Taunton. An application was first submitted at the end of 2015 and was considered by the Council's



Planning Committee last summer but was refused in line with officer recommendations. Concerns centred on layout and design, rather than the development and the mix of uses. Since then, the Council has worked with the developers St Modwen to address the issues, particularly those regarding design.

- 4.2 Firepool regeneration remains the Council's priority. We have come a long way since development of the site was proposed and a great deal of necessary preparatory work has been carried out along with SCC progressing the Northern Inner Distributor Road. Completion of this road is essential to provide the main access to the proposed new development.

## **5. Parking Strategy**

- 5.1 In June Taunton Deane Borough Council embarked on a Parking Strategy which will set out a vision for improving the quality of its off-street car parking over the next decade. One of the key objectives as the Local Authority is to encourage people to visit our town centre and help our local businesses thrive and the way in which we provide and manage car parking is central to that.
- 5.2 The Council has appointed leading transport and urban design specialists, WSP UK Limited, in partnership with SCC, to carry out the surveys. Our surveys will help inform our Parking Strategy and ensure that it works for town centre visitors, including those who work, shop, eat, drink and live there.

## **6. The Brewhouse Theatre**

- 6.1 Just over four years ago the future of The Brewhouse Theatre looked bleak. It was forced to close after going into administration. Taunton Deane Borough Council, which had grant-funded the Theatre stepped in to buy back the remaining years of the lease from the administrators and Taunton Theatre Association (TTA) was formed to take on responsibility for running The Brewhouse. It was saved.
- 6.2 Now, the Council and TTA are looking at how The Brewhouse can expand and become a regional 21<sup>st</sup> century arts centre. Built in the 1970s, The Brewhouse was designed to meet the then needs of the area but it is too small to accommodate some touring productions – it needs to grow. The plans for the expansion were unveiled on 13 June 2017.
- 6.3 The revitalised theatre would wrap around the existing, enlarged auditorium, working in harmony to preserve the adjoining listed 18<sup>th</sup> century building. This would provide a range of new and modern spaces such as studios, cinema and gallery, while making the most of the river frontage and creating the potential for pop-up performances, markets and events. Also included in the preliminary plans are 8 flats which can be for sale or rent subject to a Business Case.

- 6.4 Securing the funds needed of around £20 million to deliver these ambitious plans for The Brewhouse expansion will not be easy but having a viable and deliverable plan is a vital first step. The Council is now committed to working closely with TTA, Arts Taunton and others to develop the final plans and secure the necessary funds to bring our ambitions to reality.

## **7. Wellington Heritage**

- 7.1 Specialist help is being drafted in to assist with the major task of helping to preserve some of Wellington's heritage. Historic England has agreed to fund most of the costs of an expert as Project Manager, with the balance met by Taunton Deane, to focus on how the town's rich heritage can be saved for future generations. Work will be targeted at the crumbling former Mill buildings – Tonedale and Toneworks – as well as Cornhill in the centre of Wellington and Wellington Monument.
- 7.2 Wellington's heritage is extremely important both locally and nationally. I am delighted that Historic England recognise that specialist help is needed and will fund an expert to focus on conservation. A great deal of hard work has been done to reach this point – it is really good news for Wellington. We can be justly proud of our local history and hope real progress can be made in preserving the past.
- 7.3 The Project Manager, currently being recruited, will lead the conservation management programme of a number of high profile regeneration heritage at risk projects.
- 7.4 Tonedale and Toneworks are among the best preserved examples of historic textile manufacture in the South West of England. Built in the 1830s by Fox Brothers, the Toneworks buildings were used for finishing cloth produced at the Mill. Extensions were added over the years as part of the Mill's development. It is considered a rare example of a 19<sup>th</sup> century cloth dyeing and finishing works and still contains the remnants of historic machinery. Tonedale Mill has planning consent for the conversion of the buildings to apartments. The Mill was built in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century for Fox Brothers and was used for wool preparation and yarn spinning.
- 7.5 Regeneration work at Cornhill is underway with the clean-up complete after a vacant building in the historic street became a refuge for pigeons, despite attempts to get owners to take responsibility for the clean-up. Officers threatened action under the 1990 Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act against an absentee overseas landlord after months of negotiations had stalled.
- 7.6 Works undertaken have included, cleaning the building inside and out and installing measures designed to stop pigeons roosting and entering the building. Negotiations are also underway with a local developer and potential housing association to move forward with housing scheme at the rear, which

would include the repair and re-use of fire-damaged historic buildings which have been derelict for a number of years.

- 7.5 I would like to take this opportunity of paying particular credit to Fiona Webb, Regeneration and Infrastructure Manager, who has done so much to move this, seemingly intractable, problem forward. Thank you.

## 8. Taunton Garden Town

- 8.1 Taunton Deane Borough Council received the Garden Town funding in January 2017. Specific details for the key projects are outlined below:-

- **Development Plan:** the adoption of the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP) provides a complete suite of development plan documents for Taunton including the Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan (TTCAAP adopted 2008); the Taunton Core Strategy (adopted 2012) and the SADMP (adopted 2016). The Council was intending to progress work with a review of the TTCAAP, however we recognise that the recent award of Garden Town status provides an opportunity to widen the scope of this work and provide a comprehensive plan for Taunton supported by a detailed phasing and delivery plan
- **Taunton Garden Town Plan:** The Council recently approved the proposed workstream for a new Taunton Garden Town Plan. This plan will review the current vision for Taunton, working in partnership with key stakeholders to develop a new vision beyond 2028 and embracing Taunton's new Garden Town status, update policies and allocations in relation to Taunton and provide a more detailed delivery/phasing plan for the supporting infrastructure. The plan will also explore opportunities for innovation in housing delivery and meeting older person housing requirements.
- The additional work will provide greater detail on the critical points at which key infrastructure is required and support future funding bids as well as the allocation of our local infrastructure funding streams.

- 8.2 At this stage progress has been made in the following areas since Garden Town status was awarded in January 2017:-

- Land Use Consultants, Environmental Planning, Design and Management, have been commissioned to update the Green Infrastructure Strategy, to identify key projects for place-making and delivering quality public realm.
- In the process of commissioning consultants to update the economic projections and review employment/retail/leisure land requirements.
- Station Quarter: The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) has progressed discussions with Network Rail to transfer the largest development site and a joint HCA/Taunton Deane commission for Masterplanning and viability work is expected to be complete by

February 2018. The Council is continuing to engage with the HCA over the support that can be provided towards the delivery of new housing as part of the Hinkley Housing Zone designation.

- The Council has allocated its share of the Hinkley Housing Fund, to create additional bedspaces to mitigate the impact of hosting its anticipated share of the construction workforce.
- More detailed work has commenced on the Bus Rapid Transit network a key transport proposal to improving the public transport offer in Taunton.

**8.3 Further Capacity Funding Bid 2017/2018** - Officers have developed a further Capacity Funding bid for 2017/2018 and this was submitted to meet the 26 May 2017 deadline. These bids are currently being assessed by the HCA and the Department of Communities and Local Government.

**8.4** To date Taunton Deane has received £475,000 of Garden Town Capacity Funding. The 2017/2018 Capacity Funding bid was submitted on 26 May 2017 and requested additional funding of £560,000 - £680,000. If successful this additional Garden Town Capacity Funding will be targeted towards:-

- Progressing master planning for key sites to inform the Garden Town Plan, to explore the potential for innovation in place making and delivery.
- Progressing infrastructure project planning work and developing a detailed Infrastructure Delivery Strategy/Implementation Plan, to inform the Taunton Garden Town Plan. This work is critical to deliver place-making and to achieve accelerated housing delivery through the timely provision of key infrastructure projects.
- Moving forward the delivery of the new garden communities, the town centre regeneration sites, all key sites within the Hinkley Housing Zone area are critical to achieve accelerated delivery. These sites also offer the opportunity to explore innovative housing delivery models.
- Commissioning specialist expertise and assistance with legal, acquisition, land assembly and financing to address key barriers to delivery. This is critical to accelerate delivery and ensure quality place-making and long term stewardship of the Garden Town.
- Specialist support/officer roles to inform/assist a Garden Town Delivery Team and explore innovative models for accelerating housing delivery to support the Government's housing priorities and to ensure quality place-making is achieved.

## **9. Nexus 25**

**9.1** Work continues in preparation for the publication of the draft 'Local Development Order' (LDO) for its statutory period of consultation, which is programmed to run for six weeks from 10 July to the 18 August 2017 (the statutory requirement being for a four week period). During July the statutory consultation on the Environmental Statement will also take place.

- 9.2 The findings of the consultation and the LDO proposed for adoption will be considered by the Community Scrutiny Committee on the 19 September 2017, the intention being that it will propose that the LDO should be submitted for a decision by Full Council on the 3 October 2017. The final making of the LDO will rely on planning permission for the M5 Junction 25 Improvement Scheme being in place.

## **10. Official Opening of Tangier Central, Taunton**

- 10.1 I was delighted to represent the Mayor at the official opening of the fantastic newly refurbished office facility and to formally welcome the developer, CCLA's investment into Tangier Central. The move demonstrates confidence in the town's future and is helping to support business growth by providing quality space to do so. It has already secured a number of lets and talking to others.
- 10.2 Tangier Central, located within walking distance of the town centre, offering green space and close to the River Tone will help deliver a much needed base from which businesses can realise their potential. All good qualities for employers looking to invest in the town.

## **11. International Cricket comes to Taunton**

- 11.1 The first men's international match was played at Somerset County Cricket Club on 23 June 2017 when England played South Africa in one of the three T20 matches scheduled. The Women's World Cup matches start on the 26 June.
- 11.2 I was delighted to attend and what a fantastic match it was, playing to a sell-out crowd of 12,500 spectators who witnessed a thrilling match which England, unfortunately, lost by three runs!
- 11.3 It was a tremendous atmosphere and, in addition, a facility we can be justly proud of in our town centre. Media coverage was beamed across the world with a global TV viewing figure of 858,000 and many more following online.
- 11.4 Taunton Deane Borough Council was fulsomely praised by the Chairman for all the help and support we have provided over the 13 years it has taken to reach this point. To me it was the very successful conclusion of an awful lot of planning and investment by a dedicated and committed team on both sides. Culminating in a major success for the club and a major contribution to the economy of Taunton, particularly the promotion of our County Town to so many watching across the world.

## **12. The Deane House**

- 12.1 Taunton Deane Borough Council is embarking on a radical programme to change the way it works and deliver services to make it fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Customers will be provided with greater choice to access services while the Council will make substantial savings to the public purse.
- 12.2 The refurbished accommodation at The Deane House will create fit-for-purpose premises while minimising the space needed for its own staff. This will free up space that can be let on a commercial basis so providing a return that reduces The Deane House costs to the taxpayer.
- 12.3 The first partner to share the accommodation is Avon and Somerset Police who will be moving in to The Deane House from current premises in Shuttern which has the further advantage of ensuring the Police Station is retained in Taunton.
- 12.4 The Council is exploring new ways of communicating with staff and Members and the video, made by a member of staff, was distributed widely. It is designed for internal use and to secure design suggestions from staff and Members.
- 12.5 As a Council we no longer need the space we required when The Deane House was built 30 years ago. In fact, we only require about one third of the space we did. This is in line with many local authorities across the country who have rationalised their accommodation to embrace modern ways of working. The Deane House refurbishment and sharing the office space with others is a very visible symbol to staff and our community that the way we work will radically change.

### **13. CDS Phase 2 Gigaclear Ultrafast Broadband Installation**

- 13.1 Gigaclear have been appointed and have now carried out necessary surveys and identified the areas they will carry out their first installation which in Taunton Deane is from Corfe to Churchstanton/Churchinford. This links with the areas already being installed in the Blackdown Hills.
- 13.2 The service being provided is "Fibre to the Premises" (FTTP) which can deliver speeds from 50mb up to 1gb subject to the subscribers requirements and it is a completely new system with all fibre placed underground.
- 13.3 This will be a tremendous asset for the rural areas which should start going live later this year with all works scheduled for completion by the end of 2019. CDS has already connected 320,000 homes and businesses to better broadband and by 2019 aims to raise that to at least 380,000 as part of Phase 2. The Government wants to increase the overall coverage to at least 95% of properties but this target is heavily dependent on the private sector investing in its commercial roll-out.

13.4 For those in rural areas that have not already done so please do register an interest on “Gigaclear Post Code checker” and this will tell you when coverage to your post code may be expected or when it is likely to be known.

#### **14. 75th Anniversary of Formation of 40 Commando Royal Marines**

14.1 I was honoured to be invited to the Anniversary Parade recently and what a fantastic parade it was with precision marching from well turned out troops. In his address the Commanding Officer ran through an impressive list of postings where the Royal Marines services had been required and said they are on call for immediate posting to anywhere in the world, should the need arise

14.2 It was also acknowledged that their base at Norton Manor Camp was established in 1984 and they really appreciated the welcome and support received from our local community.

14.3 The event was well supported by family, friends and veterans and it was great to see the support given to the families of the serving Commandos in recognition of the support they, in turn give those on active service. We can be proud to be hosting 40 Commando in our midst. Reference was made to the recent announcement of their relocation but we were informed this is now under review. Hopefully this may mean a reprieve and Taunton continues to be their base.

Councillor John Williams

# **Council Meeting – 11 July 2017**

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

### **1. Parks and Open spaces**

- 1.1 Vivary Park has now been planted out and is looking glorious. I receive many positive comments about the floral displays and see an amazing number of people taking photographs of the park. The rose garden is looking particularly good this year and the scent is lovely to walk through or sit and have lunch. Vivary has again achieved a certificate of merit from Trip Advisor.

### **2. Community Leisure**

- 2.1 We are working with the Friends of Longrun Meadow to improve the footpaths around the meadow which are so well used by walkers and Parkrun.
- 2.2 The Playing Pitch Strategy continues through consultation and all your input is appreciated.
- 2.3 The Member workshops for the Leisure Procurement will have happened by now and I hope as many of you as possible took the opportunity to engage with this important project.

### **3. Summer Sunday Bandstand Concerts**

- 3.1 The Vivary Bandstand Concerts are well underway and have drawn good crowds. Friends of Wellington Park summer season is also proving popular as always – sometime in spite of the occasional poor weather!

### **4. GLL (Taunton Deane)**

#### **Volunteer Event**

- 4.1 GLL recently held a celebration event with afternoon tea at Cheddon Fitzpaine Village Hall to thank the 40 volunteers who support the Walk Well programme in Taunton Deane. GLL's Head of Sport and Communities, Phil Lane, presented awards and certificates to the volunteers and Andrew Martin, GB Para-badminton player and recipient of a GLL Sports Foundation Award, inspired the volunteers with stories of his sporting journey as a GB Para-badminton player.

#### **Health Walk Outing**

- 4.2 On 31 May 2017, Wellington Walk Leaders organised a day trip to the South West Deer Sanctuary, followed by lunch at a nearby venue.



### **Sports Fest in Wellington**

- 4.3 On 31 May 2017, GLL planned a Sports Fest in partnership with the Wellington ONE team. The aim of the event was to put on half-term activities for families (targeted at deprived wards) and showcase all the sporting activities available locally for children and adults to enjoy.
- 4.4 Just under 300 adults and children attended, aged from 0-70+ years. In total 19 different clubs/agencies attended and local sports clubs provided taster sessions of activities for all ages including Bowls, Walking Football, Boccia, Boxing, Tae Kwon Do, Rounders, Zumba, Football and Tennis. The local Police, Fire and children's centre teams also delivered children's safety messages and activities, as part of National Child Safety week.

### **Dementia Awareness Week**

- 4.5 Wellington Dementia Alliance organised a full programme of activities across Wellington to raise awareness of dementia in the town. GLL took part in three different activities to support the campaign.
- 4.6 Walk Well in Wellington included a dementia wellbeing walk within their programme, offering a choice of either a long or short route followed by a coffee stop at the Beam Bridge Inn. Additional walk buddies were in place to support those with dementia or their carers.
- 4.7 A Dementia Roadshow was held in the centre of Wellington and GLL promoted a wide range of activities that are available. The event provided great networking opportunities for local people and staff to meet other organisations. A short 20 minute health walk was also provided at the Roadshow.
- 4.8 A game of Petanque had been arranged at Wellington Sports Centre; however, due to the very poor weather conditions indoor curling was offered instead.

### **Mental Health Awareness Week**

- 4.9 To celebrate and raise awareness of Mental Health Awareness Week amongst the community of North Taunton, GLL ran a Wellbeing Walk from Lyngford Park, in partnership with the Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Lyngford Park Surgery Patient Participation Group. 13 people attended long and short wellbeing walks, which highlighted both the benefits of being physically active outdoors and enjoying nature in a built up area.

### **Lambrook Activity Day**

- 4.10 In partnership with Taunton Deane's Community Empowerment Officer and the Link Power Team, GLL ran an event for families at Lambrook Road, Taunton on 30 May 2017. The event promoted National Smile Month and families enjoyed a discovering hunt, sports taster sessions of Volleyball, Badminton, Hockey, Tennis and Football, and making healthy smoothies.

### **Swim Skills Badge Testing For Brownies and Cubs**

- 4.11 During May half-term Blackbrook Leisure Centre and Spa offered two days of swim sessions for local Beavers, Brownies and Scouts to achieve a variety of their swim badges. The bookable sessions proved to be very popular, with 82 Beavers, Cubs and Brownies attending.

#### **Inclusive Membership Launch**

- 4.12 GLL's inclusive membership for disabled people was launched in June 2017 from all Better Leisure Centres in Taunton Deane. The Better Inclusive membership gives disabled people full, anytime access to GLL's gyms, pools and fitness classes for a discounted price. GLL will be engaging with local disability groups to promote and raise awareness of the benefits of keeping active for those with disabilities.

Councillor Catherine Herbert

# **Council Meeting – 11 July 2017**

## **Report of Councillor Richard Parrish – Corporate Resources**

### **1. Electoral Services**

- 1.1 Electoral Services has been very busy since the last report. Firstly, there were the County Council Elections, with eleven Electoral Divisions in the Taunton Deane area, held on 4 May 2017, followed by the General Election on 8 June 2017.
- 1.2 On the 8 June there was also a Wellington (North) Town Council by-election and the Trull and Staplehay Neighbourhood Planning Referendum.
- 1.3 It was particularly pleasing to see a high turn-out of 73.9% for the General Election in the Taunton Deane area.
- 1.4 It is not always appreciated what is involved regarding the logistics required for the running of the election process. For example, in regard to the General Election, the Elections Team consisting of two full time and two part-time employees (who are also responsible for running the election in West Somerset) are obviously key but only the tip of the iceberg, as for Taunton Deane alone, there are over 600 roles required including Presiding Officers, Polls Clerks, postal vote opening, Polling Station Inspectors, Count Supervisors, counters, security staff as well as support from other parts of the organisation for things like PR and financial expertise.
- 1.5 The process for preparing for the Electoral Register Canvass starts in July so no real time to rest and recuperate as far as the team is concerned.
- 1.6 I trust the Council will join me in congratulating the Electoral Services Team for its hard work and dedication for a job well done.

### **2. The Mayoralty and Democratic Services**

- 2.1 Since the last meeting of Full Council, Democratic Services has been very busy ensuring that the Council's three major events to welcome our new Mayor – Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey – to her year in office went according to plan.
- 2.2 The Annual Council meeting held on 11 May 2017 at Somerset County Cricket Club was attended by well over 350 people – a new attendance record! This was followed the next evening by the Mayor's Celebration Dinner at Oake Manor Golf Club which was enjoyed by all those who attended and a week later on Sunday 21 May 2017 by the Civic Service at St James Church, Taunton.

- 2.3 Since then, the Mayor has led the bi-annual Civic Visit to our twin-town, Lisieux in France and has welcomed visitors from our other twin-town, Konigslutter in Germany. She has also hosted the Armed Forces Flag Raising Ceremony on 19 June 2017 and led silent tributes at The Deane House in memory of those who have died in the recent terrorist attacks in Manchester and London and the tragic fire at Grenfell House.
- 2.4 Combined with many other events that take place this time of year, the Mayor has had quite a hectic couple of months.
- 2.5 As well as assisting Electoral Services with the recent County Council and Parliamentary Elections, Democratic Services has again begun the task of fully supporting the Council's meetings following the usual brief hiatus either side of the Annual Council meeting.
- 2.6 Work is also currently taking place to arrange suitable alternative meeting venues for the Committees once the refurbishment works to The Deane House commence later in the year.

### 3. The Deane House Accommodation Project

- 3.1 The Deane House Accommodation Project has been commenced and is now gathering momentum. To assist members understanding of the timeline plan please refer to the table below:-

Name	Duration	Start Date (Monday)	Finish Date (Friday)
<b>Pre-construction Contract Award</b>			11.05.17
<b>Concept Design (RIBA Stage 2)</b>	3 weeks	22.05.17	09.06.17
Concept Design for TDBC Approval	1 week	12.06.17	16.06.17
<b>Developed Design (RIBA Stage 3)</b>	3 weeks	19.06.17	07.07.17
Developed Design for TDBC Approval	1 week	10.07.17	14.07.17
<b>Technical Design (RIBA Stage 4)</b>	4 weeks	17.07.17	11.08.17
Technical Design for TDBC Approval	1 week	14.08.17	18.08.17
Tender Period Commences	6 weeks	21.08.17	29.09.17
Tender Submission, Contract Award	1 week	02.10.17	06.10.17

- 3.2 Following the preconstruction phase, we will enter into a JCT (Joint Contracts

Tribunal) contract for the actual works which will be carried out in three phases, plus enabling works at the front end as follows:-

Phase 1 First Floor	October 2017 to February 2018;
Phase 2 Ground Floor	February 2018 to August 2018; and
Phase 3 Top Floor	August 2018 to October 2018.

- 3.3 Enabling Works in June 2017 to August 2017 includes decant of staff around The Deane House. Work is also currently taking place to arrange suitable alternative meeting venues for the Committees once the refurbishment works to The Deane House commence later in the year. The facilities Management Team are heavily involved in supporting the decant.
- 3.4 A display of indicative plans (Design DH) for the proposed works together with pictures of designs used elsewhere have been on display in The Deane House for staff and Members to view. This has been well attended and views expressed by attendees have been very positive. Further consultation has taken place which ended on 30 June 2017. All responses will be considered in the formulation of the final plans.
- 3.5 We will be sharing the next stage of developed plans and design progress with all staff in a similar manner commencing the week beginning 10 July 2017 as shown in the above table (3.1).

#### **4. ICT Services**

- 4.1 The ICT Service is heavily involved in the rollout of the new telephony solution to support The Deane House accommodation moves and is supporting the procurement exercise for procuring the software to enable the delivery of the new operating model element of the transformation.
- 4.2 The ICT Member Working Group are closely involved with the Transformation Technology procurement and are monitoring developments as they progress, concurrently changes are taking place to ensure our network remains PSN compliant.
- 4.3 A review of resourcing requirements to identify the capacity required to deliver the transformation and business as usual technology projects is also underway.

#### **5. Revenues and Benefits**

- 5.1 The Revenues Team is making good progress in reducing the significant volume of work that typically accumulates this time of year from annual billing. While slightly below target, collection is broadly on track for both Council Tax and Business Rates. The Team is performing well in speed of benefit processing for 2017/2018 with the average time to reassess Housing Benefit at under 6 days from when the customer tells us of a change in their

circumstances. The working out of new claims is on average within 23 days of the date they are submitted.

- 5.2 In July 2017, it is expected we will finalise arrangements for delivery of a Corporate Counter Fraud Service through officers employed by Powys County Council. The new team consists of experienced Investigation Officers and will be self-financing as payment will be dependent on their success in detecting fraud. As well as carrying out reactive investigations from referrals from our staff and the public, there will be extensive analysis of data that will be cross matched for anomalies.
- 5.3 The Corporate Scrutiny Committee considered a report on 25 May 2017 to agree options for public consultation on potentially changing our Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme for 2018/2019. Until recently, CTS administration has been both cost effective and efficient as in most claims, we have been able to use information supplied by claimants for a Housing Benefit claim or directly from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).
- 5.4 Since the roll out of Universal Credit, CTS administration has become increasingly difficult. Universal Credit can be adjusted every month according to variations in the customer's income and even negligible changes mean we need to reassess their CTS award under our current scheme. When we change CTS, we need to issue amended Council Tax bills and adjust direct debit arrangements. Consequently, with more people claiming Universal Credit, administration of our existing CTS scheme is becoming progressively burdensome, as well as increasingly complex for our customers. An Income Band CTS scheme could target financial support to those who most need it, whilst simplifying administration so small changes in income will not alter the CTS award.
- 5.5 Following agreement from the Corporate Scrutiny Committee, on 3 July 2017 we will start public consultation to seek views on changing our local CTS scheme for working age people from 2018/2019. We will be consulting on the following 3 options:-
  - (i) An Income Band CTS scheme;
  - (ii) Retain our current scheme but reduce maximum CTS from 80% to 70%; and
  - (iii) Retain our current scheme but introduce entitlement limits so that customers with an award above or below a certain level would no longer receive CTS.
- 5.6 Any changes to our scheme from 2018/2019 will not affect pension age CTS recipients as they will continue to receive support of up to 100% through a scheme set by the Government. However, everyone liable to pay Council Tax pays for the CTS scheme through their Council Tax payments. Therefore, it is important we get a broad cross section of views, regardless of whether residents receive CTS or not.

- 5.7 Public consultation will be for eight weeks and will close on 27 August 2017. Officers from the Revenues and Benefits Service will interview a random selection of households in every Parish to obtain their views. We will also be seeking views on our options to change the CTS scheme from welfare support agencies and advice groups, such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, as well as inviting further consultation responses through our website.
- 5.8 The outcomes of the consultation will be reported to Members in due course.

## **6. Corporate Services**

### **Corporate Performance and Strategy**

- 6.1 The Quarter 4 performance report for 2016/2017 has been produced and will be going to Corporate Scrutiny in July.
- 6.2 Work is being undertaken to understand the Data Protection changes that will come into force next year.
- 6.3 The Corporate Risk Register has recently been refreshed and reviewed by the Management Team.

### **Communications**

- 6.4 The External Communications Team has done a really good job on promoting the Litter Campaign and continue to respond as necessary about communications issues. The in-house team are working closely with the Transformation Programme to support the future communications required. Staff and Members are being involved at all stages of development.

### **Customer Services Project**

- 6.5 We have recently given notice to Somerset County Council (SCC) that we do not intend to extend the temporary 12 month extended shared service arrangement that we put in place in December 2016 when the service returned from Southwest One (SWO).
- 6.6 We are working with SCC to facilitate a smooth return of the service to our direct management in December 2017.

### **SWO Succession Project**

- 6.7 This project is now largely completed and has seen the successful return of services and migration of systems. A detailed update report will go to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee in July. The system replacements include the launch of the new website which has gone well and provides the platform upon which we can build and improve through the Transformation Programme.

- 6.8 At a lunchtime event on 20 June 2017, which was attended by some 35 staff members, I expressed the thanks of the Council for the dedication and expertise to all that have guided us to a very satisfactory conclusion in returning the services in house previously provided by SWO.

## **7. Resources and Support Services**

### **HR and Organisational Development**

- 7.1 Three payroll runs have now been completed and the team has quickly adapted to the new processes and procedures. The General Election meant that we had to set up all election staff on the new payroll which was a challenge but was achieved. The next stage is the development of the HR information system i.e. leave booking, travel and expenses via the HR system, which will now be the focus for the next quarter.

### **Accommodation move**

- 7.2 We are working with the Health and Safety Officer to review and develop policies to ensure that staff know how to set up their work stations correctly when they move out of their current accommodation and guidance for both managers and staff on employee wellbeing, maintaining contact and available support.

### **Apprenticeship Levy**

- 7.3 This came into force in April 2017 and the levy is set at 0.5% of our annual pay bill – approximately £70,000. The levy can be drawn down to pay for the approved training of apprentices and the development of existing staff.
- 7.4 We have increased the number of apprenticeships we are offering this year and are working together with local colleges and training providers to ensure that we utilise this training resource to its potential.

### **Wellbeing**

- 7.5 The HR Officers attended a Wellbeing Training Day with colleagues from across the South West region. There were some interesting ideas which we intend to develop for staff particularly with regard to men's mental health. We will also be training several mental health first aiders, to act as a first point of contact for staff to enable them to discuss their concerns and get advice on where and how to access support.

### **Procurement Team**

- 7.6 The team continue to provide support and training in respect of the implementation of the E5 system. The focus is to build the reporting mechanism that will help maximise the benefits from the way the system has been designed to operate.



- 7.7 The Invitation to Tender has been issued for the Unified Transaction Portal (UTP). This is a major procurement project in which the team have played a key role in both the market analysis and specification design.
- 7.8 Tenders that have either been recently awarded or are currently being evaluated include:-
- Estate Management Consultancy Services (6 lots);
  - Managed Print solution;
  - Works Contractor – Moorland Place; and
  - Employment and Retail Study.
- 7.9 In addition to the UTP (outlined above) and the more general Transformation Project, major areas of focus include:-
- Working with the Property Team to plan and support major procurement projects;
  - Similarly working with the Housing Enabling and Development Team to support major projects; and
  - Increasing the exposure of staff to managing procurement projects. The aim being to increase their knowledge and experience, the end goal being to create 'go to' specialists in various operational areas – e.g. Fleet, ICT, general office services.

## 8. Finance

- 8.1 The finalising of the outturn reports for both Councils and briefing Members on the options for any potential underspend is underway. Also, the Finance Team is looking at trends to find early indications of underspends that may occur in 2017/2018 which may influence our decisions in-year.
- 8.2 **Statement of Accounts** – The Statement of Accounts have been produced for both Councils and the unaudited versions are now on the websites. We continue to review these alongside the auditors until these are signed off for Taunton Deane in July and for West Somerset in September.
- 8.3 **External Audit** – As part of the Statement of Accounts approval process we are now in the audit period and the accounts inspection period (12 June until 21 July 2017) where members of the public can come in and ask questions of staff in relation to the entries in the accounts.
- 8.4 **Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)** – We are looking at the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the MTFP to understand and share with Members the challenges we face in setting a balanced budget in future years and identifying opportunities to enhance our income generation.
- 8.5 **New Finance and Procurement System** – We are working hard to reach a BAU (Business as usual) position with our new finance system. At the same time, we are continuing to train our staff to ensure we are using the functionality to inform our finance decisions going forward. We think the new

system will help budget holders and other stakeholders understand their costs and income streams better and, in turn, help them make the best of the budgets they have available.

Councillor Richard Parrish

# Council Meeting – 11 July 2017

## Report of Councillor Mrs Jane Warmington - Community Leadership

*The strategic vision for Taunton Deane's most disadvantaged areas is that residents lives will improve significantly and that these priority areas will look better, feel safer and in the future place a more proportionate demand on public services. These services will be delivered in urban areas through co-ordinated, frontline, problem-solving, multiagency one teams of individuals providing early help and based together in these areas. Rural parishes with more scattered communities will be helped to access services through community centres and local village agents identifying, signposting and supporting isolated residents to get the help they need. Urban priority areas need excellent education and health facilities close by which are then accessible to all if we are to build independence, resilience and raise aspirations in individuals, families and communities so as to sustain improvements and reduce the need and costs of intervention in the future.*

### **1. Fire Safety Update - Following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower, Taunton**

- 1.1 The horror of the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in London was terrifying and deeply upsetting. Taunton Deane Borough Council has been reassuring its residents about fire safety in their homes and how it is managed. All Local Authorities and Registered Housing Providers (RHPs) are re-inspecting their properties as a matter of urgency and the Department of Communities and Local Government has written to them about this.
- 1.2 Taunton Deane does not own any high-rise tower blocks (described as more than four storeys high or above 18 m in height). Our tallest blocks of flats are four storeys and the vast majority are two-storeys. Any Council buildings with communal areas are risk assessed regularly as part of a fire safety plan.
- 1.3 The Council has a clear plan to ensure it complies with the relevant legislation and its requirements. Some of our non-traditional housing has been fitted with cladding to improve insulation and reduce condensation. These buildings are two-storey properties and the material used complies with regulations, including fire safety.
- 1.4 There are no current plans to fit any water sprinklers in our buildings and no provision has been made for these in the recently revised Housing Business Plan. A full Fire Safety Position Statement is being undertaken which will be published as soon as it is complete.
- 1.5 Gas Servicing was brought in house this April and each address on gas has an annual service and fire safety check within ten to twelve months of the last. With so many Council properties (5,800 and the majority on gas) these are ongoing throughout the year. The Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for these in May 2017 was 99%. The only reason this was not 100% was due to a resident being away to look after her terminally ill father. This property has now been safety checked and we are on target to complete 100% of gas safety checks at the end of June. We take our gas servicing very seriously indeed.

- 1.6 The Council has built a strong relationship with its tenants over recent years through the monthly Tenants Services Management Board (TSMB) and the Tenants' Forum as well as through our traditional Housing Estate Officers visiting tenants. Senior officers have met members of the TSMB to update them and to let them know that tenants will be provided with detailed, updated information about fire safety shortly.
- 1.7 Tenants have been made aware that the Council has no high-rise housing over four-storeys and has not used the type of cladding linked to the terrible tragedy at Grenfell Tower. They have also been assured that the Council has a robust programme of fire risk assessments in place and with TSMB we will continue to monitor and ensure that fire safety compliance is a priority for the Housing Service.
- 1.8 Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (Fire Service) were able to update District Councillors on fire safety at the recent Safer Somerset Partnership (which the Portfolio Holder sits on) on 22 June 2017. Fire crews have completed their operational risk inspection of buildings in Somerset which are above four storeys or over 18 m in height. These are mostly business premises but also some residential buildings.
- 1.9 Their site specific information in Somerset is therefore up to date so that fire crews understand where there may be any different or additional risks. Equipment checks are up to date including performance of local water mains (good size and operating well). The visible presence of the Fire Service across Somerset has also been helpful for the public who have found this reassuring.
- 1.10 The Fire Service is also liaising with partners who manage high-rise buildings. There are seven such buildings across Somerset West (that is Taunton Deane, Sedgemoor and West Somerset) and three of these are in Taunton Deane. These are Waterside House (rendered and pronounced safe), Exchange House (brick and render located off The Crescent) and Quantock House (empty and about to be demolished) and the Fire Service has no undue concerns about these buildings.
- 1.11 The Fire Service has a very good relationship with Local Authorities' Environmental Services and Building Control who let them know of any concerns either reported to them or they come across in the course of their work. The Fire Service will then prioritise these (for example a complaint about a blocked fire exit) and do a fire safety check.
- 1.12 Fire Service Home Checks continue to be available and they have an information package to circulate to partners and to hand out to residents.
- 1.13 Anyone with a three to four storey building who may be worried and would like a fire safety visit should contact the Fire Service. They have already completed their fire safety checks of high-rise buildings across both East and West Somerset as their priority.

- 1.14 Somerset East residents with a care line (equivalent to the Deane Helpline) have their fire detectors linked up to the Fire Service at an additional cost to Mendip and South Somerset District Councils of £5,000 a year each. This is something we at Taunton Deane should consider as well.
- 1.15 As well as acting quickly on our own initiative following this dreadful tragedy, Taunton Deane has received over ten separate communications from different Government Departments (Communities and Local Government, Homes and Communities Agency, Local Government Association) and agencies (Fire Service and others) in relation to Grenfell Tower and fire risk. These have been revisited and reviewed and we have responded to all of them where a response was needed and any follow-up actions are in hand. Any further correspondence or requests are being channelled through our Asset Surveyors which we will use as a central clearing house so nothing is missed.
- 1.16 Our hearts go out to all those who were caught up in this dreadful event and witnessed it - those whose lives were lost, those who they've left behind, those who helped on that fateful night and our brave Fire Crews who worked so long and hard.

## **2. Local Crime and Policing Update**

- 2.1 Once or twice a year the Community Scrutiny Committee ask Avon and Somerset Police (Police) for an update on crime and policing in Taunton Deane which is usually presented by the Somerset West Sector Inspector. Inspector Carey's report is mostly pictorial which is helpful and can be found on the Taunton Deane website (Community Scrutiny Committee 27 June 2017) or <http://www2.taundeanegov.uk/webpages/tdbcagendas/Meeting.aspx?MID=20171960>.
- 2.2 For anyone particularly interested in detailed crime statistics for their neighbourhood, visit [police.uk](http://police.uk) and put in your postcode to explore the crime map for your local area. This is updated monthly, is two months in arrears with a figure for that month's total recorded crime. You click on the dots on the map for information about individual crimes (what and where). The side menu has more local information which includes 'local policing priorities' about what's being done to address issues in the neighbourhood. It is really informative.
- 2.3 Comparing neighbourhood crimes with those across the district and county can be found on the Somerset Intelligence Network which collates the information from police.uk into simple bar charts (<http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/community-profiles.html>) This is where you will also find lots of other information relating to community safety including the Police and Crime Plan, the Police and Crime Needs Assessment and more.

## **3. National Award for One Team Working**

- 3.1 The One Team initiative which has now been adopted in seven areas in Somerset has been highly commended in a major national award. Taunton Deane Borough

Council was shortlisted as a finalist in the category 'Delivering Better Outcomes' in the Municipal Journal's (MJ) Local Government Awards. We would like to pass on our thanks and congratulations to officers who work as part of our three One Teams. The award is a reflection of the great work they are doing.

- 3.2 Angela Bolitho (North Taunton One Team Coordinator) and Simon Lewis (Assistant Director of Housing and Communities) travelled up to the 2017 MJ Awards in London to represent the range of partners and officers who work in our three One Teams in Halcon, North Taunton and Wellington and received Highly Commended in second place.
- 3.3 The One Teams bring local authorities and other agencies together co-ordinating their frontline support. Partners include the Police, Somerset County Council, the Fire Service, health services, Knightstone Housing, schools, churches and partners from the voluntary sector.
- 3.4 Taunton Deane not only helps co-fund the initiative with the Police, but has also restructured its housing service to embed One Team working in its day-to-day business to make sure it can best help tenants and align with other partners.
- 3.5 This summer the Halcon One Team, now four years old, will be moving into the ground floor of Moorland House to share a dedicated workspace. To be located together in the heart of a community is part of the long term plan for One Teams in Halcon and the other areas. Moorland House is part of the Council's new residential redevelopment near Asda and there are eight single person flats occupying the two floors above.
- 3.6 Bath Spa University has been evaluating One Team working for the past two years as part of the Police Innovation Fund award. Their report is due out in the Autumn and as well as helping to shape learning, it should help identify the value of this innovative problem-solving approach, evidencing the benefits within the community and the increased effectiveness of individual organisations who have chosen to work more closely together.

#### **4. Taunton Deane Star Volunteer Award**

- 4.1 Another successful Taunton Deane Star Volunteers Award Ceremony filled North Street Church and included nominees, the judges, volunteer groups, partner agencies, the Mayor of Wellington and several Councillors.
- 4.2 We would like to congratulate the overall winner Graham Farrell from Link Power in Halcon who was nominated by Community Development Officer Suzie Rea for his cheerful dedication and commitment to Link Kitchen. Graham cooks and serves breakfasts most days in the pop-up kitchen outside the Community Centre in Halcon.
- 4.3 Engage South West hosted the ceremony and referred Graham to Link Power as a volunteer last year. He is very grateful to Engage for giving him a chance to work again and was really thrilled to have won this individual award. Very well done indeed.

- 4.4 Earlier this year each of the Link Power volunteers received a Pride in the Community Award from the Police Commissioner at a special ceremony at Taunton Rugby Club. They had been nominated by the Police Sergeant Andy Murphy QPM, Halcon One Team Co-ordinator.

## **5. Somerset West Lottery Launch**

- 5.1 Good causes across Taunton Deane and West Somerset are generating support after the launch of the Somerset West Lottery in mid-June when tickets went on sale. Already over two hundred weekly tickets have been sold on line through the dedicated website <https://www.somersetwestlottery.co.uk/> which will raise over £5,500 a year between the forty-four good causes which have signed up already. Every month they will each receive half the value of any tickets sold on their behalf.
- 5.2 Other local good causes can apply on-line to be included with the Councils covering all the set up and ongoing costs. So if you know of any you think might be interested, please encourage them to visit the website and consider doing this.
- 5.3 Please give some thought to buying a regular weekly lottery ticket on-line to support our local voluntary and community sector good causes which help so many people in both our areas. It is really straightforward and the link is : <https://www.somersetwestlottery.co.uk/> . Thank you on behalf of all our good causes.

Councillor Jane Warmington

# **Council Meeting – 11 July 2017**

## **Report of Councillor Terry Beale – Housing Services**

### **1. Deane Housing Development**

#### **Creechbarrow Road, Taunton**

- 1.1 All units have now been handed over including Moorland House. There is still some minor snagging issues but these are currently being addressed.

#### **Weavers Arms, Rockwell Green, Wellington**

- 1.2 This development is progressing well. We are currently discussing the process of a phased handover as well as the returning decants.

#### **Laxton Road, Taunton**

- 1.3 The Planning Application is being finalised and we are looking at various ways of developing the site including off site manufacture.

#### **12 Moorland Close, Taunton – Community Centre and 3 units plus 4 unit conversion at 121-123 Outer Circle**

- 1.4 Current projected six month build project with the ground floor space and 41 bed flats. Currently going through the tender process.

#### **Oake**

- 1.5 We are still developing a number of options on the site including development and refurbishing. In addition, discussions are continuing regarding short term tenancies for the properties currently void.

#### **Off site manufacture (OSM)**

- 1.6 Information is still being gathered on options and costings for offsite manufacture. This will feed into officer discussions between Development and Housing Services where solutions to the shared housing /Under 35's issue are being discussed.

#### **Development Pipeline**

- 1.7 There is a range of future development options. Financial and feasibility work is underway to further inform the decision as to which sites to bring forward next.

#### **Affordable Housing**

- 1.8 I am delighted to confirm that in the year ending March a record number of affordable



housing was delivered within Taunton Deane. The annual target of 200 was well exceeded with 284 homes delivered. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Development Team and the whole of Housing for a job well done.

## **2. Welfare Reform**

### **Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP)**

- 2.1 The total DHP budget for 2017/2018 is £196,652.00. Since April to date 51 DHP's have been awarded to Taunton Deane tenants with a total of £13,302 being paid direct onto the rent accounts and a further £6,500 committed to come across onto the accounts.
- 2.2 There have been many reasons why DHP's have been awarded to Council tenants, some of these include rent shortfall due to bedroom tax, low income families and help with arrears or rent.
- 2.3 We will continue to provide help and support to those tenants who need it to claim DHP and also any other Benefits they may be entitled to.

### **Universal Credit (UC)**

- 2.4 We have now had UC in Taunton Deane since April 2015. When it was first launched in Taunton it was for single unemployed claimants however since 26 October 2016, the system changed which meant everyone of working age making a new claim for benefits would have to claim UC. There was a further change to this in April 2017 which means any family with three or more children can no longer make a new claim for UC but would instead have to make a claim for old legacy benefits, those claimants with no children or two or less children will still have to claim UC.
- 2.5 UC continues to cause some of our tenants a great deal of issues and in some cases a large amount of distress.
- 2.6 The communication between UC and claimants is poor, as most of the contact is through their online journal. When you call UC you cannot speak to your Case Manager so very rarely are any issues resolved by making that call. Claimants are often left for weeks not knowing when they will receive money or how much they can expect to receive.
- 2.7 When there has been an error from UC it can take months for the tenant to get any of that money backdated and paid. This is extremely frustrating for our tenants as they are finding themselves falling further into arrears with their rent and also getting into debt with their other bills.
- 2.8 We have also had tenants fail the habitual residency test and have then had to appeal the decision which has been taking a very long time and is not an easy process especially for those who do not have English as their first language.
- 2.9 Although it may appear that UC is all gloom and doom, the majority of our tenants have been able to make and sustain their claims without issues, however for those

that do it seems to take a lot of time and support to be able to resolve those issues.

- 2.10 I do have a concern that as the “roll out” of UC continues and starts to gather pace the level of service given by UC will get worse and it will take even longer to sort out the problems. I am also of the view that unless the amount of staffing at UC increases and the standard of help given to claimants improves, our tenants could find themselves in much worse positions than they are now. Our officers of course continue to offer all the help, advice and support that they can to those tenants most in need and I am monitoring the situation with regard to staffing and stress issues.

### **3. Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Service**

#### **Performance**

- 3.1 Satisfaction with the service remains high. At the end of Quarter 3 94% (target 66%) of tenants who reported ASB in year to date rated the help and advice received as good or excellent. This is an increase since the last update which is very encouraging.

### **4. Repairs and Maintenance**

#### **Personal Digital Assistants**

- 4.1 We have recently had some problems with the Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) equipment used by staff. Some of these have revolved around IT issues, some security and some with regard to signal issues.
- 4.2 With regard to IT there are five PDAs still at The Deane House left to reconfigure out of 43, and we are returning the PDAs to trade professionals as we receive them back from IT. About three quarters of the workforce are now back on PDAs.
- 4.3 Around 75% of problems recorded on the issues log are password related. IT are investigating alternative PDA's with fingerprint recognition, so as to improve, and more importantly, simplify password access for trade professionals. In addition for security our ICT Services Team is reviewing a new MDM (Mobile Device Management) solution with encryption software.
- 4.4 Regarding signal coverage, some of the trades are reporting that this is improving in areas such as Milverton, which will happen over time as enhancements are made by our supplier. There are also hotspots which have been installed in Wiveliscombe, which we are hoping staff will be able to use. Coverage does still remain a problem in certain areas but we remain committed to exploring ideas which will help with this.

### **5. Review of the Somerset Strategic Housing Framework**

- 5.1 Housing is very much in the national spotlight, fuelled by the tragic events at Grenfell Towers and the deepening housing crisis of affordability, homelessness, fuel poverty and worsening stock conditions (certain sectors). The way that we, as

partners, try to tackle these huge issues is to combine our efforts into strategy and (most importantly) subsequent action.

- 5.2 The current Housing Strategy is provided by the Somerset Strategic Housing Framework (2013-2016). This is a County-wide strategy with individual district action plans. It contains priorities relating to affordable housing, supporting vulnerable people, and making best use of the existing housing stock.
- 5.3 The current Framework is now time expired, and requires refreshing in a number of significant policy areas including recent Government advice concerning both housing delivery and homelessness, and the links between health and housing. A partnership approach is being taken to the review, involving all Somerset Borough/District Councils, Knightstone Housing Association (providing the link to the Registered Provider sector), the County Council, Public Health and the Clinical Commissioning Group. Taunton Deane and West Somerset are providing the project management expertise.
- 5.4 To launch the review, a Housing Framework Conference has been organised for 12 July 2017 at Taunton Rugby Club. This event will bring together 100 stakeholders to discuss housing related issues, and to set a steer for the content of the revised Framework i.e. draft priorities /actions. Public engagement will also commence on this date, informed by district housing profiles that will be hosted on our website. All Members will receive the link by email in due course.
- 5.5 The indicative timeframe for the review is as follows:-
  - Launch / initial engagement: 12 July to 30 September 2017;
  - Draft Framework: late Autumn 2017; and
  - Final Draft Framework: Spring 2018.
- 5.6 A draft version of the Framework will be presented to the Community Scrutiny Committee / Executive during the late Autumn. In the meantime, if you would like to receive more information, please contact myself or Mark Leeman ([m.leeman@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:m.leeman@tauntondeane.gov.uk)).

## **6. Fire Safety**

- 6.1 Officers have recently met to review the Taunton Deane position and the current action plan on Fire Safety and work is taking place on an updated Fire Safety Status report which will be shared with the Tenant Services Management Board and Members. We will continue to ensure good communications with Members, tenants, staff and partners as we develop our position and work programme on compliance.
- 6.2 Following the Grenfell Tower tragedy we have received over 10 different communications from the Department of Communities and Local Government, Homes and Communities Agency, Local Government Association, Fire Service

and others in relation to Grenfell Tower and fire risk. We have revisited these and we are happy that we have responded to all of them where a response was needed from us and have any follow-up actions in hand.

Councillor Terry Beale

# Council Meeting – 11 July 2017

## Report of Councillor Patrick Berry – Environmental Services

### 1. Environmental Health

- 1.1 Food Hygiene Inspections – The Environmental Health Team across Taunton Deane has now completed all required food hygiene inspections for the financial year 2016/2017 and almost 100% for Quarter 1 of the financial year 2017/2018.
- 1.2 The team is also engaged in a food sampling exercise from mobile vendors at events this year. The events will include Dunster Show, Bhuddafields and Taunton Flower Show.
- 1.3 Anti-Littering Campaign - Environmental Health is involved in the current Somerset County Gazette campaign on littering. Press releases are being issued over next 5-6 weeks on a variety of topics including littering, fly-tipping, gulls and food safety.
- 1.4 Also included in the above campaign is dog fouling. In particular, we have received a series of letters from pupils in Year 6 at St Andrews School which concern dog fouling at the Greenway Recreation Ground. A photo opportunity is to be arranged as part of the campaign.
- 1.5 During Food Safety Week, which commenced on 19 June 2017 several press releases, Facebook posts, and tweets were issued.
- 1.6 Safety Advisory Groups (SAG's) – Several large events are taking place this Year - Taunton Flower Show, Eat Taunton, the UB 40 Concert at Taunton Racecourse, Fake Festivals and the recent International 20/20 Cricket Match have all been the subject of SAG Reviews.
- 1.7 The team's enforcement activity continues with two cases in Wellington and we have a date for the commencement of hearings in court for an accident case involving one of the town centre retailers.

### 2. Licensing

- 2.1 **Performance:** The service achieved its performance target again for the final quarter.

- 2.2 **Appeals:** Two appeals had been lodged with Taunton Magistrate's Court against decisions recently taken by the Licensing Sub-Committee.
- 2.3 The first, which was to revoke the licence from a taxi driver following a road-rage incident, had been captured on a video recording device. The hearing took place on 21 June 2017. The Court agreed that the cab driver's actions showed that he was not a fit and proper person to hold a taxi licence.
- 2.4 The second appeal concerned an alcohol off-licence shop, which lost its licence in a review called by Avon and Somerset Police. The Taunton Magistrate's Court has set the appeal hearing for mid-July.
- 2.5 Licensing worked closely with the Environmental Health Group and the Somerset County Cricket Club to ensure that the International 20/20 Cricket Match, the first in Taunton since 1963, was a big success and passed off without incident.

### **3. Street Sweeping and Toilet Cleaning**

- 3.1 IdVerde Contract: Cleansing operations have now been with IdVerde for five months and up to now the reports have been good. We have a follow-up inspection regime of 80 streets per month and so far few problems have emerged.
- 3.2 Most comments received have been positive, particularly in Wellington. Recently certain areas have emerged as problem areas such as the Toneway verges (the central reservation is not the responsibility of Taunton Deane). These were given special attention last week leading up to the International Cricket.
- 3.3 Despite being high profile, fly-tipping is not increasing according to Taunton Deane records and IdVerde has been responding to call-outs as foreseen in its contract to handle this type of work.
- 3.4 There are still issues with domestic rubbish being left out on the wrong day, particularly in areas with a high proportion of single occupancy dwellings. Rubbish left on the pavement risks not only the usual attempts by gulls and rats but also risks being deliberately scattered by people returning home after a night out.
- 3.5 We have requested the Somerset Waste Partnership to write to residents in these areas pointing out that they, the residents, remain responsible for refuse left out at the wrong time.
- 3.6 Deane DLO is also well involved with the Anti-Littering Drive in conjunction with our Environmental Health Team and the Somerset County Gazette.
- 3.7 Having reviewed the number and condition of the dog bins in Taunton Deane, Deane DLO is about to start a phased replacement programme.

## **4. Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP)**

- 4.1 The recruitment process has begun to find the permanent replacement for SWP Managing Director (MD) Steve Read, who left at the end of May to become Director of Energy, Waste and Environment at West Sussex County Council. Applications closed on Monday, 26 June 2017, with interviews expected to take place in mid-July, and – assuming the successful candidate will need to give three months’ notice – the new MD will relieve Bruce Carpenter, SWP’s previous Head of Operations, of his interim MD role at some point in October.
- 4.2 The Somerset Waste Board is due to select its Chairman for the coming year at its Annual General Meeting on 30 June 2017.
- 4.3 Although there was a small spike in fly-tipping near the Priorswood Recycle Centre following the introduction of charges for certain vehicles and types of waste, this has not continued and has now settled down to a more usual level. These charges were only introduced after neighbouring authorities had introduced theirs and it is considered likely that the increase may have been due to visitors, having come from afar, fly-tipping after discovering that Somerset also charges about the same as other authorities.
- 4.4 The SWP also recently issued a warning about summer barbecues. “Enjoy that summer barbecue but take care to not start a fire by discarding the ashes into your rubbish bin or black sacks,” SWP is warning. “Drench ashes with water or let them cool completely to avoid a rubbish fire threatening your home and family or causing a blaze in a waste truck or at a landfill site. The last major landfill fire in Somerset took days to put out, while across the United Kingdom, people have died in fires that began in rubbish bins.”

## **5. Cemetery and Crematorium**

- 5.1 The new Cemetery and Crematorium Manager and Registrar Manager, Garry Bowles, is now settling into his post and reports the following:-
- As reported previously, the number of cremations has increased slightly and this trend continues.
  - A new software package for the service is now required. This item will need to be fully compatible with the new overall software package for handling of the ‘transformed’ Council.
  - During the recent hot weather, the Chapel became extremely hot with several customers being taken ill. The emergency services had to be called more than once. Due to its design, the proximity to the cremators and the large windows, the building is in need of better ventilation or air-conditioning.
  - In order to give customers more choice a new series of post-cremation memorials is to be introduced soon.

- Councillors may be interested to see the excellent facilities and services that the Taunton Deane Crematorium and Cemeteries offer. Garry Bowles would be very happy to give a conducted tour. He is also looking for input and any constructive comments on how to improve the service offered.

Councillor Patrick Berry



# **Council Meeting – 11 July 2017**

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

### **Section 1: Business Development**

#### **The Glass Box, Taunton**

1.1 Members will be aware of The Glass Box, which opened in Taunton Library in Summer 2016. The centre is run by the Somerset County Council's Libraries Service and offers innovative space in the town centre for people to meet, design and create. It offers numerous digital and creative services for users, including 3D printing, digital equipment, and business information.

1.2 During the first year of its operation the facility has proved very popular.....

I have agreed to offer the Glass Box the sum of £10,000 to enable the service to continue its development and growth over the next year. Specifically the contribution will enable the Library Service to invest in new promotional equipment, and to extend the range of services it provides to the business community. Officers are currently discussing a year-long programme of events, ranging from weekly IT clubs to occasional prestigious meetings led by a nationally recognised digital innovator.

1.3 The Glass Box is an excellent facility and I would urge all Members to visit it and use its services.

#### **Heathrow Logistics Hub**

1.4 Heathrow plc has invited Expressions of Interest from locations that wish to be considered to host a Logistics Hub. The four hubs will support the massive Heathrow expansion project, which will be Europe's largest privately funded infrastructure project, and they will be located in different parts of the United Kingdom. These facilities will help deliver the airport's expansion and will create opportunities for suppliers from across the country.

1.5 The Council intends to submit an Expression of Interest and is working alongside the local development industry to draft the submission in relation to particular strategic employment sites within Taunton Deane.

1.6 It is important that we seek out opportunities to secure inward investment such as this. Although the details of the Logistics Hubs are sketchy I am confident that the area has a strong offer to make. I would congratulate officers for identifying the opportunity.

## **Taunton Deane Business Awards (TDBA)**

- 1.7 200 local business people turned out for an evening of celebration as Taunton Deane's second Business Awards reached their climax. The black tie awards ceremony was held at Somerset County Cricket Ground on General Election night, 8 June 2017 and the house was full and celebrating success.
- 1.8 Now in its fourth year the TDBA goes from strength to strength each time, and I was pleased to offer the Council's sponsorship, working alongside PKF Francis Clark. The competition exposes some real success stories, and I would congratulate all of the businesses that reached the finals. This year there were 10 hotly contested awards, all sponsored by local businesses.
- 1.9 The winners were:-
- Digital Innovators: INTROTWEET
  - Start-Up: ELITE STAFFING SOLUTIONS
  - Customer Excellence: BUFF URBAN SPA
  - Exporter of the Year: GRANNY GOTHARDS
  - CSR: VIRIDOR
  - Growth Business (Over 2 years): GRANNY GOTHARDS
  - Best Employer: LLOYD AND WHYTE
  - Creative Industries Awards: TAUNTON AND BRIDGWATER COLLEGE#
  - Best Marketing Campaign: REMINISCENCE LEARNING
  - Young Entrepreneur of the year: LITTLE MONSTERS ATTIC.
- 1.10 I would also thank and congratulate White Knight Marketing for managing a very successful competition.

## **Support for the Creative Innovation Centre (CICCIC), Taunton**

- 1.11 The Council has commissioned CICCIC to continue its work amongst the creative industries during 2017/2018. Located on Paul Street, Taunton the centre has become established over recent years as a valuable resource to support enterprise, community and culture locally.
- 1.12 The Council's support will build upon the services provided by the centre to the Council over the past two years, progressing a strategy for the creative industries in Taunton Deane. The Centre will draw together a regular forum, comprising organisations and businesses in the creative sector, to shape and oversee the delivery of the strategy.

## **Employment and Skills Prospectus**

- 1.13 I am pleased to welcome a temporary additional member of staff to the Business Development team during this Summer. Lori Cooney lives in Taunton and is an undergraduate student of Economics at Plymouth University. We have recruited her to produce an Employment and Skills Prospectus for Taunton Deane.

1.14 Lori will review the labour market in the Borough, summarise the activities currently in hand to assist residents to enhance their employment opportunities, and make recommendations on how the Council might intervene further to enhance the support available.

1.15 The Prospectus will be completed in the early Autumn.

### **LEADER rural funding**

1.16 Taunton Deane is covered by three EU funded Leader Programmes, namely, Making it Local (covering the Blackdown Hills and Wellington), The Western Somerset Programme (which covers those rural wards in the west of Taunton Deane) and the Somerset Levels and Moors Programme. In summary all of the Borough with the exception of Taunton's urban wards is covered.

Making it Local has £1,400,000. <http://makingitlocal.org/index.php>  
Western Somerset has £1,480,000 <http://western.somersetleader.org.uk/>; and  
Somerset Levels and Moors has £1,690,000  
<http://levelsandmoors.somersetleader.org.uk/>

1.17 Grants of up to £35,000, 40% of eligible costs are available. All three are intended to improve the economy of the rural areas and the quality of life for residents.

1.18 Within the Levels and Moors Programme three Taunton Deane projects have been funded so far; namely, Granny Gothards Ice Cream, Mere Green Farm, and Gothards Farm. The Western Somerset Scheme is also still inviting applications. To date two projects have been funded in the Borough; reinstatement of a historic path at Hestercombe Gardens and installation of shepherd huts at Tilbury Farm in West Bagborough. The Making it Local funding is now fully committed, and no projects have been supported from within Taunton Deane.

1.19 If Members become aware of rural businesses that require funding to invest I would urge them to put them in contact with Nadine Ackland or David Evans in the Business Development Team.

### **Somerset West Cycle Network**

1.20 Officers are progressing a project to enhance cycle routes across Taunton Deane and West Somerset, which will lead to the development of an integrated cycle network. Many of the sections of the route are already in place, and the project will involve enhancement, new build, and in due course, marketing.

1.21 Following a call for applications under the Rural Development Programme for England an expression of interest has been submitted to improve an existing Sustrans cycleway in the Selworthy area of Exmoor. The application is a good

example of joint working within the new One Team, being written by Taunton Deane staff and supported by West Somerset Council staff.

### **Programme of support for start up and young businesses**

1.22 Officers are working closely with colleagues in West Somerset and Sedgemoor Councils to provide a programme of innovative projects to support pre-start ups and young businesses across the three Districts. The programme currently underway reflects the needs of businesses and is commissioned from delivery organisations with expertise in working alongside businesses in a supportive role. Three programmes currently underway are:-

- **Somerset Business Start Up Day** to be held at The Glass Box, Taunton on Wednesday 13 September 2017. Businesses will be invited to meet with statutory and regulatory services, financial organisations, technology firms and advisory bodies to get ideas and learn about starting a business. If successful the event will be repeated later in the year.
- **Cornerstone Mentoring:** The Council has contracted Cornerstone for a couple of years to provide mentoring to young businesses. The service is accredited and run by volunteers. 59 Businesses from the Taunton Deane area have received the 1:1 support during 2016/2017, and we have offered them further financial support during the current year to continue the service.
- **Get Business Get Digital.** Since its launch at the beginning of this year the programme, delivered by Cosmic, has supported 55 Taunton businesses, through 20 workshops and 16 hours of 1:1 mentoring.

### **Taunton Garden Town and Inward Investment Communications Strategy**

1.23 The Growth Team have been working with our marketing and communications partner (Coast Communications) since October 2016 to develop and implement a Communications Strategy and approach for our Inward Investment and Taunton Growth (Garden Town) Programme. The objectives of this strategy are to ensure that stakeholders are informed about the Council's 'Growth' activities in a proactive and positive manner, and position Taunton as an extremely competitive location with strong opportunities for growth, access to skills and potential for investment.

1.24 Current activities and priorities include:-

- A new Inward Investment website is in the final stages of development and is due to go live this summer;
- A 'Taunton Garden Town' public exhibition has been prepared and will be on display in the town centre from 10 – 15 July 2017;
- Taunton Garden Town information and 'Frequently Asked Questions' have been developed and will feature on updated pages on the new Taunton Deane website in July.

## **Section 2: Destination, Events, Retail Marketing and Visitor Centre**

### **Destination Marketing**

- 2.1 Taunton and the surrounding area continues to be promoted through the Destination website ([www.visitsomerset.co.uk/taunton](http://www.visitsomerset.co.uk/taunton)), social media and regular e-newsletters.
- 2.2 The Marketing and Visitor Centre Manager has recently been appointed as an Executive Director of the Visit Somerset Board who are the trade-led organisation promoting the County as a visitor destination. We are also working with other destinations across the South West to promote the region overseas.
- 2.3 The Visit Taunton Facebook account currently has over 7,660 likes, Instagram over 1,250 followers and Twitter over 6,250 followers, these continue to be widely used to promote attractions, competitions, events, retail, special offers and services available in the Visitor Centre. We have also added Pinterest and Snapchat channels, all of these social media platforms are now featured on the Destination website Home Page.
- 2.4 The Marketing and Visitor Centre Team have worked hard to boost the new Visit Wellington and Visit Wiveliscombe platforms (with large increases since my last update) – in Wellington the Facebook page now has nearly 800 likes, Twitter over 150 Followers. In Wiveliscombe Facebook has over 500 likes, Twitter over 130 Followers. The team are making regular visits to both towns to gather content from businesses and are being supported by the Business Group in Wiveliscombe and the Community Office Team in Wellington.

### **Events**

- 2.5 We have just held another successful Somerfest. Now in its fifth year this continues to be a popular event in the town. Fuse Performance brought a great collection of artists and performers to our open spaces, including this year bringing activities to the High Street and outside of the Visitor Centre.
- 2.6 Great crowds were drawn to both Castle Green and Somerset Square where Britain Got Talent's semi-finalists 'Lords of Strut' were among the acts who entertained the crowds. A music stage was created on Goodland Gardens and the event was also able to help celebrate The Brewhouse's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, plus host the Cancer Research UK Duck Race and Taunton Longswords's "1000 cut challenge".
- 2.7 Other popular events held in recent months include the new Eat Taunton event on Castle Green in May which organisers tell me attracted over 20,000 visitors on the day, the Vintage Bus Day who had one of their best ever years and the Dragonboat Race.

- 2.8 It was also great to see the Cooper Associates County Ground host its first International Match last month when England played South Africa in a T20 match, whilst the result was close (and perhaps not as we would have hoped), the feedback appears to have been really positive with lots of good reviews on Taunton as a result.
- 2.9 The Marketing Team continue to work with the club and the English Cricket Board on the Women's World Cup with games taking place as we speak and we will be hosting a Cricket in the City event on Castle Green on the 1 July 2017.
- 2.10 The new events booking portal continues to take shape with a launch planned in the Summer. The Marketing Team now act as the welcome desk for all event enquiries and account managing many of these event organisers, once the portal has been launched we intend to actively market these spaces and encourage more events and activities.

### **Retail Marketing**

- 2.11 Account management of town centre businesses continue to take place, with the Marketing Team facilitating these. These discussions are proving very useful to helping steer our activity in the town centre. It is encouraging to see the recent refurbishment of TK Maxx, plus the start of work on the old BHS unit and a planning application recently received for the old HMV.
- 2.12 Officers are now hosting regional meetings of the Association of Town Centre Managers group in Taunton each quarter. Fact-finding and learning from others is proving invaluable to our activities.

### **Visitor Centre**

- 2.13 The Visitor Centre Team continue to support all of our marketing activities in addition to providing the important day to day service to customers. The team continue to pursue new commercial opportunities which is seeing new publications and services beginning.
- 2.14 In recent months the team has been supported by students from Belgium, Germany and Spain as our working partnership with the Totnes Language School continues.

## **Section 3: Strategic Regeneration Projects**

### **Coal Orchard Redevelopment**

- 3.1 The outline planning application for a mixed use scheme on the southern element of the site received conditional approval at the Planning Committee on 21 June 2017. We now need to develop the reserved matters application for the site and will seek to submit this at the earliest opportunity. There is

further consultation and development work to do though with a range of interested parties.

- 3.2 We will also commence the application process for the demolition of St James Street Pool which requires a separate full consent due to its relationship with the Conservation Area.
- 3.3 Officers have also been working on the Business Case which is due to be considered at Council tonight. This seeks an indicative borrowing approval for £9,500,000 to develop the site. If the case is agreed there will be next phases of work to procure project management and deliver the build following the securing of a reserved matters application.
- 3.4 As Members will be aware we have in tandem with this work delivered a detailed Business Case for expansion of The Brewhouse Theatre which follows up on the venue study delivered by our partners at Arts Taunton. This study has created a robust platform to go forwards with and exciting expansion of the site to create a truly regional arts centre which will serve the area. The next steps for this development are being planned. These include creation of the necessary £20,000,000 funding package which will need to be worked up with partners and will be sought from a range of sources.

#### **Lisieux Way, Taunton Site**

- 3.5 The Council and Thales continue to work together on a plan to secure the future of the hi-tech companies such as Novanta (GSI) and South West Path Lab, both crucial to the long-term regeneration of this important town centre business park.
- 3.6 Officers continue to negotiate the details of an agreement and programme of development and are investigating commercial options to further accelerate growth, retain jobs and secure new employment also encourage new industry and business into Taunton and the wider Somerset region.

### **Section 4: Asset Management Service General Fund Activities**

After an extremely challenging period in respect of resourcing across Asset Management we are now beginning to see an improving picture with a more stable staffing structure and therefore able to further progress projects which had stalled.

#### **Estate Management Work**

- 4.1 The annual asset valuation exercise which was outsourced to Torbay Development Agency was successfully completed and this year included the vast majority of the General Fund portfolio and therefore making subsequent year's asset valuation exercises smaller.
- 4.2 There is a fairly significant consultant budget which in previous years has been underspent. A significant piece of work has been undertaken to

commission consultants under the ESPO framework to support the Estate Management deliver services alongside officers. Consultants have now been appointed to deal with valuation work, agency, estate management, lease event management and compulsory purchase.

- 4.3 In total four consultants have been appointed and this will enable much better resource allocation to deal with fluctuating workloads and enable external specialist input to be commissioned as necessary. Mobilisation meetings are taking place in July and we will be seeking to recover fees where reasonable from third parties, tenants and from capital receipts to ensure maximum benefit can be obtained from the budget.
- 4.4 Along with providing additional capacity, these consultants will be working closely with officers within Asset Management to improve innovation and commercialism. Business Rates appeals work was outsourced earlier this year with fees being deducted from savings made.
- 4.5 Progress on key projects continues to be reported weekly to the Leader, Portfolio Holder and Senior Officers and this new arrangement is working well in providing greater visibility and accountability.

#### **Asset Data and Compliance Work**

- 4.6 Significant work is continuing in respect of surveying the General Fund stock to develop comprehensive stock condition data of a level not previously available. A further benefit of having this data is that it will enable the performance of individual assets to be measured with the resulting appraisal tool being developed considering costs alongside income at individual asset level enabling the Net Present Value of assets to be known along with valuable cashflow data during that 30 year period.
- 4.7 This is a level of sophistication not previously applied to the General Fund portfolio and will be key in enabling active asset management of these assets in the future through understanding each asset's performance and through this greatly assisting in decision making. Surveys of properties are now complete, the final surveys of land are almost complete along with asbestos surveys, fire risk assessments, preparation of floor plans and a review of land. This intelligence will then inform a new Asset Strategy which will be presented for adoption in late Summer 2017.
- 4.8 As for the landlord health and safety work across the General Fund portfolio, we are continuing to gather data (on asbestos, servicing, fire risk assessments, legionella testing, electrical safety etc) and, where necessary, commissioning further works. New policies are now in place.
- 4.9 Whilst the recent Grenfell Tower fire in London has understandably generated significant attention on fire safety relating to residential flats and which we have responded to in respect of the Housing Revenue Account portfolio, quite rightly there is increasing focus also on commercial and operational property. The Council had already proactively commissioned Fire Risk Assessments as



appropriate on the General Fund portfolio and these are due to be completed by August 2017 creating subsequent action plans to enable the Council to initiate building works where or if required.

## **Section 5: Media, Marketing and External Communications**

- 5.1 The Public Relations Team provided support and proactive communications during the two recent elections – Somerset County Council and the UK Parliamentary General Election.
- 5.2 We joined the Electoral Commission’s social media campaign to raise awareness on registration, how to vote and reminders on when to vote.
- 5.3 The count at Wellsprings overnight on June 8-9 was attended by radio and print journalists and we were able to provide them with information throughout. We used Twitter to provide updates throughout the night (and morning), finishing with the declaration of the result by the High Sheriff of Somerset.
- 5.4 With the pre-election period over, the Council held a successful media briefing on plans for The Brewhouse Theatre. This resulted in good coverage in print and on radio. Thanks must go to The Brewhouse Team for the support and venue.
- 5.5 We continue to attract more social media followers on both Twitter and Facebook and are looking to make more of both these channels.
- 5.6 The Council’s anti-litter campaign, in partnership with the Gazette, was successfully launched. This aims to educate people through a series of articles on issues ranging from street litter to dog fouling.
- 5.7 The work of volunteer groups will also be featured as they do so much on behalf of the community throughout the year.
- 5.8 The campaign was masterminded and co-ordinated by Becky Howat with support from colleagues in service areas.
- 5.9 We hope that the partnership with the Somerset County Gazette on such an important – and highly visible topic – will have the desired impact.

Councillor Mark Edwards

# **Council Meeting – 11 July 2017**

## **Report of Councillor Roger Habgood – Planning Policy and Transportation**

### **1. Planning Policy**

- 1.1 Work on the review of the evidence base to support local Planning Policy is continuing. Progress is being made on the Green Infrastructure Strategy. This will help to identify future projects key to realising the aims of our new Garden Towns status.
- 1.2 The Policy Team continues to work through the current Core Strategy and Town Centre Area Action Plan to identify obvious areas to address in the review and evidence base gaps.

### **2. Junction 25 Local Development Order**

- 2.1 Informal consultation on the Local Development Order (LDO) for the Strategic Employment Site took place in March 2017. Work continues in preparation for the publication of the Draft Local Development Order for its statutory period of consultation, which is programmed to run for six weeks from the 10 July to the 18 August 2017 (the statutory requirement being for a four week period).
- 2.2 During July the statutory consultation on the Environmental Statement will also take place. The findings of the consultation and the LDO proposed for adoption will be considered by the Community Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 19 September 2017, the intention being that it will propose that the Local Development Order should be finalised by the decision of Full Council on the 3 October 2017.
- 2.3 The final making of the LDO is dependent on planning permission for the M5 Junction 25 improvement scheme being in place.

### **3. Mid Devon Local Plan**

- 3.1 Mid Devon Council submitted its Local Plan Review 2013 - 2033 to The Planning Inspectorate on 31 March 2017, for examination into the legal compliance and soundness of the Plan.
- 3.2 The Council (TDBC) responded earlier in the year to the proposals for a large allocation at Junction 27 anchored by 14,000sq m of retail floorspace. Concerns were expressed about the compliance of such a

proposal with National Planning Policy and the potential impact on Wellington and Taunton Town Centres.

- 3.3 The Secretary of State has appointed Mr Paul Griffiths BSc (Hons) BArch IHBC to conduct the examination and to report to the Council in due course.

## **4. Neighbourhood Plans**

### **Trull and Staplehay**

- 4.1 The plan progressed to referendum in June 2017. The votes cast in favour of a Yes were 1167 (78.53%). The number cast in favour of No 282 (18.98%). The turnout was 81.29%.
- 4.2 The Community Scrutiny Committee passed the plan at its meeting on 27 June 2017 for a Full Council decision.

### **Other plans**

- 4.3 The Council is continuing to support the preparation of plans for West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine, Creech St. Michael and Ruishton and Thornfalcon.

## **5. Garden Town Status**

- 5.1 Officers continue to take forward elements of our Garden Towns proposal.

## **6. Major Planning**

### **Coal Orchard**

- 6.1 This scheme has been in gestation for over nine years and has evolved in that time to respond to both public, local business and stakeholder feedback. The Planning Committee recently passed the outline planning application. This important scheme can now progress.
- 6.2 The Brewhouse Theatre plans have received positive feedback and the campaign to raise the required funds will now begin in earnest.

### **Firepool**

- 6.3 The revised Firepool application will be put to the Planning Committee for consideration in the very near future.

## **7. Car Parking**

- 7.1 The Car Park Maintenance Programme continues to deliver improvements across the estate.
- 7.2 Income and usage for April and May mirrors year on year performance.

### **Variable Message Signage (VMS)**

- 7.3 The contract for the supply and installation of this signage has been let. The signs will be installed during the winter period in readiness for the Pay on Exit car park improvements in the New Year.

Councillor Roger Habgood