

You are requested to attend a meeting of the Council to be held in The Shire Hall, Shuttern, Taunton on 22 February 2018 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 12 December 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 or Town or Parish Councillors will automatically be recorded in the minutes.

Members are reminded that they all have Pecuniary Interests as far as the setting of the Council Tax rate is concerned but that a specific exemption exists to enable the item to be considered and voted upon.

5 To receive questions from Taunton Deane Electors under Standing Order 15,

6 Receipt of petition from Mr Dave Mansell on behalf of On behalf of Transition Athelney, Quantock Eco, Taunton Transition Town, Transition Town Wellington and Wivey Action on Climate and Environment calling on Taunton Deane Borough Council - recognising the waste and pollution caused by plastics - to become a 'single-use plastic free' Council by:-

a) Phasing out single-use plastic products, such as bottles, cups, cutlery and drinking straws and the unnecessary use of plastic bags in all Council activities, where reasonable and possible, by April 2019.

b) Encouraging users of Council facilities, local businesses and other local public agencies to do the same, by championing alternatives, such as reusable water bottles, cups, cutlery and bags; and

c) Submitting a public report to the Council by October 2018, which summarises single-use plastic within the Council, progress and plans for phasing it out, including by encouraging others; with a further update by April 2019.

Mr Mansell has formally requested that a debate takes place at the Full Council meeting.

- 7 Receipt of any further petitions or deputations under Standing Orders 16 and 17.
- 8 Tackling our throw-away culture by providing incentives to reduce, reuse and recycle to safeguard our health and environment - To consider a Motion proposed by Councillor Habib Farbahi, seconded by Councillor Simon Nicholls (attached). An assessment of the implications for the Council should the Motion be carried is also attached.
- 9 Capital Improvements - Cemetery and Crematorium. Report of the Assistant Director - Operational Delivery (attached), to be presented by Councillor Patrick Berry.
- 10 Refresh of Taunton Parking Strategy. Report of the Assistant Director - Business Development (attached), to be presented by Councillor Roger Habgood.
- 11 Designation of Car Parks into Short and Long Stay and Pricing Strategy. Report of the Community and Client Services Manager (attached), to be presented by Councillor Roger Habgood.
- 12 Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy 2018/2019. Report of the Interim Financial Services Manager (attached), to be presented by Councillor John Williams.
- 13 General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Estimates 2018/2019. Report of the Interim Financial Services Manager (attached), to be presented by Councillor John Williams.

Note - A recorded vote on the recommendations contained in the report will be required;

- 14 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Estimates and Capital Programme 2018/2019. Report of the Interim Financial Services Manager (attached), to be presented by Councillor Terry Beale.

Note - A recorded vote on the recommendations contained in the report will be required;

- 15 Council Tax Setting 2018/2019 - Report of the Interim Financial Services Manager (attached), to be presented by Councillor John Williams.

Note - A recorded vote on the recommendations contained in the report will be required.

- 16 Part I - To deal with written questions to the Executive.

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

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

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.

- 18 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 – Listed Buildings at Tonedale Mill, Milverton Road, Wellington. Report of the Wellington Heritage at Risk Project Manager (attached), to be presented by Councillor Roger Habgood. Paragraphs 3 - Financial or business affairs of any particular person; and Paragraph 6 - Information relating to the proposed issue of a notice.

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 Council Chamber, Shire Hall, Shuttern, Taunton on 12 December 2017 at 6.30 p.m.

Present        The Mayor (Councillor Prior-Sankey)  
                  The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Mrs Herbert)  
                  Councillors M Adkins, Mrs Adkins, Aldridge, Beale, Berry, Booth, Bowrah,  
                  Brown, Cavill, Coles, Coombes, Davies, Edwards, Farbahi, Mrs Floyd,  
                  Gage, Gaines, Govier, Mrs Gunner, Habgood, Hall, Henley, C Hill, Mrs Hill,  
                  Horsley, Hunt, James, R Lees, Mrs Lees, Ms Lisgo, Martin-Scott, Morrell,  
                  Nicholls, Parrish, Mrs Reed, Ross, Ryan, Mrs Smith, Mrs Stock-Williams,  
                  Sully, Townsend, Mrs Tucker, Mrs Warmington, Watson, Williams and  
                  Wren

Mrs A Elder – Chairman of the Standards Advisory Committee

### **1. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council held on 3 October 2017, copies having been sent to each Member, were signed by the Mayor.

### **2. Apologies**

Councillors Mrs Blatchford, D Durdan, Ms K Durdan, Mrs Smith-Roberts and Wedderkopp.

### **3. Communications**

The Mayor drew the attention of Members to the Carol Concert that had been arranged in a weeks' time on Tuesday, 19 December 2017 at the St Mary Magdalene Church, Taunton starting at 6.30 p.m.

She hoped as many Councillors as possible would be able to attend.

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

Councillor Coombes declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 8 as he was the owner of land adjacent to the site the subject of the Nexus 25 Local Development Order. He left the room during the discussion of this item.

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

### **5. Public Question Time**

(a) Lisa Horman, who was representing a number of local groups with particular interest in The Garden Town Plan for Taunton, was of the

view that the plan had to enshrine the Garden City Principles and draw from other sources of evidence about how the environment in which we lived affected Quality of Life.

It was important that the Taunton Garden Town was, in the future central to all the strategies, policies and functions of the Council, including planning, housing, transport, environment, communities, sustainability and health and wellbeing.

In addition, effective leadership and community participation should call upon the knowledge and experience of existing organisations to ensure that the vision was shared and owned by as many local people as possible and then measured against recognised targets.

There were a number of key themes that could be followed including:-

- Promoting human interaction in the local environment by the co-location of facilities and infrastructure in an integrated way;
- Activating the environment to maximise sustainable community participation;
- Prioritising environmental factors such as wildlife, existing and new green spaces, air quality, energy provision and water management;
- Transport policies and design decisions which prioritised walking and cycling; and
- Inclusive and high quality design and sustainability principles to be used at all levels.

In the view of Ms Horman the Garden Town Plan for Taunton was the perfect opportunity to strive for the highest possible quality of life of everyone who lived, worked in or visited Taunton.

How was the Council going to ensure that this outcome was achieved?

In response, Councillor Habgood thanked Ms Horman for her statement and question which appeared to stem from the recent conference held on the subject. He was really proud that Taunton had achieved Garden Town status and looked forward to working with the local groups whom Ms Horman was representing to ensure that the Garden Town would be of real benefit to local residents.

(b) Paul Partington referred to the questions he had previously raised at Full Council a year ago.

The only improvement he had seen was that the turning flags were now in position at the Station Road and Wellington Pools.

He reminded Councillors as to the importance of having proper lane ropes which made a real difference to those who could just swim, those learning and those doing serious swimming. Ropes together with standard lane widths would result in swimmers adhering to lane etiquette, thus making better use of the water area.

Mr Partington also raised issues concerning the need for the timing clocks to



be relocated at both Wellington and Blackbrook Pools so that they could be easily read by swimmers, the lack of a drinking fountain in the swimming hall at Blackbrook and the need to provide additional equipment at the three Leisure Centres in Taunton Deane to cater for all participants.

The Council had, in recent years, spent £7,000,000 on swimming facilities. Would it please now spend the extra insignificant sum to address the above matters?

Councillor Herbert thanked Mr Partington for raising his issues which she would continue to work with GLL address. She added that if he wished, Mr Partington would have the opportunity of raising his issues directly with representatives of GLL at tomorrow evening's Community Scrutiny Committee meeting.

- (c) Roger House referred to the Council's proposed Asset Strategy which might be beneficial in helping to devolve assets to established parishes. However without a new town council for the many Taunton Green Spaces listed in the Strategy, moving them to voluntary sector ownership that could be sustained was unrealistic.

It was estimated that a town council would require a budget of at least £1,500,000 per annum to maintain the green spaces, a number of community buildings and other responsibilities.

Currently the Unparished Area Special Expenses yielded only £45,000 per annum. To raise a further £1,500,000 a £100 rise in local Council Tax for a Band D home would be required.

In April this year Swindon Borough Council imposed four new parishes in its unparished area. In Swindon Central South a new urban parish had 40,000 electors. 23 new Parish Councillors had been elected in five wards with a first year precept of £2,000,000 and local Council Tax rising from £30 to £115 for a Band D home.

That could be Taunton too later in the merger process, to logically free all "parish" duties from the new Council, promising £1,500,000 spending to redirect elsewhere.

Taunton residents needed to be protected from this high risk impact. So the question was could Taunton Deane develop a 'Plan B' Asset Strategy, to identify and reserve a basket of Taunton property, our green spaces plus a meaningful share of our revenue generating buildings or car parks to enable an orderly step by step transfer to a democratically elected town council?

In reply, Councillor Williams reported that a Town Council would need income if one was set up in Taunton. He promised Mr House a full written response to the points he had raised.

- (d) Mrs Dorothea Bradley stated that apart from the problem of affordability to first time buyers resulting from Government subsidy of the housing market, artificially low interest rates and over lending beyond the historic ratio of 3 x annual salary, the main problem was the lack of social housing.

30% of the population were not in a position to buy and/or meet the full cost of their housing needs. Does Taunton Deane recognise in its plans:-

- Need as to tenure: renting;
- Need as to location: within 10 minutes of facilities – buses are too expensive or infrequent; and
- Need as to design: Sufficient space and how it was arranged.

Was the Council aware of the social and health costs arising from the loneliness of these blanket housing estates with their lack of facilities and transport and the isolation resulting from suburban design? Did the Planning Committee recognise the difference between vertical and horizontal lines in building design?

In reply, Councillor Habgood said that the Council did recognise the needs of the community especially over time when needs tended to change. Taunton Deane did listen to the community but could not always agree to what was being said. He promised Mrs Bradley a fuller written response.

The following five speakers all raised questions in relation to agenda item No. 7, the motion relating to the reinforcement of 25% affordable housing in the Core Strategy.

(e) Jackie Calcroft, representing the Residents of Staplegrove Action Group (RoSAG) reported that it was now well recognised that across the country, developers were holding Councils to ransom by stating, well into the planning process, that due to viability issues they no longer found themselves able to meet affordable housing targets. This was recently the case for the Staplegrove development.

In its Core Strategy the Council had a target of 25% affordable housing. In many other neighbouring authorities the target was 35%. This meant that when developers submitted their pleas for viability, the 10% reduction in the percentage of affordable housing they subsequently had to provide averaged 25% and not 15% as with Staplegrove!

Taunton's 2017 Housing Market Profile quoted a terraced house locally as costing 6 x the average Taunton Deane wage [£25,000]. Yet the National minimum wage for over 25's was £15,200. This made a terraced house locally just under 10 x their income!

Mrs Calcroft also referred to the Land Trajectory table in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment which detailed the total number of houses built year on year on each of the allocated sites. However, it was a total number and did not separately illustrate the quantity of market value houses and the quantity of affordable homes built.

She asked:-

(1) Would the Council please re-appraise its Affordable Housing Policy to include the building of more council houses for those who regrettably will never be in a position to get on the housing ladder? and

(2) Would the Council please introduce another column into its "land trajectory" to clearly indicate both the number of market value price housing and the number of affordable housing?

She also asked Councillors to support the motion on the agenda to show that Taunton Deane was a Council which clearly stood up for all its electorate and publicly committed itself to being a genuine voice for those who needed to have somewhere affordable to live.

(f) Mr Alan Paul said that most of the residents of the communities about to experience a massive new housing estate were prepared to accept it on two conditions.

First, if it came with as much affordable and rented housing as possible - at least matching the 25% target in the Taunton Deane Core Strategy. Second, if it came with adequate infrastructure to overcome the problems the housing brought with it.

The first condition had recently been breached in Staplegrove, which would cost nearly 200 affordable homes for local families and individuals. In Comeytrowe/Trull, the developer was challenging the 25% planning condition.

The motion on the agenda was a serious attempt to provide a robust defence of the Council's targets on affordable housing. Local families who needed low cost and rented homes depended on the Council to provide them

There were only two explanations for what was happening at the moment. Either the Council was letting developers get away with a betrayal of local communities, or developers could not make a reasonable profit while providing effective infrastructure and affordable housing, in which case the Council had chosen the wrong sites. Which was it?

(g) Mr Brian Collingridge, a Wiveliscombe Town Councillor stated that like all of Taunton Deane, Wiveliscombe had a housing problem.

The Town Council had conducted two Housing Needs surveys in Wiveliscombe in the past revealing a real need for housing to rent. By working with Magna Housing Association, two blocks of housing at Tuckers Meadow and Allenslade had been built to partly meet that need.

However, as properties had become available for re-letting it had been clear from the number of applicants that there was still a large unmet demand for such housing. This reflected the national problem. More houses to rent were urgently needed for working people on below average incomes.

The Town Council with Magna, and Taunton Deane, with its 25% Social Housing to rent, were the only way lower paid workers could be enabled to afford to live in our towns and thereby keep our infrastructure intact. Mr Collingridge was sure that this applied in Wellington and Taunton equally well.

He therefore asked why the Council had reduced the Social Housing target to 15% on the Staplegrove Development when there was such obvious need for

Social Housing to rent, from young people and those earning below average salaries? Was this the new policy for Taunton Deane?

- (h) Ms Carolyn Warburton stated that it was a truth universally acknowledged that a young family in possession of only a small fortune must be in want of an affordable home. But this was not supported by the national developers who played the “viability assessment game”. It was hard for Councils to resist.

Taunton Deane had previously demonstrated through a public inquiry that 25% affordable housing was easily viable - and house prices had risen substantially since.

But now the Staplegrove development was only going to provide 15% affordable housing and it was likely the Comeytrove and Monkton Heathfield developers were also likely to seek a reduction in the provision of affordable housing.

The consequences would be costs to the very empty public purse and people with nowhere to live. It undermined the Council’s Local Plan.

The motion on the agenda was an opportunity for Taunton Deane to support its own assessment of viability. When it was discussed, please would you consider the following steps as interim measures to be incorporated in your overall strategy:-

- In assessing the viability appraisals, the Council could make the case that the personal circumstances of the developer did not determine the use of land. Instead of subjective estimates and expectations, the viability test should be based on 'typical' or 'consensus' estimates;
  - There was the potential for Taunton Deane to use the residual land value. It was essential for the land value to reflect policy requirements; if not, the land would be overvalued. A market value approach, which then reflected overvalued land, should not be accepted;
  - The Planning Inspectorate had previously stated that key variables should only be considered in viability reappraisals if there was clear evidence that there had been changes in the original assumptions – The Council could provide an annual update, identifying the significance of changes;
  - Should the developers’ viability constructs be accepted, the legal agreements should include provision for short and long term review to allow subsequent increases in legal payments; and
  - Supplementary Planning Guidance on viability to support existing guidance on affordable housing could be delivered more quickly than the revised Core Strategy. There were numerous good examples to draw on.
- (i) Mr Tony Smith pointed out that existing provision of Affordable Housing in the South-West, ranged between 30-50%. Indeed the Council’s own studies had established the need for Affordable Housing in Taunton at 35%. However, the existing Policy was only 25%.

When that Policy was adopted, it complied with national Guidance, in

allowing adequate margins for both landowners and developers, so that applications for housing development would continue to come forward.

Strangely, affordable housing provision only appeared to be contested once outline planning permission had been granted.

In the recent applications relating to Staplegrove, due to 'exceptional circumstances' the affordable housing provision was reduced by 137 dwellings. Why had these circumstances not come to light during the pre-application discussions?

And now the Planning Department had, apparently, been surprised, by the last-minute introduction, by the developers, of their case for reducing the affordable housing provision in Trull and Comeytrowe by 200 houses.

If developers did not intend to comply with existing Policy, of which they were fully aware prior to application, why were they not required to present their cases, including Viability Assessments, before application so that the Planning Councillors could make fully informed decisions?

The Council's existing Affordable Housing Policy, demonstrably, failed to meet proven local need. Why should developers, time after time, be allowed to circumvent it?

In response, Councillor Habgood confirmed that the points raised would be addressed during the discussion of the motion.

The following three speakers all raised questions in relation to agenda item No. 8, the response report on the Statutory Consultation on the draft Nexus 25 Local Development Order.

- (j) Mr Michael Farrell of Stoke St. Mary Parish Council agreed that Taunton needed space for lasting, well paid jobs in our ever expanding town. However, he had always maintained that the proposed Nexus 25 site was in the wrong place and was also a suspicious means to an undesirable end.

If the Local Development Order (LDO) was adopted, the only immediate consequence was that the land value would multiply, many fold.

It was no coincidence that Persimmon, Henry Boot, Taylor Wimpey and Summerfield had bought or optioned most of the land adjacent to Nexus 25. Nor can it be a co-incidence that Tithegrove Limited one of the largest ground works businesses in the South West, whose clients included the above named companies, had just acquired offices locally

Despite all the assurances given by the Council that there were no current plans for the development of this land, because it was not in the Core Strategy, Mr Farrell felt he could be forgiven for wondering.

He went on to say that the Garden Town status heralded as the saviour of Taunton was really a dangerous 'Trojan Horse' which could lead to the Council being asked to find sites for an additional 9,000 new homes. You should be asking yourselves "Where?"

Mr Farrell requested that a decision to adopt the LDO should be deferred until permission to reconstruct Junction 25 was granted. Without this improvement Nexus 25 would be useless.

A decision was likely in two months. A short delay now would surely be better than a long period of suspicion and recrimination later.

- (k) Mr Mike Baddeley, the Chairman of Stoke St. Mary Parish Council stated that having corresponded with the Monitoring Officer, he was addressing the Council directly as their Ward Councillor, John Williams, did not represent the views of the Parish Council. He suggested that as Leader of the Council he had a prejudicial interest with regard to the proposed LDO. He inferred nothing else.

The Nexus site was surrounded by category 2 and category 3 flood plain. The run off from that area flowed into the Blackbrook and then the River Tone. Any increase in run off would adversely affect Creech St. Michael and Ruishton.

On the southerly aspect of the Nexus site, Stoke St. Mary was bordered by floodplain 3 streams and a large area of category 2 flood plain. In November 2014 the flooding in the area stretched far beyond the boundary of the flood plain. The centre of the village was similarly affected.

The planners had stated that there was a requirement for attenuation ponds within the Nexus site to cope with the run off from the hard surface areas. Given that some of this site was underwater a few years ago it was hard to believe that the ponds proposed would be sufficient.

Who exactly was going to insist that these ponds were built as planned? There was already an example of non-compliance at the affordable housing site on Stoke Road, Henlade which still remained unresolved.

Mr Baddeley went on to say that this was the wrong site for a business park. He was very concerned that the main proponent of the scheme had purchased the strip of land between the houses on the A358 and the edge of the flood plain. He was sure they had not purchased it for the provision of a Country Park but for future building.

If the LDO proposal was approved credibility would be given to a certain local Member of Parliament's allegations made under Parliamentary Privilege which he was unable to repeat in front of the meeting.

- (l) Mr Mike Marshall of Ruishton and Thornfalcon Parish Council hoped that all Councillors were now aware of the far reaching effect the LDO would have on the future development of Taunton and its immediate adverse effects on local residents.

Councillors needed to debate and question the conclusions and recommendations presented by the Planning Officers, who had not seen fit to make changes to their draft LDO to accommodate any of the concerns raised by the public, apart from those demanded by the Environment Agency.

Both the Parish Council and parishioners had been very worried that their views in respect of this LDO had not been brought to this Council by their two Ward Councillors who continued not to attend any parish meetings. We were therefore relying on Full Council to act on our behalf and recognise our concerns.

Mr Marshall went on to flag up some very important points, as follows.

Why was this LDO being decided upon in isolation from two other major schemes that had not been decided upon and which would have a great effect on its viability? Namely Highway England's A358 Improvement Scheme and Somerset County Council's Junction 25 Scheme which had yet to be considered by its Regulation Committee?

This LDO made no provision for the impact that the increased traffic generated by Nexus 25 would have on the A358 through Henlade or the detrimental effect on the residents. It merely assumed that an A358 Improvement Scheme would deal with this.

What would happen if Highways England did not upgrade the A358, or provide a Henlade Bypass should Nexus 25 go ahead?

There was no provision for the effect that the development would have on Ruishton. Improvements to Ruishton Lane for pedestrians, cyclists and local traffic should be included in the scope of this LDO as a community benefit.

We ask that the decision on the LDO should either be deferred until the preferred route for the A358 had been announced or decide that the site could only go ahead on the provision of a Henlade bypass.

Due to the complexity of the issues surrounding the site, the real alternative would be for this Council to adopt the LDO in principle and refer it to an Inspector to confirm that it was fit for purpose.

In response Councillor Williams stated that he felt personally slighted by some of the comments made.

He had no prejudicial interest in the LDO proposal. However, if there was any evidence to the contrary this should be referred to the Council's Monitoring Officer.

He was also still the elected Member for Stoke St. Mary and would continue to serve local residents. He felt he had maintained his integrity throughout the consideration of the LDO. It was often the case that Councillors had to consider the effect of a proposal on the wider community.

The reference to what 'a local Member of Parliament' had said was a reprehensible statement by someone he had worked with for decades. It related to an allegation that he had 'squirrelled away' 30 acres of land at Stoke Hill. Councillor Williams stated that he had once owned the land concerned but had sold it in 1997. The real irony was that the person who had referred to this issue was now the owner of the land.

Councillor Williams was amazed, disappointed and sorry these inferences had been made.

**6. Motion - Reinforcement of 25% Affordable Housing in the Core Strategy**

Moved by Councillor Fran Smith, seconded by Councillor Simon Coles.

"The Council notes

- That the Council's Core Strategy 2011-2028 - Vision states:-

"By 2028 Taunton Deane will be recognised nationally as a place that is developing sustainably, securing a better life and future for its communities. Taunton Deane will be a more accessible and equitable place where those living and working can access suitable and Affordable Housing, a range of services, recreational and leisure facilities, and where deprivation is tackled.

An Affordable Housing Viability Study has been undertaken to support the Council's Affordable Housing position. This Study, undertaken by Fordham Research, concludes that an Affordable Housing target of 25% would be viable and appropriate for adoption based upon current market conditions. In addition to this study, further viability testing has been undertaken for both the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and in order to demonstrate the deliverability of the Plan's proposed urban extensions. All three studies conclude that the 25% target is viable at present and can generally be achieved in combination with a package of developer contributions.

The Core Strategy will provide for at least 17,000 new dwellings over the period 2008 to 2028 supporting the Plan's employment-led strategy. 25% of new housing stock will be affordable to meet existing and arising need over the plan period. The target percentage will ensure that the Plan accounts for the needs of those unable to access market housing but is not set so prohibitively high so as to inhibit the delivery of essential infrastructure."

- That in Taunton Deane currently there are 2,012 people on the housing waiting list and unless a solution is found immediately the chronic shortage of Affordable Housing will continue to persist.

- The 2012 Core Strategy is still pertinent even though it is now over five



years old and the Government's latest guidance indicates that plans should be reviewed at least every five years.

- West Somerset Members may not wish to progress with the new joint plans. Therefore waiting until May 2019 is not an option for Taunton Deane residents.

The Council accepts that the decision of the Planning Committee has led to the Staplegrove development foregoing Taunton Deane's policy of 25% Affordable Housing in favour of providing only 15%, giving the developers an extra 163 open market homes at the expense of our struggling families and younger generations in our Borough who cannot get onto the housing ladder.

The Council should take note of Shelter's Chief Executive Officer (Polly Neate) warning that the dire lack of Affordable Housing is the main cause of homelessness. The figures from the Department for Communities and Local Government show an increase of 16% on the previous year.

The Council should therefore recognise the need to take action immediately, otherwise other sites will shortly follow suit and the public will end up paying the heavy price for it.

**The Council resolves:-**

(i) That the viability testing that underpinned the Core Strategy should be updated by independent consultants;

(ii) That the draft Core Strategy policies should be prepared for consultation that would:-

(a) Maximise the provision of Affordable Housing, in line with the Taunton Deane Core Strategy taking into account the Community Infrastructure Levy and other obligations.

(b) The recently adopted Site Allocations and Development Management Plan together with Garden Town status should persist on 25% Affordable Housing until that work is completed.

(c) In Part of Policy CP4

**Delete**

"Where scheme viability may be affected, applicants will be expected to provide full development appraisals (at their own cost) demonstrating the level of affordable housing provision that is appropriate."

**And Insert**

"Levels of Affordable Housing in line with the Fordham Research are non-negotiable and integral parts of Taunton Deane's Planning are included in the Policy."

- (iii) The recently adopted Site Allocation and Development Management Plan together with Garden Town status should ensure 25% Affordable Housing is provided wherever possible until the review is completed; and
- (iv) That the officers should begin the process of a full review of the Core Strategy to reinforce its Affordable Housing policy as set out above, including contacting The Planning Inspectorate to seek an expedited time scale for the process.”

In accordance with Standing Order 18(2)(b), the Mayor called for a formal roll call of votes to be taken in respect of the above motion and recorded in the Minutes.

The motion was put and was lost with twenty one Councillors in favour and twenty seven against, as follows:-

<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Councillor Mrs Adkins	Councillor Beale
Councillor M Adkins	Councillor Berry
Councillor Aldridge	Councillor Bowrah
Councillor Booth	Councillor Brown
Councillor Coles	Councillor Cavill
Councillor Farbahi	Councillor Coombes
Councillor Mrs Floyd	Councillor Davies
Councillor Gaines	Councillor Edwards
Councillor Govier	Councillor Gage
Councillor Henley	Councillor Mrs Gunner
Councillor Mrs Hill	Councillor Habgood
Councillor Horsley	Councillor Hall
Councillor R Lees	Councillor Mrs Herbert
Councillor Mrs Lees	Councillor C Hill
Councillor Ms Lisgo	Councillor Hunt
Councillor Morrell	Councillor James
Councillor Nicholls	Councillor Martin-Scott
Councillor Prior-Sankey	Councillor Parrish
Councillor Ross	Councillor Mrs Reed
Councillor Mrs Smith	Councillor Ryan
Councillor Wren	Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams
	Councillor Sully
	Councillor Townsend
	Councillor Mrs Tucker
	Councillor Mrs Warmington
	Councillor Watson
	Councillor Williams

7. **Response report on the Statutory Consultation on the Draft Nexus 25 Local Development Order and Adoption of the Order**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the proposed adoption of a Local Development Order (LDO) aimed at delivering a new strategic employment site at M5 Junction 25.

The adopted Taunton Deane Core Strategy had included the provision of a new strategic employment site under Policy SS8. Initial steps had been taken to allocate the new strategic employment site in the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (SADMP), however by the Preferred Options stage of the plan preparation process in October 2013, it had become clear that the timescale for the provision of the County Council's scheme to upgrade M5 Junction 25 (including the provision of access to the new strategic employment site) was such that the site could not be included in the SADMP without incurring very substantial delays to this urgently needed statutory planning document.

Subsequently, in December 2015, the Council resolved to progress the implementation of the new strategic employment site through the preparation of a LDO.

LDOs had been introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 with the purpose of granting planning permission for a specified type of development on a particular, defined site. LDOs were made by Local Planning Authorities and they streamlined the planning process by removing the need for developers to make a planning application. They created a greater level of certainty for prospective developers, helping to expedite the implementation of the Council's land use strategy and improving the likelihood of new investment being made in the local area. Developers had to demonstrate that their proposals satisfied the terms of the LDO before being able to implement their development scheme.

The Consultants Peter Brett Associates had subsequently been commissioned to prepare a LDO to deliver a new strategic employment site of some 25 hectares which could provide up to 4,000 new jobs. The LDO included the Council's 'Statement of Reasons' together with its accompanying Design Guide and Environmental Impact Assessment / Environmental Statement. The LDO had been developed through a process of working with other stakeholders and had also been informed by an informal public consultation exercise which was additional to the requirements of the Regulations.

The creation of a second strategic employment site was a long standing ambition of the Council, helping to fulfill the need for additional employment provision as an integral part of the Council's Growth Strategy and the subject of a Member Task and Finish Group. In the current context, the proposal was also an important element in the Town's Garden Town agenda, providing new high quality employment opportunities to compliment the new strategic residential development areas around the town.

The development of the Nexus 25 site was closely linked to Somerset County Council's project to upgrade M5 Junction 25 in order both to increase its capacity

and to provide access to the Nexus 25 site. The Local Economic Partnership had provided funding for the improvement scheme because it also provided access to the Nexus 25 site. Without the junction improvement scheme, currently the subject of a Somerset County Council planning application, the employment site could not be delivered.

Although Highways England was currently progressing a trunk road improvement scheme which included the upgrading to the dual carriageway of the A358 between its junction with the A303 to the east, and the M5 at Taunton the delivery of Nexus 25 was in no way dependent on this trunk road scheme, furthermore, Nexus 25 did not prejudice an A358 scheme from coming forward.

Further reported that a Transport Appraisal Report (TAR) and Framework Travel Plan (FTP) had been produced in accordance with the scope and parameters of assessment that were agreed with Somerset County Council and Highways England.

The TAR had concluded that there was an appropriate mitigation and intervention strategy capable of accommodating the impact of the development. Moreover, the potential traffic impact generated by the proposed development scheme, subject to interventions and mitigation, was not considered to be severe and therefore accorded with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The FTP had been prepared in accordance with Somerset County Council's Travel Planning Guidance Supplementary Planning Document and would serve as an overarching travel plan for the development.

The FTP would therefore set the parameters for the requirement for individual plots within the overall Nexus 25 development to prepare and implement their own Subsidiary Travel Plans as and when they came forward in accordance with the LDO.

Noted that the informal consultation exercise had been carried out between the 1 and 30 March 2017 setting out the nature of the proposals and inviting representations on a number of questions about the proposals. There were some 71 responses to this consultation, which were used to help inform the development of the draft LDO and the LDO Design Guide.

The Statutory Consultation on the Draft LDO took place between the 20 July and 30 August 2017, a period of six weeks. There were some 43 responses to the consultation exercise.

Whilst there was considerable support expressed for the employment opportunities which the Nexus 25 development would bring, there were also a significant number of points made in objection, essentially on matters of process, detail and impact. A schedule summarising the matters raised by respondents and the Council's comment on each one had been prepared as an Appendix to the report with any recommended amendments. In addition, an overview of some of the most commonly raised points made by respondents with comments from the Council were submitted for the information of Members.

The views of the Ruishton and Thornfalcon, Stoke St Mary, Creech St. Michael, West Monkton, Cheddon Fitzpaine, North Curry and Hatch Beauchamp Parish Councils were set out in full in the report.

Reported that the matter had been considered by the Community Scrutiny Committee on the 14 November 2017. Having heard verbal representations from a number of members of the public and after extensive debate, the Committee had decided to recommend Full Council to adopt the Nexus 25 LDO.

The planning application for Somerset County Council's M5 Junction 25 improvement was currently likely to be considered in February 2018. It was therefore recommended that the decision to adopt the Nexus 25 Local Development Order be delegated to the Assistant Director - Planning and Environment conditional on planning permission being granted for the M5 junction improvement.

Further reported as to how proposed development schemes would be brought forward as part of the LDO.

The Council would continue to work with the owners and developers of Nexus 25 in a continuing promotional role as part of its status as key promoter of economic development for the Taunton Deane area and its strategy for growth. This would also involve working with potential occupiers and continuing to seek the involvement of high value occupants in line with the terms of the LDO.

Noted that the Council would require a Certificate of Compliance to be in place in order to confirm that any development proposed complied with the LDO. Other Local Planning Authorities had introduced charges for this process to cover its administration. It was proposed that the Council should make a charge for an application for a Certificate of Compliance of a development proposal with the Nexus 25 LDO which would be 50% of the planning fee for a planning application for an equivalent development.

In accordance with Standing Order 18(2)(b), the Mayor called for a formal roll call of votes to be taken and recorded in the Minutes.

The substantive Motion, which is detailed below, was put and was carried with twenty nine Councillors in favour, six Councillors voting against and eleven abstaining:-

**Resolved** that:-

- (1) Having taken account of the content of representations made, the findings of the report be noted and endorsed; and
- (2) Delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director - Planning and Environment to adopt the Nexus 25 Local Development Order, together with the Design Guide, Transport Appraisal Report and Framework 'Umbrella' Travel Plan and the proposed charging regime; conditional on planning permission being granted for the M5 Junction 25 improvement.

Yes	No	Abstain
Councillor Mrs Adkins	Councillor Henley	Councillor Aldridge
Councillor M Adkins	Councillor Mrs Hill	Councillor Booth

Councillor Beale	Councillor Mrs Lees	Councillor Farbahi
Councillor Berry	Councillor Ms Lisgo	Councillor Mrs Floyd
Councillor Bowrah	Councillor Ross	Councillor Gaines
Councillor Brown	Councillor Mrs Smith	Councillor Horsley
Councillor Cavill		Councillor R Lees
Councillor Coles		Councillor Morrell
Councillor Davies		Councillor Nicholls
Councillor Edwards		Councillor Prior-Sankey
Councillor Gage		Councillor Wren
Councillor Mrs Gunner		
Councillor Habgood		
Councillor Hall		
Councillor Mrs Herbert		
Councillor C Hill		
Councillor Hunt		
Councillor James		
Councillor Martin-Scott		
Councillor Parrish		
Councillor Mrs Reed		
Councillor Ryan		
Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams		
Councillor Sully		
Councillor Townsend		
Councillor Mrs Tucker		
Councillor Mrs Warmington		
Councillor Watson		
Councillor Williams		

**8. Review of the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2018/2019**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the annual review of the Council's Council Tax Support Scheme.

Responsibility for Council Tax Support (CTS) passed to Local Authorities on 1 April 2013. The Government had also passed funding for CTS to Local Government, but reduced the amount of funding compared to the costs of the previous Council Tax Benefit (CTB) scheme where responsibility had been held by central Government and funded through the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

Local Authorities therefore had to decide whether to absorb the funding reduction across other areas of their budget or pass it on to recipients of CTS by requiring them to make a contribution to their overall Council Tax bill.

Billing Authorities were tasked with designing a CTS scheme for people of

working age. It was a requirement that people of pension age would continue to receive assistance at no less amount than had been available under the CTB scheme.

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) provided funding through the annual Settlement Funding Assessment (comprising Revenue Support Grant and Business Rates Baseline) to help meet the cost of localised CTS schemes. Each of the major precepting authorities in Somerset received the initial funding based on their share of Council Tax receipts. The initial grant awarded to precepting authorities was £6,110,080, with Taunton Deane's share being £587,775 (based on a 9.62% share). From 1 April 2014, funding for localised CTS was incorporated in the Local Government Finance Settlement and was not separately identified.

It was now impossible to ascertain funding provided for CTS in the LGFS. Government grants to Councils were being phased out and Local Government would move to 100% Business Rates retention by 2020. It was possible that this might well be how Councils would be expected to fund CTS schemes in future.

The approach taken by many authorities had been to assume the funding for CTS had been reduced at the same rate as the Settlement Funding Assessment which had reduced by 45.7% since 2013/2014. Therefore, in applying this methodology, the funding available for localised CTS had reduced by £2,792,307 to £3,317,773.

In 2016/2017, CTS of £2,932,313 was paid to people of pensionable age. Based on the assumptions stated above, this would leave just £385,000 available to spend on CTS for people of working age. As the expenditure for working age recipients in 2016/2017 was £2,445,657, this would leave a funding shortfall of £2,060,197. Based on its precepting share of Council Tax for 2017/18 of 9.61%, the share of this shortfall in funding for Taunton Deane Borough Council equated to £197,985.

Until recently, the administration of our localised CTS scheme had been both cost effective and efficient as information supplied by claimants for a Housing Benefit claim or directly from the Department for Work and Pensions had been able to be used. However, CTS administration had become increasingly difficult since the roll out of the "full service for Universal Credit (UC) in October 2016, with the number of working age customers claiming UC significantly increasing. The implications of this were set out in the report.

As a result, administration of the CTS scheme could become progressively financially burdensome, as well as being increasingly complex for customers.

Reported on the possible options to reduce the projected shortfall as well as simplifying the CTS scheme to not only make it easier for our customers, but also to contain what could be increasing administrative costs.

The report also set out in detail the background of Taunton Deane's CTS Scheme which had first been adopted in December 2012, including the various changes made to it over the intervening years.

In annual billing for 2017/2018, Taunton Deane sent Council Tax bills that after the award of CTS, totalled more than £64,200,000. Approximately 13% of residents received financial support through CTS, with just under 7% of those liable to pay some Council Tax, being CTS recipients of working age.

There were 8,513 people who moved from the Council Tax Benefit scheme to the localised CTS scheme. At 31 March 2017, this had reduced to 7,033.

The Local Government Finance Act 2012 stated that before making a scheme consultation with any major precepting authorities had to be undertaken, a draft scheme published and then consulted upon with other such persons who were likely to have an interest in the operation of such a scheme.

Consultation with the precepting authorities and the public had taken place in respect of the following three options:-

**Option 1 – Change CTS so entitlement was based on bands of income.** This option involved setting bands of awards based on an applicant's net income (and that of their partner). Whilst this was the least complex option to administer and potentially provided less sophisticated protection for some groups, it would be simpler to administer. This could be an important factor as the Council anticipated a falling Central Government administration grant which would mean the Council would potentially bear a greater proportion if not all of the administration costs of any new scheme in the years ahead. Response - 59% in favour;

**Option 2 - Reduce maximum CTS for working age recipients from 80%.** This meant working age CTS recipients would need to pay more and the Council could reduce the funding required to support the scheme in 2018/2019 to assist in off-setting cuts in the LGFS. Under our current CTS scheme the minimum contribution was 20%. Response - 21% in favour;

**Option 3 – Introduce entitlement limits.** There were two types of entitlement limits - minimum and maximum. A minimum limit was where there was no entitlement below a certain level. The advantage in setting a minimum weekly level at which the Council would award CTS was that this would avoid collecting small balances from customers and would focus limited resources towards the most needy. A maximum limit was where entitlement was capped at a certain level. Response - 11% in favour;

Any of the options to reduce the level of support offered through CTS would have an adverse impact on certain applicants or groups of applicants. If the Council needed to cut the support offered through the CTS scheme, a careful selection of options for our particular demographic would need to be considered unless additional funding could be raised through other Council initiatives or by cuts in services generally.

The reality was that any revised scheme that had less funding, needed to establish which applicants were more able to pay an increased level of Council Tax with the reduction in their CTS.

A decision to reduce CTS for people of working age would mean that Council



Tax Collection would be a much harder task. This would result in more pressure on Revenues staff and might require additional capacity to maintain tax collection rates.

The above options had been considered by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 12 October 2017. Members had recommended to amend the current CTS scheme for 2018/2019 to that illustrated in Forecast C contained in the report. This would award entitlement to working age recipients based on bands of income and would:-

- a) increase the maximum support available to working age recipients to 85% of their Council Tax liability;
- b) apply a flat rate deduction of £5 a week for each non-dependant; and
- c) disregard carers' allowance from the income used to work out CTS.

The Committee had also recommended that the Council provided extra assistance for young people who had left local authority care and that the effects in moving to a Banded Income CTS scheme for working age applicants be mitigated by inviting applicants with protected characteristics who would receive reduced CTS from April 2018 to submit a claim for a discretionary reduction.

A copy of the full, proposed Council Tax Support Scheme together with a copy of the report presented to the Executive on 9 November 2016 that included an Equality Impact Assessment was circulated to all Members of the Council to increase understanding of the issues prior to a decision being taken.

**Resolved** that:-

- (1) Having regard to the consultation response and the Equality Impact Assessment, the recommendations from the Corporate Scrutiny Committee that the 2018/2019 Council Tax Support scheme should be amended to that shown in Appendix 1 to the report be agreed. This would award entitlement to working age recipients based on bands of income and would:-
  - (a) increase the maximum support available to working age recipients to 85% of their Council Tax liability;
  - (b) apply a flat rate deduction of £5 a week for each non-dependant;
  - (c) disregard carers' allowance from the income used to work out Council Tax Support; and
  - (d) provide extra assistance for young people who had left local authority care by increasing maximum support to 100% of the Council Tax liability for single applicants up to the age of 25 where their weekly income fell within Band 1; and
- (2) It be agreed that working age applicants with protected characteristics who would receive reduced Council Tax Support from 1 April 2018, should be invited to submit a claim for a discretionary reduction to mitigate the effects in moving to a Banded Income Council Tax Support scheme.

## 9. **Heart of the South West – Joint Committee**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the proposed establishment

of a Joint Committee for the Heart of the South West (HotSW).

Since August 2015, Devon and Somerset County Councils, all Somerset and Devon Districts, Torbay Council, Plymouth City Council, Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks, the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the three Clinical Commissioning Groups had worked in partnership to progress towards securing a devolution deal for the HotSW area focusing on delivering improved productivity. Since that time the partnership had continued to progress its objectives in spite of policy shifts at a national level.

On 15 February 2017 an Executive Councillor Decision was published, which confirmed 'in principle' approval to the establishment of a HotSW Joint Committee, subject to approving the Joint Committee's constitutional arrangements and an inter-authority agreement necessary to support it.

The report set out detail the necessary documents which, if agreed by the partner authorities, would enable the Joint Committee to be formally established.

Reported that the Government was keen to engage with areas such as HotSW that could demonstrate:-

- Unity, clarity of purpose and a shared, ambitious vision built on local strengths;
- Strong partnership between business and the public sector with solid governance arrangements that provided assurance in capacity to deliver;
- Compelling ideas that could help to deliver Government objectives; and
- Clarity about the offer to Government in terms of savings and was prepared to take hard decisions based on a robust analysis of risk and benefits.

The Joint Committee would provide the ideal governance framework at this stage to take forward this dialogue with Government.

The key role of the HotSW Joint Committee was to develop, agree and ensure the implementation of the Productivity Strategy. This could only be achieved by working, where appropriate, in collaboration with the individual constituent authorities and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

The detail of the proposed functions of the Joint Committee and how it would operate were set out in the Arrangements document. An Inter-Authority Agreement detailed how the Joint Committee would be supported and set out the obligations of the Council if it agreed to become a constituent member.

The Joint Committee had a much more limited role than a Combined Authority. Its role would focus on collaboration, negotiation and influencing with full decision making responsibilities limited to developing and agreeing the Productivity Strategy.

The aim of the Joint Committee through the delivery of the Productivity Strategy would be to:-

- Improve the economic prosperity of the wider area by bringing together the public, private and education sectors;
- Work together to realise opportunities and mitigate impacts resulting from

Brexit;

- Increase understanding of the local economy and what needed to be implemented locally to improve prosperity for all; and
- Ensure the necessary strategic framework was in place across the HotSW area to enable sub-regional arrangements to fully deliver local aspirations; and improve the efficiency and productivity of the public sector. This work would be supported by a Joint Committee budget based on an agreed work programme.

Although the Joint Committee was a cost-effective formal structure, some provision needed to be made to meet the support costs of what would be a fully constituted local authority joint committee. It was proposed that Somerset County Council would take on the support role from 22 January 2018.

It was estimated that the operating cost of a Joint Committee would be £89,000 in 2018/2019 which it was proposed would be met by contributions from the Constituent Authorities. This would exclude the LEP and the CCGs from contributing as non-voting partners.

Taking into account a carry forward of £42,000 from the 2015 devolution budget, there would be a shortfall of £47,000 to meet the total estimated budget requirement of the Joint Committee in 2018/2019. Using the formula of contributions agreed in 2015 to support the devolution project the contribution requested of each Constituent Authority was as follows:-

- County Councils - £10,500;
- Unitary Councils - £4,000; and
- District Councils (and National Parks) £1,400.

In terms of the proposed meeting arrangements, it is recommended that the Joint Committee should meet formally immediately after the LEP Board meetings to assist with engagement and co-operation between the bodies and allow co-ordination of the respective work programmes. A proposed timetable of future meetings was submitted.

Further reported that the Productivity Strategy proposed to deliver prosperity and productivity across the entire HotSW area in an inclusive way. It proposed to build on existing strengths such as aerospace, advanced manufacturing, nuclear energy and agri-tech as well as exploiting new opportunities and releasing untapped potential.

The Strategy was built around three key objectives:-

- Developing leadership and knowledge within businesses in our area;
- Strengthening the connectivity and infrastructure our businesses and people relied on; and
- Developing the ability of people in our area to work and learn in a rapidly changing economy.

It was recommended that one of the first tasks of the Joint Committee would be to approve the Productivity Strategy early in the New Year.

**Resolved that:-**

- (a) The recommendation of the Heart of the South West Leaders (meeting as a shadow Joint Committee) to form a Joint Committee for the Heart of the South West be approved;
- (b) The Arrangements and Inter-Authority Agreement documents for the establishment of the Joint Committee with the commencement date of Monday 22 January 2018 be approved;
- (c) Councillors John Williams and Mark Edwards be appointed as the Council's named representative and substitute named representative on the Joint Committee;
- (d) Somerset County Council be appointed as the Administering Authority for the Joint Committee for a two year period commencing on 22 January 2018;
- (e) The transfer of the remaining joint devolution budget to meet the support costs of the Joint Committee for the remainder of 2017/2018 financial year be approved subject to approval of any expenditure by the Administering Authority;
- (f) An initial contribution of £1,400 for 2018/2019 to fund the administration and the work programme of the Joint Committee be approved, noting that any expenditure will be subject to the approval of the Administering Authority;
- (g) It be agreed that the key function of the Joint Committee was to approve the Productivity Strategy (it is intended to bring the Strategy to the Joint Committee for approval by February 2018);
- (h) The initial work programme of the Joint Committee aimed at the successful delivery of the Productivity Strategy be authorised; and
- (i) The proposed meeting arrangements for the Joint Committee, including the timetable of meetings for the Joint Committee, be agreed.

**10. Taunton Deane Borough Council 2018-2020 Asset Strategy**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the draft Taunton Deane Borough Council 2018-2020 Asset Strategy.

The issues identified within the draft strategy were very significant and actions were needed to be taken to address them via the protocols within the strategy. It was critical that delivery of the strategy, when adopted, was not delayed due to lengthy decision making cycles.

The Asset Strategy required the General Fund asset portfolio to be managed more proactively and commercially moving forward to enable disposal of poor performing assets, acquisition where there was a sound Business Case, investment in a proactive and informed manner and much greater commercialism in respect of the 'let' portfolio. Unless the strategy was adopted then significant additional budget would need to be secured to maintain this

portfolio.

What was key was the ability for the Council to make informed and proportionate decision making but in a way that did not stifle the delivery of the strategy and the need for more 'agile' decision making. For the previous three years this had been a significant issue which had impacted on delivery.

Noted that Full Council was recommended to choose one of the following two options as the favoured decision making route moving forward:-

- (a) Detailed asset specific final protocol decisions that flowed from the approved strategy, including key decisions being undertaken by delegation to a Director in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Asset Management (no call in); or
- (b) Detailed asset specific final protocol decisions that flowed from the approved strategy, including key decisions being undertaken as Executive Portfolio Holder decisions {call-in possible}.

From a speed of delivery perspective and in terms of generating the receipts and increasing the revenue income, decision making option (a) was the preferred route. However, if decision making option (b) was the outcome eventually agreed, the portfolio holder and officers would review any impact to the delivery of the Asset Strategy if it was deemed that the use of the Scrutiny 'Call in Procedure' negated the delivery of the strategy.

In accordance with the strategy, protocol decisions would result in an options appraisal as part of the flowchart contained in the document. All options appraisals would be undertaken using a standard format.

Ward Councillors would be consulted where assets in the ward were being appraised and given an opportunity to discuss any concerns, with the Asset Management Team. The team would seek to address any apprehensions and suggestions the Ward Councillor might have, including considering alternative options or what compromises might be possible.

However, if their support on the outcome for the asset in question could not be mutually agreed, then it would be for the Portfolio Holder to decide how to proceed. In addition to Ward Councillors, appropriate Portfolio Holders would also be consulted.

An Asset Management Group (AMG) for the General Fund portfolio would be re-established and would include relevant Portfolio Holders who would consider these options appraisals and agree how to proceed.

Further reported that delivery of the strategy and realisation of the benefits would be reliant on adequate staffing resource, asset data in easily reportable datasets and the prioritisation of projects to focus on delivery of the strategy with less emphasis on non-key tasks. Noted that the current way of working would need to change.

The strategy made it clear that disposals were just one consideration and would be pursued alongside Investment In assets, acquisitions and being

more commercial with the let portfolio but officers did need the ability to implement the strategy. Investment plans and the results from options appraisals would be reported to the Council through the AMG.

The Action Plan would be reviewed quarterly by the AMG and reported to Scrutiny, the Executive and Full Council annually.

Further reported that this item had been considered by the Executive on 29 November 2017. The views expressed previously by Members of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee were reported verbally. From these, it had been agreed that when the report was considered by Full Council, it should contain an updated list of all the Council's assets. It was also noted that Scrutiny had opted for decision making 'route (b)' which would allow for call-ins to be made.

An amendment proposed by Councillor Ross, seconded by Councillor Mrs Adkins requiring any disputes between the Ward Councillor and the Portfolio Holder over the disposal of an asset to be referred to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee for consideration was put to the vote and was lost.

A further amendment proposed by Councillor Horsley, seconded by Councillor Farbahi to alter the recommendations to read as follows was also put to the vote and was lost:-

“1) All non-revenue generating asset disposals should be replaced with revenue generating assets to ensure that the "family silver" was not diminished over time by a reduction in capital assets.

2) All assets disposed of within Taunton Deane should be reinvested in Taunton Deane to benefit its taxpayers.

3) Detailed asset specific final protocol decisions that flowed from the approved strategy, including key decisions would be undertaken by delegation to the Portfolio Holder, Shadow Portfolio Holder and a member of the Independent and Labour party in conjunction with the Director of Asset Management.”

**Resolved that:-**

- (a) The Taunton Deane Borough Council 2018-2020 Asset Strategy, the principles within and the recommendations be formally adopted; and
- (b) It be agreed hat the favoured decision making route moving forward should be:- "Detailed asset specific final protocol decisions that flowed from the approve Strategy. including key decisions being undertaken by delegation to a Director in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Asset Management (no call-in)".

Note : The Director might, if appropriate, choose to take a decision through Committee if such a decision was likely to be contentious.

## 11. **Suspension of Standing Order**

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

## 12. **Recommendations to Council from the Executive**

### **(a) Somerset Business Rates Pool and 100% Business Rates Retention**

Following a recent meeting with Group Leaders, the Executive had been informed that a bid had been submitted to the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to become a pilot for 100% Business Rates Retention (BRR) in 2018/2019 with our County-wide district and County neighbours.

The current 50% BRR system had been introduced in the 2013/2014 financial year and, as a result, Taunton Deane had joined a Business Rates Pool with Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset, Somerset County Council (SCC), Mendip District Council (MDC), Sedgemoor District Council (SDC), and South Somerset District Council (SSDC).

Although this pooling arrangement had ended earlier in the year, at the beginning of September 2017, DCLG had issued an invitation to local authorities to pilot 100% Business Rates retention in 2018/2019 – for one year only – and to pioneer new pooling and tier-split models.

In assessing applications the Government had set out a criteria. This included aspects that would suggest the potential for a successful Somerset bid, such as:-

- The proposed pooling arrangements operating across a functional economic area;
- The Government was particularly interested in piloting in two-tier areas focusing on rural areas; and
- There was a variation in the types of Business Rates base represented.

The pilot areas – if selected - would retain 100% of Business Rates growth above the baseline. Under the 50% system, half of this growth would be paid over to the Government. This provided an opportunity therefore to keep more funding locally and the Government had indicated it was looking for authorities to show how the additional retained resources would be of benefit locally.

Following the publication of the Government's invitation, the Section 151 Officers within the six local authorities in Somerset had sought to urgently assess the potential gains from establishing a wider pool and applying to be a pilot for 100% BRR.

Having considered the analysis, advantages and disadvantages, it was thought the case for a County-wide pool and becoming a pilot was overwhelming and an application was therefore submitted.

It was expected DCLG would announce successful applications for new pools and pilot areas through the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement in

December 2017. The Government had indicated that the Safety Net for a 50% pool would remain at 92.5% of Baseline, and that under a 100% Pilot the Safety Net would rise to 97% of Baseline – reducing the risk of losses.

The principle put forward by the authorities within the pool was that each Council should be no worse off than if it were to remain outside the pool. This meant that the pool shared the risk of maintaining the safety net position for each individual Council as a ‘first call’ on pooling gains. Each Council would be exposed to risk of volatility in its Business Rates income, most notably in respect of appeals.

The Government had recently confirmed that any new 100% BRR pilots for 2018/2019 would benefit from a ‘no detriment’ clause within the funding agreement which would remove the risk of volatility in respect of 100% BRR gains in 2018/2019.

The analysis undertaken to assess the potential financial benefits, and potential benefit sharing arrangements, had indicated that a Somerset Pool would benefit by an estimated £4,400,000 and a further £10,300,000 if the bid to be a pilot area for 100% BRR was successful. This was summarised in the table below:-

	<b>Projected Potential Gain in 50% BRR Pool £m</b>	<b>Projected Additional Gain under 100% BRR Pilot £m</b>	<b>Total Projected Gain if 100% BRR Pilot £m</b>
<b>Mendip</b>	0.8	0.9	1.7
<b>Sedgemoor</b>	1.0	1.1	2.2
<b>South Somerset</b>	0.5	0.5	1.0
<b>Taunton Deane</b>	0.2	0.5	0.7
<b>West Somerset</b>	0.6	0.7	1.3
<b>Somerset County</b>	1.2	6.6	7.8
<b>TOTALS</b>	4.4	10.3	14.7

On the motion of Councillor Williams, it was

**Resolved** that:-

- (a) The urgent decision made by the Leader of the Council and the Section 151 Officer that the Council participated in the pooling arrangement together with the other Somerset authorities under the 50% Business Rates Retention scheme for 2018/2019 be endorsed;
- (b) The urgent decision to apply to the Government for the Somerset Business Rates Pool comprising the County and five Districts Councils to become a pilot area for 100% Business Rates Retention in the 2018/2019 financial year be also endorsed; and
- (c) Authority be delegated to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to decide whether to remain in the Pool and, if approved by the Government, the 100% Business Rates Retention Pilot scheme when the Government’s Provisional Settlement Details.



## **(b) Earmarked Reserves Review**

A review of a number of earmarked reserves held by the Council for various purposes had recently been undertaken with a view to balances being returned to the General Fund.

The level of earmarked General Fund reserves as at 31 March 2017 was £17,344,000 which was equivalent to 120.5% of the Council's Net Revenue Budget.

As a result of the review, there were various earmarked reserves, totalling £91,649, that were no longer required. These related to budgets in connection with Climate Change, the F E Colthurst Trust, Waste, Debt Recovery, Legal Civica Hosting Costs and Transparency.

On the motion of Councillor Williams, it was

**Resolved** that a Budget Return of £91,649 to General Reserves of surplus Balances currently held in Earmarked Reserves be approved.

## **(c) Fees and Charges 2018/2019**

The Executive had very recently considered a report concerning the proposed fees and charges for 2018/2019.

Those services proposing an increase to charges included:-

- Cemeteries and Crematorium – It was proposed to increase the main cremation and interment fees and make minor increases for other charges within the service. The income increase from this was expected to be £120,000;

Waste Services – The Somerset Waste Partnership proposed to make modest increases to its charges for the Garden Waste Collection and Recycling Service. The price increases would allow the service to continue on a cost neutral basis in terms of the contract price paid to Kier;

- Housing Services – It was proposed to increase housing (non-rent) fees and charges by applying Retail Price Index (RPI) inflation as at September 2017 (3.9%), with some exceptions. The increases were likely to generate £336,000 for the Housing Revenue Account;
- Licensing – Although the fees in some areas had been increased last year any surplus or deficit would be dealt with across a rolling three years such that the balance was zero on those fees which were set locally;
- Environmental Health – It was proposed to introduce a cost recovery fee for the provision of food hygiene advice to food businesses in Taunton Deane which could provide a potential increased income of up to £2,450;
- Flag Post Pennants and Promotional Spaces – The proposed increase for the

pennant service would cover the increase in the installation charge. The fees for promotional spaces had been altered to reflect research which showed that the Council's charges were not comparable to other towns and actually deterred bookings;

- Court Fees – Following a High Court Case, there was a requirement to evidence a detailed breakdown of how the Court Fees were calculated. This had resulted in a proposal to reduce the Court Fees to £72. This was likely to result in a reduction of £860; and
- Open Spaces – The aim of this proposal was to formalise the charging for roundabout sponsorship and plant beds. It was anticipated that these proposals would generate additional income of £3,500.

No increases to the fees charged by Land Charges, Planning, Deane Helpline and Freedom of Information Enquiries were proposed.

The proposed fees and charges had recently been discussed by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee. Although generally supportive of the proposals, Members suggested that in relation to charges for Open Spaces, a list should be drawn up of approved Community Organisations which would have an equal status to "Friends of" Groups in order to ensure that there would be no charges levied on Community Events organised by non-profit making organisations which were non-ticketed events.

This had been considered by the Executive and it was agreed that a criteria should be drawn up against which requests for the waiving of charges could be assessed in the future.

On the motion of Councillor Parrish, it was

**Resolved** that:-

- (a) The fees and charges for 2018/2019 in respect of the Cemeteries and Crematorium, Garden Waste Collection and Recycling, Housing Services, Licensing, Environmental Health, Flag Post Pennants and Promotional Spaces, Court Fees and Open Spaces be agreed; and
- (b) The Portfolio Holder for Sports, Parks and Leisure be authorised to introduce a criteria against which requests to waive charges for the use of the Council's Open Spaces could be assessed. This criteria would be circulated to all Councillors for information.

Due to the lateness of the hour, the Mayor suggested that rather than extend the duration of the meeting, questions for the Executive Councillors in respect of their reports (details follow) could be dealt with via e-mail. This was agreed.

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

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

Councillor Williams's report covered the following topics:-

- John Collins VC DSM Honoured;
- Taunton Garden Town;
- Nexus 25;
- A358;
- Joint Committee for the Heart of the South West;
- Plaque unveiled to commemorate the Monmouth Rebellion;
- Wellington Heritage at Risk Manager; and
- The Deane House.

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

The report from Councillor Edwards covered:-

- Communications – The Local Government Authority’s tweetathon #Ourday on 21 November 2017;
- Business Development - Productivity Strategy; Rural Productivity Commission; South West Growth Summit; and Events to support small businesses;
- Events, Place, Retail Marketing and Visitor Centre – Place and Retail Marketing; and Visitor Centre;
- Growth Strategy and Specific Projects – Growth Strategy; Growth communications, marketing and promotion; Coal Orchard Redevelopment; and Lisieux Way Site, Taunton;
- Asset Management – Asset Strategy; and Transactions.

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

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

- Planning Policy Development;
- Nexus 25 – Local Development Order;
- Mid Devon and Sedgemoor Local Plans;
- Neighbourhood Plans;
- Major Planning – Staplegrove Garden Communities, Comeytrowe/Trull Garden Community, Firepool, Monkton Heathfield Garden Community;
- Planning Appeals;
- Planning Application Performance;
- Parking – Fees and Charges; Performance against budget expectations; Firepool Parking; Parking Strategy; and Variable Message Signage and Pay on Exit parking;
- Connecting our Garden Town; and
- A358 Upgrade.

(iv) **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 – Leisure Procurement; and
- GLL (Taunton Deane) – Whirlwinds Academy; Wellsprings Holiday Activity Programme; Try Short Mat Bowls; Vibe Youth Group; Go Tri; Back to Cycle Course; and Walk Well in Taunton.

(v) **Corporate Resources (Councillor Parrish)**

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

- Electoral Services;
- Democratic Services;
- Revenues and Benefits;
- HR and Organisational Development – Payroll; Building Services and Open Spaces; and Chaplaincy Service;
- Procurement;
- Finance – Medium Term Financial Plan/Budget; New Finance and Payroll System; and Projects;
- Corporate Performance;
- Customer Services;
- Facilities Management;
- ICT/Technology;
- Resource and Priorities Planning; and
- Print Function.

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

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

- Strategic Partnerships;
- One Teams;
- Homelessness; and
- Good Customer Care.

(vii) **Housing Services (Councillor Beale)**

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

- Deane Housing Development – Woolaways; Weavers Arms, Rockwell Green, Wellington; and 12 Moorland Close, Taunton;
- Welfare Reform – Discretionary Housing Payment and Universal Credit;
- Deane Helpline;
- Property Maintenance – Grounds Maintenance Contract and New Service Charge;

- Tenants Talk;
- Responsive Repairs and Voids; and
- Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership – Private Sector Housing.

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

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

- Licensing;
- Street Sweeping and Toilet Cleaning;
- Somerset Waste Partnership;
- Cemeteries and Crematorium; and
- Environmental Health.

(Councillors Govier, Aldridge and Henley left the meeting at 8.54 p.m, 9.28 p.m. and 9.32 p.m. respectively.)

(The meeting ended at 10.10 p.m.)

## **Full Council – 22 February 2018**

### **Tackling our throw-away culture by providing incentives to reduce, reuse and recycle to safeguard our health and environment**

#### **Motion proposed by Councillor Habib Farbahi, seconded by Councillor Simon Nicholls**

The Council notes:-

There are now 5.25 trillion pieces of plastic in the World's Oceans, with an estimated 10% of the plastics we produce ending up in the oceans. Research from the University of Exeter shows that plastic damages marine life; in particular micro-plastics can enter the food chain at the zooplankton stage and by stunting growth may cause damage all the way up the chain<sup>1</sup>. There is universal agreement that this must be stopped.

Professor Galloway and her colleagues of Exeter University gave evidence to the Government's Environment Audit Committee, as well as delivering a high-level presentation at the United Nations headquarters in America, outlining the effect micro-plastics have on the ocean environments<sup>4</sup>.

We want to raise awareness of the issue of micro-plastics, as it is one of the major threats to the health of our oceans and is something everyone, including school children, can all do something about. Potentially hazardous chemicals used in plastic food packaging have been found in the digestive system of 86% of teenagers who took part in a recent study at Exeter University<sup>2</sup>. These chemicals could be linked to breast cancer and heart diseases<sup>3</sup>.

The plastic bag charge reduced usage by 85% in the first year and the recent disposable coffee cups campaign has led to a "latte levy" being proposed by a group of influential cross-party MPs, and indeed to our own recycling centres accepting these cups. Now we need local government to commit to a Plastic-Free Charter.

This could include a plastic bottle return scheme. Tackling plastic pollution will require us to work closely with local businesses to find non-plastic alternatives. It will take research and investment, but most of all it will take a willingness to change.

We all recognise and accept that action needs to be taken and welcome the petition on the single use plastic and wish to go a step further by:-

#### **Recommending that:-**

- 1) This Council will set up a cross-party working group including, parish representatives, to research ways and costs of reducing or eliminating not only single use plastic on its premises but the wider implications which the Council may wish to become involved with. To engage with small, independent businesses such as coffee shops, pubs and restaurants and give the working group a practical time scale to work to;
- 2) This Council supports the potential idea of working with the University of

Exeter on an advisory basis to achieve this goal with no costs to Taunton Deane taxpayers; and

- 3) This Council widely promotes through Council-wide email footers and footers on all news releases that both Taunton (Priorswood) and Poole Household Waste Recycling Centres and twelve other Recycling Centres across the County can now accept plastic-lined paper cups and emphasise that plastic can damage our health.

(Note : Other ideas that could be considered by the proposed working group could perhaps include:-

- (a) The Council ceasing the use of single use plastics on all its premises in favour of recyclable or biodegradable alternatives;
- (b) The Council to look at providing multi-compartment recycling bins in prominent pedestrian entry and exit points and thoroughfares inside and outside all its buildings and encouraging landlords and operators of buildings used by organisations receiving Council grants and loans and housing to do the same;
- (c) Schools and Colleges to be encouraged to reduce the use of single use plastic;
- (d) The Council works towards establishing a plastic litter free zone within our town centres; and
- (e) Introducing incentives (for example a modest reduction in Business Rates?) for businesses that reduce their use of single use plastics and their plastic throw-away.

References:-

<http://biosciences.exeter.ac.uk/microplastics/>

1 Galloway T, Cole, M, and Lewis C (2017) Interactions of micro-plastic debris throughout the marine ecosystem. *Nature Ecology & Evolution* 1: 0116  
doi:10.1038/s41559-017-0116

2. Galloway, T, Baglin, N., Lee, B., Kocur, A, Shepherd, M, Steele, A, Harries, L and the BPA Schools Consortium (2018) An engaged research study to assess the effect of a 'real-world' dietary intervention on urinary bisphenol A (BPA) levels in teenagers. *British Medical Journal Open* 8:e018742.  
doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2017-018742

3 Gore A, Chappell V, Fenton S, Flaws J, Nadal A, Prins G, Toppari J, Zoeller R (2015) The Endocrine Society's Second Scientific Statement on Endocrine-Disrupting Chemicals. *Endocrine Reviews*. 2015 Dec;36(6):E1-E150. doi: 10.1210/er.2015-1010. Epub 2015 Nov 6.

4 [https://www.exeter.ac.uk/news/featurednews/title\\_632419\\_en.html](https://www.exeter.ac.uk/news/featurednews/title_632419_en.html)



## BIOSCIENCES

College of Life & Environmental  
Sciences  
Geoffrey Pope Building  
Stocker Road  
Exeter UK EX4 4QD

t +44 (0)1392 725171  
f +44 (0)1392 723434  
e biosciences@exeter.ac.uk  
w biosciences.exeter.ac.uk

14 February 2018

Dear Councillors Farbahi and Nicholls,

**Ref: Tackling our throw-away culture by providing incentives to reduce, reuse and recycle to safeguard our health and environment.**

I hold a chair in Ecotoxicology at the University of Exeter and an honorary position at University of Exeter Medical School. I have been involved in the study of environmental pollution for over 15 years and during this time have advised governments internationally on the topic of plastic pollution. This includes providing evidence to the UK government environmental audit committee and to the United Nations relating to the use of microbeads in cosmetics and to the USA Food and Drug Administration relating to the use of plastic chemicals in packaging materials.

I have now had the opportunity to read through your motion to Taunton Deane Borough Council on 22 February. It is encouraging to see how your council is working proactively to reduce the effect of plastic in our environment.

On behalf of my research group, I am happy to support your initiative in raising awareness that the widespread use and disposal of plastic litter into the environment and the generation of microplastics presents a potential risk not only to our fragile oceans and environment but also to human health. I am willing to provide unbiased advice on issues relating to plastic pollution and the interpretation of scientific evidence and implementation of remedial actions that fall within my expertise, at no cost to the council.

As an educational establishment, we are always happy to engage with local partners and to integrate the work of our students and researchers into appropriate activities such as this.

Yours sincerely

Professor Tamara Galloway

Chair in Ecotoxicology  
Director of Innovation and Impact  
College of Life and Environmental Science  
University of Exeter  
Exeter UK, EX4 4AS  
Tel 0 44 1392 263436 Email t.s.galloway@exeter.ac.uk



## Taunton Deane Borough Council

### Motions to Council – Assessment Form

On receipt of a Motion from a Councillor, the Democratic Services Manager will carry out an assessment as to its contents to establish whether there are likely to be significant consequences to the Council should the Motion be carried at the subsequent Full Council meeting.

The first question to be addressed will be:-

“Can the Motion, if approved, be implemented without the need for any resource (financial and otherwise) to be identified outside existing budgets or staffing capacity?”

If the answer is ‘yes’, then the Motion can proceed towards discussion and resolution.

An example of a Motion which would fall into the above category would be where the Council is being asked to lobby the Government, Somerset County Council or other body on a particular issue. If the motion is carried, the action required will usually involve no more than a letter being prepared and sent to the intended recipient.

However, as in the case of the recent Motion on ‘Legal Hights’, the answer to the above question would clearly be ‘no’.

In such circumstances, detailed analysis of the wording of the Motion will be required to identify what will be needed if the Motion – when it comes before Full Council – is carried.

Such analysis will include:-

- What additional resource would be required to ensure the Motion (if approved) could be implemented?
- What needs to be done to identify the level of resource necessary both in financial and staff terms?
- Are any approvals needed to provide these resources?
- Will this require reports to be submitted through Scrutiny and the Executive?  
If a Supplementary Estimate is required, Full Council approval will be required too.

If such analysis is required, the Democratic Services Manager will arrange for the attached pro-forma to be completed and this will accompany the relevant Motion onto the agenda of the Full Council meeting so all Members are aware that further investigation will be required before the Motion – even if it is carried – can be implemented.

## Motions to Council – Assessment Proforma

(To be used in circumstances where it appears the wording of a proposed Motion will commit the Council to providing further financial or staffing resources which cannot be met from existing budgets)

### Brief Details of the Motion -

#### Motion

- 1) This Council will set up a cross-party working group including, parish representatives, to research ways and costs of reducing or eliminating not only single use plastic on its premises but the wider implications which the Council may wish to become involved with. To engage with other businesses such as supermarkets and hospitals and give the working group a practical time scale to work to;
- 2) This Council supports the potential idea of working with the University of Exeter on an advisory basis to achieve this goal with no costs to Taunton Deane taxpayers; and
- 3) This Council widely promotes through Council-wide email footers and footers on all news releases that Poole Household Waste Recycling Centre and 12 other Recycling Centres across the County can now accept plastic-lined paper cups and emphasise that plastic can damage our health.

#### Questions to be addressed

- ***What additional resource would be required to ensure the Motion (if approved) could be implemented?***

Answer – It is assumed that a cross party working group would need some support from Democratic Services and various officers within the council to deliver the specified outcomes on within Council owned buildings. This is not considered to be a significant diversion from current priorities and could be supported.

The engagement with other businesses and employers may be more resource intensive and would likely fall to the Economic Development team as they have the existing relationships so additional resources may be required or an agreed diversion of workload. This might be mitigated with a more clearly defined outcome. Is success considered to be a discussion with these businesses, which is less resource intensive than success being the removal of single use plastics from their premises.

It is unclear if working with Exeter University would be an officer task or one for the cross party group. Consideration may also be given to the use of Bridgwater and Taunton College subject to the level of expertise that is anticipated.

The email footnotes could be established relatively easily with minimal resource and costs. The cross party group could propose the wording and consideration could be given to a broader message which may incorporate “reduce, reuse, recycle” which has been the mantra of the Somerset Waste Partnership. The group may also wish to consider joining that message with our (WSC) Harbour operations and

responsibilities to try and prevent plastic finding their way in to the sea and onto the coastline.

- ***What needs to be done to identify the level of resource necessary both in financial and staff terms?***

Answer – Staffing resource is variable dependant on the perceived success criteria but potential this could be managed with no additional financial impact.

- ***Are any approvals needed to provide these resources?***

Answer – This work could span a number of teams, Facilities, Operations, Economic Development, Housing (for community meeting rooms) but a Council approval of this with the associated success criteria would create this as a new task that would require no further approval beyond agreement on the diversion to the workload with the impacted portfolio holders.

- ***Will this require reports to be submitted through Scrutiny and the Executive? If a Supplementary Estimate is required, Full Council approval will be required too.***

Answer – It is envisaged that a working group would feed back to Council and the Chairman of the group would be responsible for creating the reports rather than officers. There are no requests for supplementary estimates identified in this request so there appears to be no requirement for anything other than update reports at this stage.

**Likely timescale involved** – Some tasks could be considered as quick wins:

- Implementing a footer message to emails and publications
- Reducing or banning single use plastics in council buildings

Other aspects it is difficult to establish a timeline for as engagement with others, where we hold no power in their decision making, could take longer.

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Full Council – 22 February 2018

### Capital Improvements - Cemetery and Crematorium

This matter is the responsibility of Councillor Patrick Berry Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services

Report Author: Chris Hall, Assistant Director - Operational Delivery

#### 1 Executive Summary

This request is to support capital improvement works to the waiting room and toilet facilities within the Chapel complex at Taunton Crematorium, to meet with the increasing demands on this service.

#### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that Council approves a supplementary estimate of £400,000 to be added to the Capital Programme. £20,000 of this sum to be reallocated from the Capital approval for Cremator brickwork which is now being funded from revenue resources and another £20,000 for the Chapel roof which is no longer required in the Capital Programme. The residual Capital sum of £360,000 to be funded from borrowing.

#### 3 Risk Assessment

##### Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
Failure to keep up with the customer expectations – lose larger service to others – financial impact on service operation	2	4	8
<i>Invest in service and building enhancements as identified in the report</i>	2	2	4
All year weather impact on customers – customer are left waiting in the rain, wind, snow, sun with no protection.	4	3	12
<i>Waiting room extension will mitigate this in most instances</i>	2	2	4
Project resources are not sufficient to deliver the project	4	4	16
<i>The project will be delivered using a combination of the in house team and an appointed project manager, costs included in the bid.</i>	2	3	9
Increasing demand on the facilities cannot be met – reputational damage	4	2	8

<i>Invest in service and building enhancements as identified in the report</i>	2	2	4
Tenders come in higher than the requested budget	4	4	16
<i>Project budget has been established using Quantity Surveyor costs and a contingency (12% of build costs)</i>	2	3	6

#### **4 Background and details of the request**

- 4.1 This work is necessary to support the increased volume of people who attend services, and meet their needs in terms of accessible toilet facilities.
- 4.2 The current waiting room does not have the same capacity as the chapel leading to frequent instances of the public having to wait outside all year around. It also leads to mourners from different services co-mingling. The new space will ensure mourners for the next service can wait together inside of the building. It also creates a greater number of accessible toilet facilities within the chapel complex.
- 4.3 This request is greater than just one of convenience for service users, the ability to manage the flow of people through the site is important especially where services are planned back to back, which they often are to meet demand. There are in the region of 2000 services per year and around 40% to 50% of these services cannot be fully accommodated within the waiting room and leave people standing outside. This situation will only get worse unless appropriate action is taken as there is an increasing trend towards greater numbers of mourners at services.
- 4.4 The current layout of the complex leads to mourners waiting outside of the office, this means that any employees, visitors, contractors have to walk through the waiting mourners to access the office.
- 4.5 As identified in the risk section, unless we modernise and update the facilities in line with others in the industry we may start to lose some of the business to others.
- 4.6 The current waiting room is one of the first thinking spaces of the bereavement service and providing the right environment is an essential part of the service that we offer. The current success of the service revolves around having the right environment in addition to the right employees, we need to build on this and accommodate the increasing needs of mourners.
- 4.7 The space is used for families to compose themselves, and meet with other mourners who they may not have seen for some years and have travelled some distance prior to the service commencing. There is no other location onsite for this to take place. The waiting room creates an area of comfort and reverence with a limited refreshment offering.
- 4.8 In order to create the increased capacity necessary, we propose to repurpose areas of the existing building footprint. The plans attached at appendix 1 and 2 show a current and proposed layout for these areas which takes out an existing store and corridor. These changes will nearly double the amount of waiting room space available to the public.

- 4.9 Consideration was given to extending the building footprint through a more traditional extension of the building, however this was decided to be an unnecessary complication and cost as a result of the building being listed. There is also limited space with good access into the chapel available for such an extension.
- 4.10 The newly created space when combined with the current waiting room would better meet with the capacity needs to support the chapel.
- 4.11 The materials in the store will be relocated, as will some of the electrical installations within this area of the building.
- 4.12 The additional resources being requested take account of the need for out of hours working and the provision of temporary toilets and a temporary waiting room. This is necessary to ensure the impacts on services are kept to a minimum.
- 4.13 Whilst the work has yet to be competitively tendered, the design has been drawn up by Stone Partners along with a quantity surveyors assessment, whilst we consider this to be accurate we are aware that a number of recent build projects have resulted in higher contract prices than originally estimated. We have therefore included a greater contingency amount to account for the increasing cost of material and labour.
- 4.14 The build timeline is estimated at 5 months with additional time for tendering.
- 4.15 The bid seeks approval of a total of £360k of additional resources with the service paying back this borrowing from their income. This loan repayment pressure has been included in the Fees and Charges Report and is affordable for the service without placing a new pressure on the MTFP. It is proposed that the service pay back this borrowing at a rate of £36k per annum.
- 4.16 The budget request may appear high when this is fundamentally a reuse of existing space. There are however a number of factors which increase the costs but are considered unavoidable for operational purposes:
- Service to the customers must not be impacted, there is no opportunity to close down whilst these works are underway.
  - Project management resource will be required in the lead up to tendering, during the refurbishment, and for handover. There is also a need for greater employee presence to guide customers to and from the temporary waiting room.
  - There is no spare resource within the service, due to increasing demands and other projects being delivered.
  - The toilets accessed from inside the waiting room need to be relocated to ensure they are all accessible.
  - The toilets available to visitors from outside of the Chapel are original to building and are in need of full refurbishment.
  - Much of the work needs to be undertaken out of hours to limit the impact on the public.
  - A temporary waiting room and toilets will be needed during the build.
  - The store contains a number of electrical installations, security, fire and music that need to be relocated to another area of the building.

- Greater capacity heating and ventilation needs to be installed into the current and new waiting room areas.
- Soundproofing works will be needed to the wall of the office and the wall of the waiting room as they would become connecting walls with the Chapel.
- The project also refurbishes the existing waiting room area.
- An additional 12% of build costs has been included as a contingency within the bid.

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

- 5.1 The proposal links to the stated desire to make the best use of our assets, in this case by increasing the accessibility and ensuring the waiting room area will serve the needs of our customers going forward we can “Make better use of our land and property assets; investing in, transferring or selling assets where it makes sense to do so”

## **6 Finance Implications by Deputy S151 Officer**

- 6.1 If approved the S151 will determine the final mix of funding and borrowing at the point of draw down.
- 6.2 The projects would be overseen by the appointment of a temporary Project Manager and by the Bereavement Manager. This cost is included within the budget being requested.
- 6.3 Within the Fees and Charges Report there is a table which identifies additional income of £35,000 per year from Bereavement Services which can be used to finance the borrowing requirements associated with this work.
- 6.4 The recommendation is for an approval to borrow up to £360,000 which would equate to £36k per annum over a 10 year period. With the £35,000 available from the increased fees and charges, the additional £1,000 per annum will need to be found from within existing resources. The Minimum Repayment Provision (MRP) implications are covered by the proposed repayments.
- 6.5 The revenue payback of capital borrowing is affordable based on our current projections but are predicated on the approval of the Fees and Charges increase proposed for the service in 2018/19. Repayment of the borrowing will not reduce the contribution currently made to the Council.
- 6.6 The project is not designed to provide additional income but it would however enhance the facilities, which will in turn provide better surroundings for mourners. The bereavement service makes a significant contribution to the Council budget and the service is important on both a financial and service provision basis.

## **7 Legal Implications**

- 7.1 This is a discretionary service with no requirements for the local authority to provide this function.

## **8 Environmental Impact Implications**

8.1 This proposal seeks to make the best use of the physical environment of the site by repurposing some of the existing building once complete this will improve the feel of the cemetery and crematorium service.

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

9.1 There are no identified implications as a result of this report.

## **10 The Equality and Diversity Implications**

10.1 The approval of the project will lead to a greater number of accessible toilets for the public.

## **11 Social Value Implications**

11.1 Social value will be considered as part of the tendering process for contractors.

## **12 Partnership Implications**

12.1 There are no identified implications as a result of this report.

## **13 Health and Wellbeing Implications**

13.1 The current toilet facilities are in need of improvement, the public will see a much improved facilities and these will be easier to maintain to a higher standard of cleanliness.

## **14 Asset Management Implications**

14.1 There is no burden placed on the asset management team as a result of this report or Member approval of the recommendations. It is proposed that the improvements are managed within the service.

## **15 Consultation Implications**

15.1 There are no identified implications as a result of this report.

## **16 Scrutiny comments**

16.1 Scrutiny committee considered this report on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2017 and were supportive of the report progressing unchanged to the Executive.

16.2 A number of questions were raised by Scrutiny Members as follows:

*Why would the council take on new debt rather than using New Homes Bonus?*

*It would not be appropriate to use the NHB funds as these are earmarked for various growth projects already outlined to Full Council.*

*We would seek a borrowing approval as we have no unallocated capital resources, however dependant on the timing of the approval and draw down this position could vary and we would still look at to internal resources first. The external or internal borrowing would be repaid as set out in the proposal.*



What happens to any capital that is underspent?

*The committee heard that the money would likely be drawn down in stages to meet with the needs of the project. Should we find ourselves in the position of having funds drawn down that are no longer required then these would be returned to pay off the borrowing early.*

Questions were raised as to how we would be able to manage the growth in population and the likely impact that this would have on the provision of additional services.

*The Committee heard that there remains some capacity in the service programming and that we are considering options to manage increased service demands, this might include offering services on a Saturday or later into the evening. Even after this additional capacity has been implemented there will come a point where the site can no longer deal with the increasing demand, options for this eventuality are also being thought through now.*

It was suggested by the committee that this service is always in need of something and would this be the last request from them?

*The author of this report was able to confirm that this is a substantial service which also provided a significant income and surplus to the council each year. As a result there were service enhancements that were required from time to time in order to protect the needs of the community or protect the income that the council relies upon. It was reported that there were other opportunities that were being considered that may bring in new income for the council and that further commercialisation of services was a key principle of transformation to aid with the council's financial position.*

## **17 Executive Comments**

17.1 The Executive heard, debated, and supported the report on 11 January 2018.

17.2 It was requested that the report made reference to the S151 making the final decision on the internal / external borrowing mix of funding at the point that the money was to be drawn down. This has been included at 6.1.

### **Appendices:**

#### **1) Existing layout; 2) Proposed layout**

#### **Democratic Path:**

- **Scrutiny– Yes**
- **Cabinet – Yes**
- **Full Council – Yes**

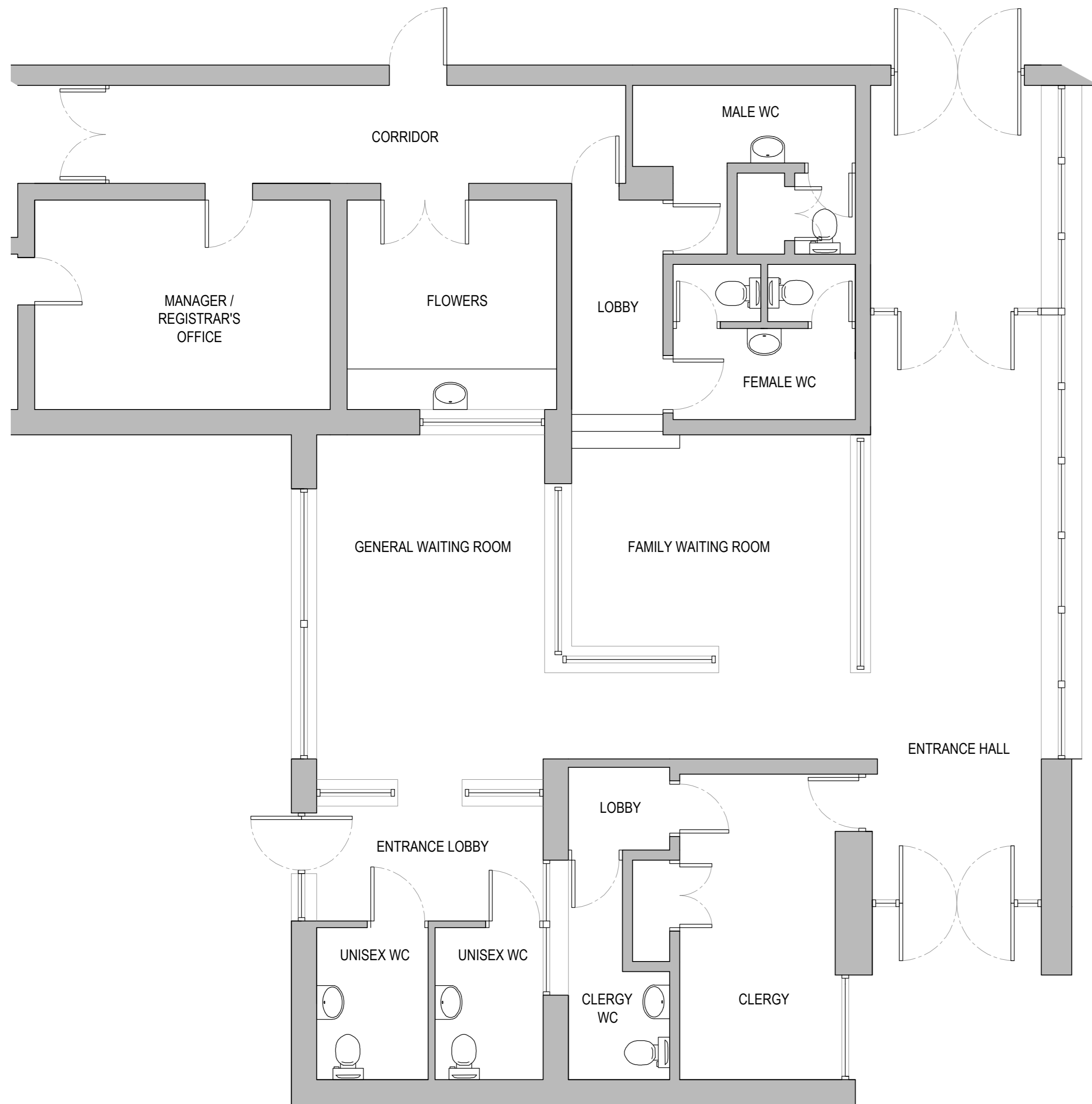
**Reporting Frequency:**  **Once only**

## Contact Officers

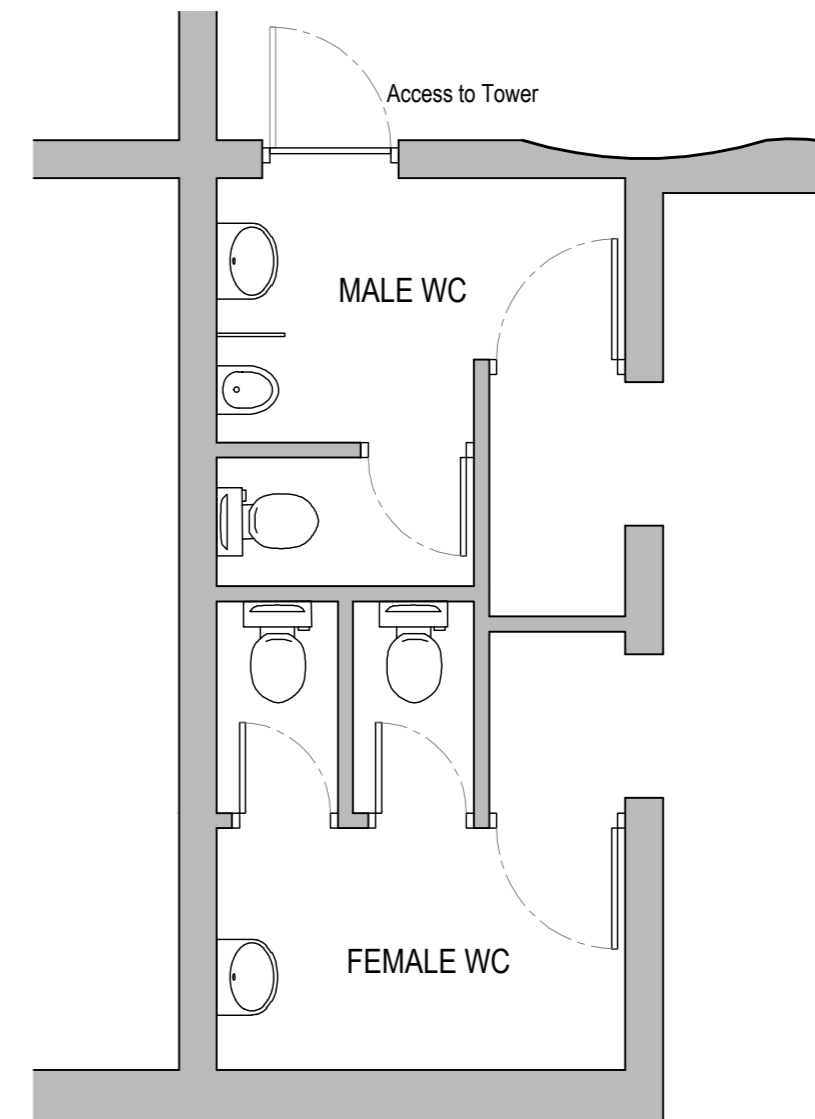
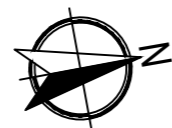
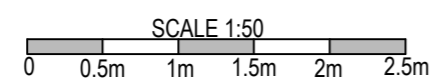
Name	Chris Hall	Name	Garry Bowles
Direct Dial	01823 356499	Direct Dial	01823
Email	c.hall@tauntondeane.gov.uk	Email	g.bowles@tauntondeane.gov.uk



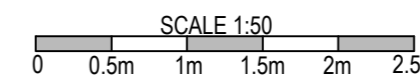




Existing Part GF Plan  
1:50



Existing WC Plan  
1:50



NOTE:  
Based on archive information  
- subject of survey



REVISION	DATE	COMMENT

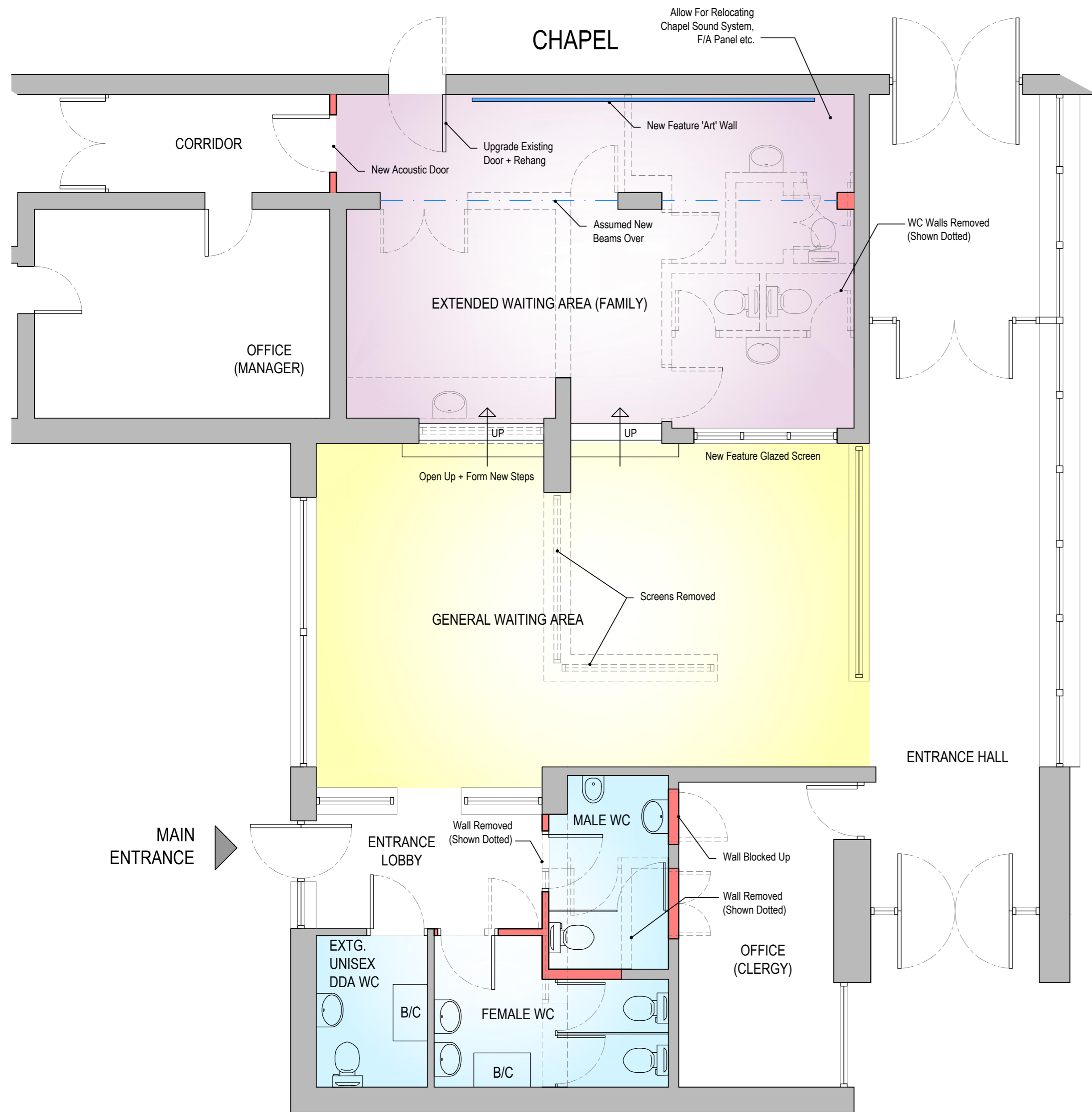
**stone + partners**

CHARTERED ARCHITECTS

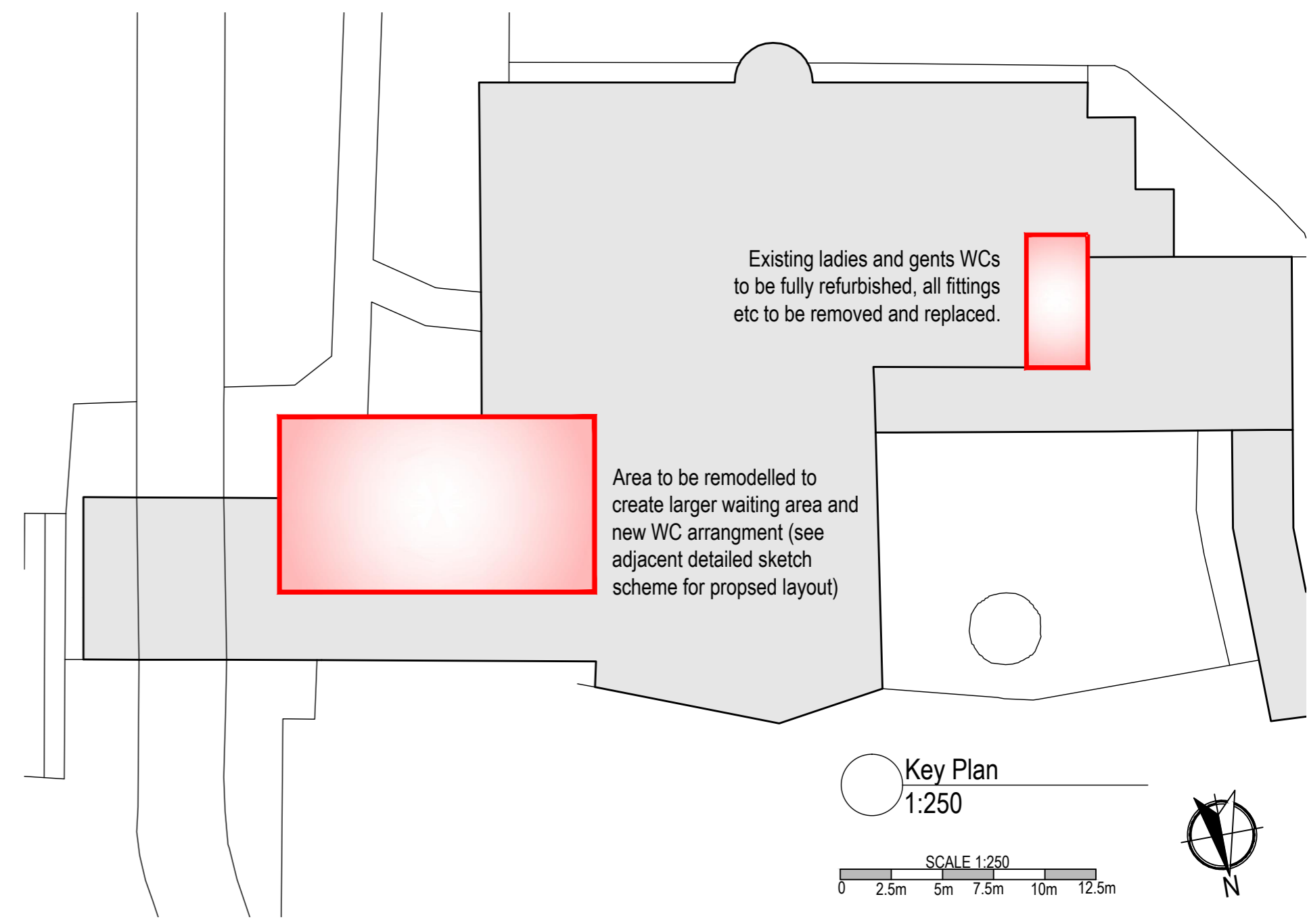
Saxum House 4 Billetfield  
Taunton Somerset TA1 3NN  
Telephone: 01823 337211  
Fax: 01823 336215  
www.stone-partners.co.uk  
taunton@stone-partners.co.uk

client	Taunton Deane Borough Council		scale	1:50 @ A2
contract	Taunton Deane Crematorium		date	OCT 17
drawing	Part G.F. Plan as Existing		job no.	3652
			dwg.	S02
			rev.	

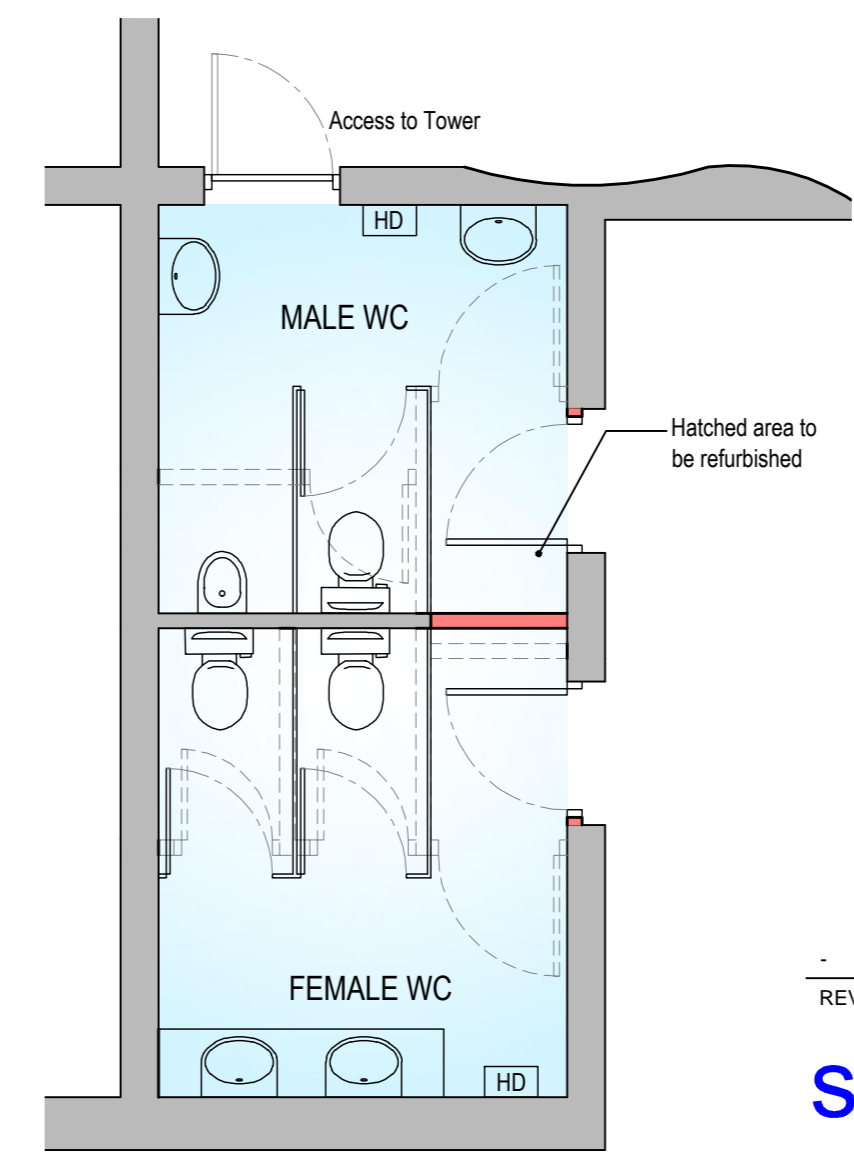
THIS DRAWING IS THE COPYRIGHT OF STONE + PARTNERS WHICH MAY NOT BE INFRINGED WITHOUT THEIR APPROVAL. DO NOT SCALE FOR CONSTRUCTION. DISCREPANCIES MUST BE REPORTED IMMEDIATELY TO THE ARCHITECT BEFORE PROCEEDING. CONTRACTORS MUST CHECK ALL DIMENSIONS ON SITE.



Proposed Part GF Plan  
1:50  
SCALE 1:50  
0 0.5m 1m 1.5m 2m 2.5m



Key Plan  
1:250  
SCALE 1:250  
0 2.5m 5m 7.5m 10m 12.5m



Proposed WC Plan  
1:50  
SCALE 1:50  
0 0.5m 1m 1.5m 2m 2.5m

NOTE:  
Based on archive information  
- subject of survey



REVISION	DATE	COMMENT
<p><b>stone + partners</b> CHARTERED ARCHITECTS</p> <p>Saxum House 4 Billetfield Taunton Somerset TA1 3NN Telephone: 01823 337211 Fax: 01823 336215 www.stone-partners.co.uk taunton@stone-partners.co.uk</p>		

client	Taunton Deane Borough Council		scale	1:50 @ A2
contract	Taunton Deane Crematorium		date	OCT 17
drawing	Part G.F. Plan as Proposed		job no.	3652
			dwg.	20
			rev.	

THIS DRAWING IS THE COPYRIGHT OF STONE + PARTNERS WHICH MAY NOT BE INFRINGED WITHOUT THEIR APPROVAL. DO NOT SCALE FOR CONSTRUCTION. DISCREPANCIES MUST BE REPORTED IMMEDIATELY TO THE ARCHITECT BEFORE PROCEEDING. CONTRACTORS MUST CHECK ALL DIMENSIONS ON SITE.

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

**Full Council – 22 February 2018**

## **Refresh of Taunton Parking Strategy**

**This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Roger Habgood**

**Report Author: Ian Timms, Assistant Director - Business Development**

### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report covers the adoption of a refreshed parking strategy for Taunton. The strategy has been produced against 5 key objectives which are set out in the report. The strategy produced nine recommended areas for action which will be developed into an action plan. This action plan will deliver the strategy objectives.
- 1.2 To produce the strategy a comprehensive review of the current development position has been combined with analysis of a range of parking related data sources which included physical survey work. This data has been reviewed against the strategy objectives to produce a series of recommendations which are outlined in section 3.2 of the strategy which is forms the basis of this report.
- 1.3 This strategy forms a key element of the Taunton twenty year transport strategy which is also being presented to members for adoption.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 Council adopt the refreshed Taunton Parking Strategy.
- 2.2 Council note the nine recommended areas for action within the strategy and the recommendation from Scrutiny that a five year action plan is created to address them.

### **3. Risk Assessment**

#### **Risk Matrix**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Overall</b>
The council lacks a clear, up to date position on it`s approach to car parking	5	3	15
<i>Adopt an up to date strategy which provides clarity on a range of actions</i>	2	3	6

**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

- 4.1 This parking strategy is a key component of the council's plans for Taunton and covers the period to 2027. This document will replace the current strategy which was adopted by the council in 2011. There has been significant change since 2011 related to development activity in the town which means that this new document is required to give clear guidance on the approach to parking over the strategy period. Whilst this period is ten years the strategy actions will become part of the council's overall approach to management of its objectives.
- 4.2 This parking strategy is a key component of the council's plans for Taunton and covers the period to 2027. This document will replace the current strategy which was adopted by the council in 2011. There has been significant change since 2011 related to development activity in the town which means that this new document is required to give clear guidance on the approach to parking over the strategy period. Whilst this period is ten years the strategy actions will become part of the council's overall approach to management of its objectives.
- 4.3 The strategy was produced using five key objectives which are derived from national and local policy. These objectives are:
1. Prioritise town centre spaces for short term visitors shoppers and visitors
  2. Provide for specific users e.g. Disabled spaces, Motorcycle bays



3. Reduce the impact of congestion and pollution
4. Improve actual and perceived safety and security of car parking
5. Improve the quality of car parks and the customer experience

4.4 A range of data was analysed which is outlined in the strategy and has enabled the evaluation of a range of options matched to the council's objectives. This gives a comprehensive view of current provision, costs and existing issues. Section seven looks at key risks and opportunities going forwards taking into account likely development plans. This includes a thorough review of the decking options that may be applied in Taunton which are Appendix D of the strategy.

4.5 There are a number of key statistics which are of interest within the documents:

- There are 4000 publicly accessible off street parking bays in Taunton town centre. 2800 (68%) are owned by TDBC with the remaining 1200 being associated with major supermarkets.
- There are 1600 Park and ride spaces. 1000 at Gateway (Junction 25) 600 at Silk Mills
- There are 145 on street bays owned by SCC
- 25 % of income is derived by pay and phone, 75 % through pay and display terminals
- Shopper car parks 70% of all stay are 2 hours and below 10% of all stays average 4 hours
- Commuter sites average of 50% pay for 4 hours, Kilkenny has highest average at 6 hours
- Park and ride use at Silk Mills is 75% Mon – Fri, 32 % Saturday
- Park and ride use at Gateway is 37% Mon –Fri, 15 % Saturday
- VMS will service 9 sites – the two park and rides and 7 TDBC owned sites.
- There is 25% capacity in TDBC car parks and 17 % spare capacity in privately owned car parks at peak times.
- The strategy accounts for 425 spaces at Firepool and reduction of 70 at Coal Orchard

Analysis of these statistics and application of the Taunton Strategic Transport model, which indicates a rise of 10% traffic through to 2031 means that we have adequate Town centre stock for demand across the strategy period.

4.6 Building on the statistics and using the objectives a range of options were assessed to address parking requirements in the town centre. These have resulted in nine areas that are recommended for action by Taunton Deane BC or partners.

1. The proposed creation of long and short stay tariffs/ designations to simplify the tariff approach for customers. Short stay would be a maximum of 3 hours.
2. Visitor Management Plans for major events for example cricket and the flower show are needed and further development of these is required to ensure that adequate travel plans are in place for these activities
3. It is suggested that we should explore incentives for the use of the Orchard (Paul Street) and High Street sites due to available capacity. This should include addressing their appearance and reviewing tariff rates.
4. Extend the use of the Variable Message Signage to utilise live data or App`s when generating parking data.

5. Review the provision of blue badge spaces and motorcycle spaces to provide them in suitable and appropriate locations.
6. Improve the maintenance and aesthetic environment of the car parks. Improve wayfinding and information for those leaving the car parks.
7. Installation of electric points. Review how to deliver these, the most appropriate route to do so and implement spaces in appropriate locations.
8. More efficient use of the spaces by possible consolidation into larger car parks and reduce the use of smaller car parks.
9. In partnership with Somerset County Council review the model of operation of the park and ride sites to enable delivery of a comprehensive solution for parking.

4.7 The recommendations will now be formed into a five year action plan which will be reviewed annually or at a frequency in line with the performance approach of the transformed council. This will be progressed by the operational car park team in association with the necessary partner organisations.

4.8 Members should note that due to physical size appendices are not provided with the report. They contain a range of data which supports the main strategy and this is listed in the appendix list at the base of this report.

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

5.1 The strategy forms an element of the delivery of Key Theme 3 of the corporate plan. The corporate plan contains an action relating to delivery of variable message signage and converting 7 car parks to pay on foot (pay on exit). This action will aid in delivery of the strategy.

## **6 Finance / Resource Implications**

6.1 The Financial implications of this strategy will depend on implementation of the actions identified within the strategy. These will need to be shaped into a clearly defined action plan with associated costings.

6.2 The council has approved funding for the conversion of seven existing TDBC car parks to provide pay on foot/pay on exit provision. This conversion is associated with Variable Message Signage which will guide drivers to these specified car parks.

6.3 Provision has also been made within revenue budgets to deal with maintenance of the car parks. Plans are being developed to deliver an effective programme of annual maintenance.

6.4 The strategy has examined the indicative cost of providing decking to a number of car parks which is included for completeness. If this option were to be progressed and appropriate case for capital investment would be required.

6.5 Resources for matters under TDBC` s control will be provided through the operational arrangements that the council has in place for it` s car parks.

## **7 Legal Implications**

7.1 The strategy identifies a number of recommendations which require action. The majority of these are optional. However there are actions such as the number of spaces available to disabled motorists that the council needs to address to discharge it` s duty as a public body under the equalities act.

## **8 Environmental Impact Implications**

- 8.1 One of the strategy objectives is to “reduce the impact of congestion and pollution”. This is tackled in a range of ways within the strategy, an example being the installation of variable message signage which reduces the time that motorists will take in searching for a parking space. The strategy also specifically identifies the need for electric charging infrastructure. This is in line with recent Government announcements relating to the changing nature of motorised vehicles.

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

- 9.1 The parking environment provides a key gateway into any town. In Taunton where 2800 of the publicly accessible spaces within the town centre are owned by the council this places particular emphasis on the council to address safety and security of the car parks.
- 9.2 The strategy makes recommendations around this area relating to aesthetics and maintenance of the car parks. These are important aspects of any parking site as they give a general impression of safety to customers using the sites.

## **10 Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 10.1 The analysis of data associated with the document has established that work is required to provide appropriate disability spaces in line with national standards. As stated in the strategy the minimum requirement is generally recognised as being six per cent of each car parks capacity. This work will need to address location of these spaces as it may be more appropriate to locate them in locations that work more effectively for individuals who have significant mobility issues.
- 10.2 It should also be noted that blue badge holders can park on street using the provisions of this badge. However this cannot mitigate the need for TDBC to make provision within its own sites.

## **11 Social Value Implications**

- 11.1 The strategy recommendations may lead to procurement of further services. This will need to take account of this factor and be built into any procurement exercises.

## **12 Partnership Implications**

- 12.1 This Strategy has been developed in partnership with Somerset County Council (SCC). It is expected that SCC will endorse the strategy through their own democratic processes. The strategy delivery does require a partnership approach in order to meet its objectives and this will be delivered through development of the action plan. In terms of wider partners the major supermarkets have enabled the development of data related to the strategy which has meant we have a fuller picture of shopper behaviour in Taunton.

## **13 Asset Management Implications**

- 13.1 The Council's car parks are, of course, an element of its owned assets. There are a number of actions which impact on and are a key part of effective management of these assets. The development of the action plan to be associated with the strategy will

inform

overall approach to the future management of the sites.

### **13 Consultation Implications**

13.1 The strategy has been produced in association with SCC and has been shared with a range of specialist advisors retained by SCC. Key councillors have also been involved in workshops to develop the strategy.

### **14 Scrutiny recommendations**

14.1 The Scrutiny Committee recommended that Council adopt the strategy. The Scrutiny Committee also recommended that a five year action plan is adopted to deliver on the objectives of the strategy.

#### **Democratic Path:**

- **Scrutiny - Yes**
- **Full Council – Yes**

#### **List of Appendices**

Appendix A	Parking Strategy
	Appendices of strategy – available on request A Summary of relevant policy B Car parking surveys - data C Borough Council car park ticket data sales D Car Park Deck feasibility report (96 pages) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A Car park Study</li><li>• B Site constraints plan</li><li>• C Typical Structure Bay layout</li><li>• D Site Photographs</li><li>• E Currie and Brown optional costings report</li></ul>

#### **Contact Officers**

Name	Ian Timms
Direct Dial	01823 217555
Email	itimms@westsomerset.gov.uk



Taunton Deane Borough Council

---

# TAUNTON CAR PARKING STRATEGY

2017 Revision







Taunton Deane Borough Council

---

# TAUNTON CAR PARKING STRATEGY

2017 Revision

**CHOOSE AN ITEM.PUBLIC**

**PROJECT NO. 70027416**

**OUR REF. NO. 70027416**

**DATE: NOVEMBER 2017**

WSP  
2 Tangier Central  
Castle Street  
Taunton, Somerset  
TA1 4AS  
Phone: +44 182 328 1190  
Fax: +44 182 328 1190  
WSP.com

---







# QUALITY CONTROL

Issue/revision	First issue	Revision 1	Revision 2	Revision 3
Remarks	Draft for officer comment	Revision for further officer comment	Amendments arising from officer comment	
Date	September 2017	October 2017	November 2017	
Prepared by	Jess Railton	Jess Railton	Jess Railton	
Signature				
Checked by	James Purkiss	James Purkiss	James Purkiss	
Signature				
Authorised by	Katherine Bright	Katherine Bright	Katherine Bright	
Signature				
Project number	70027416	70027416	70027416	
Report number				
File reference	\\uk.wspgroup.com\central data\Projects\700274xx\70027416 - Taunton Car Parking Strategy\C Documents\_PARKING STRATEGY 2017			



# CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1	AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGY TIMESCALES	4
1.2	METHODOLOGY	4
1.3	RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER KEY DOCUMENTS	5
1.4	BACKGROUND TO STRATEGY	6
<b>2</b>	<b>STRATEGY OPTIONS</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1	INTRODUCTION	7
2.2	OPTIONS AND APPRAISAL	7
2.3	OPTIONS FOR PARK AND RIDE	11
2.4	ON-STREET PARKING	12
<b>3</b>	<b>STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1	INTRODUCTION	13
3.2	RECOMMENDED OPTIONS	14
<b>4</b>	<b>ANALYSIS – OFF-STREET CAR PARKS</b>	<b>15</b>
4.1	TOTAL CAR PARK CAPACITY	15
4.2	CAR PARK LOCATIONS	17
4.3	OFF-STREET PARKING CHARGES	20
4.4	OFF-STREET PARKING DEMAND	28
4.5	TRENDS IN OVERALL CAR PARK USE	34
4.6	DURATION OF STAY	35
<b>5</b>	<b>ANALYSIS – ON-STREET PARKING</b>	<b>41</b>
5.1	INTRODUCTION	41
5.2	ON-STREET PARKING SURROUNDING THE TOWN CENTRE	42
<b>6</b>	<b>ANALYSIS – PARK AND RIDE</b>	<b>43</b>

6.1	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>43</b>
6.2	<b>BENCHMARKING PARK AND RIDE</b>	<b>44</b>
6.3	<b>PARK AND RIDE DEMAND</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>ANALYSIS – FUTURE CONTEXT AND KEY ISSUES</b>	<b>46</b>
<hr/>		
7.1	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>46</b>
7.2	<b>TOWN GROWTH AND GARDEN TOWN STATUS</b>	<b>46</b>
7.3	<b>TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENTS</b>	<b>46</b>
7.4	<b>TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC SPACE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT</b>	<b>47</b>
7.5	<b>MAJOR EVENTS</b>	<b>47</b>
7.6	<b>FUTURE SUPPLY OF TOWN CENTRE CAR PARKING</b>	<b>47</b>
7.7	<b>FUTURE SUPPLY OF PARKING SPACES OUTSIDE THE TOWN CENTRE</b>	<b>47</b>
7.8	<b>PLANNED BOROUGH COUNCIL CAR PARK INVESTMENT</b>	<b>48</b>
7.9	<b>CONSIDERATION OF CAR PARK DECKING</b>	<b>48</b>
7.10	<b>FACTORS INFLUENCING FUTURE DEMAND FOR OFF-STREET CAR PARKING</b>	<b>49</b>
7.11	<b>EMERGING TECHNOLOGY</b>	<b>50</b>

---

## ***TABLES***

Table 1 – Relevant transport and planning policy and guidance documents	5
Table 2 – Appraisal of options	8
Table 3 – P&R options	11
Table 4 – Option Appraisal Scores	13
Table 5 – Schedule of Car Park Capacity by Ownership and Tariff	15
Table 6 – Parking spaces and distance from primary shopping frontages	17
Table 7 – Blue Badge Holder spaces in Borough Council car parks	19
Table 8 – Car Park tariffs	20
Table 9 – Borough Council parking transactions by payment type and car park, 2016/17	23
Table 10 – Six-month season permits for Borough Council car parks	24
Table 11 – Benchmarking of season ticket permit prices in local authority car parks	26
Table 12 – Tariffs in privately operated car parks – short stay	26
Table 13 – Tariffs in privately operated car parks – long stay	26
Table 14 – Private car park fines	27

---

Table 15 – Peak weekday car park occupancy by car park category	28
Table 16 – Maximum car park occupancy by individual Borough Council car park	29
Table 17 – Comparison of ticket machine sales on weekdays and Saturdays in Borough Council car parks, 2016/17	33
Table 18 – Summary of car park ticket transactions, 2013/14 to 2016/17	34
Table 19 – Car park transactions by year and car park tariff, 2013/14 to 2016/17	35
Table 20 – Comparison of car park spaces to number of transactions	40
Table 21 – Selected Taunton on-street parking charges	41
Table 22 – P&R bus service fares	43
Table 23 – Park and rides in selected comparator locations	44
Table 24 – Total vehicles entering P&R sites, 2015, 2016 and 2017	45
Table 25 – Total daily average bus passengers from the P&R sites, 2015, 2016 and 2017	45
Table 26 – Estimated potential car parking spaces from car deck	49
Table 27 – Selected factors influencing parking demand	49

---

## **FIGURES**

<b>Figure 1 – Taunton town centre weekday parking capacity by category</b>	16
<b>Figure 2 – Location of key off-street car parks in and surrounding to Taunton town centre</b>	18
<b>Figure 3 – Benchmarking parking tariffs in Taunton and comparable towns – 1 hour</b>	21
Figure 4 – Benchmarking parking tariffs in Taunton and comparable towns – 4 hour	22
Figure 5 – Benchmarking car park tariffs in Taunton and comparable towns – 10 hour	22
Figure 6 – Maximum surveyed car park utilisation - weekdays	30
Figure 7 – Weekday car park occupancy	31
Figure 8 – Car occupancy profile – High Street car park	31
Figure 9 – Duration of stay by car park category and/or tariff	36
Figure 10 – Duration of stay, Borough Council car parks, 2016/17	38
Figure 11 – Intensity of use of car parks, 2016/2017	39
Figure 12 – Total tickets sold for Borough Council car parks, 2013/14 to 2016/17, disaggregated by month	40

---

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix A

Appendix B

Appendix C

Appendix D

---

## ***GLOSSARY***

P&R Park and Ride

TDBC Taunton Deane Borough Council

VMS Variable Message Signs, digital signs which can provide information on available parking spaces

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

This updated Taunton Parking Strategy sets out the recommended approach for off-street parking provision in Taunton town centre until 2027.

The strategy has been based on five strategy objectives, which are to – (1) Prioritise town centre spaces for short-stay shoppers and visitors (2) Provide for the needs of particular users - (eg disabled people, motorcyclists) (3) Reduce the impact of congestion and pollution and enhance town centre environment (4) Improve actual and perceived safety and security and (5) Enhance quality and customer experience. These have been derived from national and local policies on parking.

WSP conducted a snapshot survey of 21 off-street car parks in June 2017 (16 Borough Council and 5 private retail) to provide insights into car park usage and occupancy. This, along with other evidence, including ticket sales data (both from machines and Phone and Pay), has been analysed to understand trends in car park usage, tariffs and key issues with parking.

Key findings are as follows:

- i On weekdays there are just over 4,000 publicly available parking spaces in the town centre, with 2,800 of these (64%) being operated by the Borough Council. There are a further 1,600 spaces at the two park and rides (600 at Silk Mills and 1,000 at Taunton Gateway (M5 J25));
- i On Saturdays there are an additional 148 parking spaces available at Belvedere Road;
- i 25% of all transactions in Borough Council car parks are made by Phone and Pay, with the remaining 75% at the ticket machines. However, the proportion of Phone and Pay tends to be higher in commuter car parks, with more than 60% using Phone and Pay in Kilkenny car park;
- i Weekday surveys recorded 17,466 vehicles parked in 21 town centre car parks between 07:00 and 19:00. 9,892 (58%) parked in the five private retail car parks, with the remaining 7,574 (43%) parking in the 16 surveyed Borough Council car parks;
- i Survey data shows that on weekdays the number of vehicles parked in the town centre car parks peaks in the late morning. At the time of maximum occupancy there are:
  - A total of 3,074 vehicles parked in the 21 surveyed car parks, with 916 available spaces. Of these:
    - 2,083 vehicles were parked in Borough Council car parks, with 678 available spaces (25% spare capacity); and
    - 991 vehicles were parked in private retail car parks, with 199 available spaces (17% spare capacity).
- i Remaining spaces are not uniformly located across the town, with some car parks being at capacity at peak times, such as Castle Street, Crescent and Duke Street, whilst High Street and Orchard multi-storey are identified as having spare capacity;
- i 28% of all vehicles parked in the Borough Council town centre car parks on a weekday are parked at the time of peak occupancy in the late morning (2,083 of the 7,574 vehicles recorded). The remaining 72% are spread out across the rest of the day when there are greater levels of spare capacity;
- i Ticket machine sales indicate numbers of parked vehicles is 28% higher on Saturdays than on weekdays. Applying this uplift to weekday survey figures indicates that around 9,700 vehicles may park in town centre Borough Council car parks on an average Saturday.
- i Applying the weekday pattern of vehicle arrivals and departures to Saturday ticket figures would suggest that the surveyed Borough Council car parks have approximately 7% spare capacity at the most popular times (about 2,715 parked vehicles in late morning / early afternoon, compared to 2,909 Borough Council parking spaces (including Saturday spaces at Belvedere Road). However, it is possible that parking on Saturdays may exhibit a lower, later, peak than weekdays, with parking demand spread over a longer time period, reflecting the different nature of weekend travel patterns and activities;
- i Ticket sales indicate overall numbers of car park users have increased by 8% in the last years, with strong growth in commuter tariff car parks;

- i Survey data found two thirds of shopper tariff car park users stay for less than 2 hours but 10% stay more than 4 hours. Ticket machine sales show that on average customers pay for 2 hours and this is the same for weekdays and Saturdays;
- i Survey data found that more than 50% of commuter tariff car park users stay for less than 4 hours. Ticket machine sales identify that customers pay for an average of 4 hours' stay in commuter car parks and that average payments in Kilkenny are higher still, at more than 6 hours;
- i Short stay parking charges are generally cheaper than comparison towns and long stay parking is on a par with Bristol and Exeter; and
- i Season tickets are generally cheaper in comparison towns, and a wider range of options are available elsewhere (e.g. monthly, quarterly, annual);
- i In terms of the average vehicle occupancy of the park and ride sites, Silk Mills is 75% full on weekdays, falling to 32% on Saturdays. Gateway is 37% occupied on weekdays, reducing to 15% on Saturdays. The data highlights the available spare capacity at park and ride sites, particularly at Taunton Gateway. The reasons are unclear, but are likely to be at least partly related to the excess of supply in the town centre. Further investigation would be useful to better understand why people are not using them; and
- i Average occupancy of the park and ride sites has risen slightly over the last 3 years but there has been stronger growth in average daily numbers of daily park and ride bus service passengers over the same period

A range of changes already programmed will influence parking in the town. Developments will raise net parking supply by 355 spaces (an additional 425 from the submitted Firepool application minus the loss of 70 at Coal Orchard). Investment in variable message signs (VMS) will cover 9 car parks, including the park and ride sites, and pay on foot at seven car parks, which will help match drivers to spaces and improve customer experience.

Using the Taunton Strategic Transport Model future year (2031) we have looked at how the level of traffic is going to change in the future in Taunton town centre. The model takes into account all the development envisaged by the Core Strategy and forecasts an overall increase in town centre traffic of 10%. Following this logic, if we were to increase demand for parking by 10%, then this would show that, based on the existing surveys of spare capacity that there is sufficient weekday parking supply across the town centre to meet demand in 2031. Demand on Saturdays would exceed town centre supply (excluding the capacity which is available at park and rides) during the late morning and early afternoon. A range of options should be explored to help spread demand more evenly through the day and ensure that the strategy supports the Garden Town vision of less traffic in town centre streets and enabling more walking, cycling and public transport use.

A range of possible options have been considered as part of the strategy and assessed against the objectives. The following options performed well against the objectives and are recommended for inclusion in the strategy:

- i *Creation of dedicated short-stay and long-stay tariff car parks* – this option is particularly aimed at ensuring that spaces are available, and used, for short stay visits, and to give certainty to customers. In parallel a small number of car parks should be dedicated to long-stay users. It may be appropriate for the four existing commuter tariff car parks to fulfil this purpose but this should be kept under review;
- i *Visitor management plans for major events* – large-scale events tend to create spikes in demand for car parking and place particular pressure on the transport network in general. It is recommended that visitor management plans are prepared by event organisers in consultation with the Councils to ensure the parking and travel demands are addressed appropriately;
- i *Measures to encourage use of Orchard multi-storey and High Street car parks* – these car parks were found to have spare capacity and are close to key retail areas. A range of measures should be considered, including upgrading their appearance and potentially a special tariff, to encourage their use;
- i *Extend the use of VMS* – the existing investment in VMS and pay on foot can enable more detailed, real-time information to be provided to car park customers in advance of their arrival, with live information provided on the Borough Council website or via an app, helping shape travel choices;
- i *Review provision for blue badge holders and motorcycles* – existing provision should be reviewed to ensure suitable space is being provided in the right locations;
- i *Maintenance and aesthetic enhancement programme and improved information and wayfinding* – the appearance of the car parks, and the associated infrastructure to guide users to the rest of the town, can be an important factor shaping where people choose to park and influencing visitors' impressions of the



town. Investment in these aspects could help rebalance demand across the town, improve car park quality and customer experience.

- ▮ *Installation of electric charging points* – to provide facilities for people wishing to use electric vehicles
- ▮ *Make more efficient use of car park space* – this is a combination of option F and G. Consolidating the number of car parks into fewer, but bigger car parks will allow for a more efficient and cost effective maintenance and management strategy and will free up land within the town centre for development. Further work is required on this option to demonstrate that it has a robust business case before further pursuit.

A further 1,600 parking spaces are located at the two park and ride sites. Existing policy identifies their role in providing for commuters and long-stay visitor parking, supporting and supplementing the town centre offer. It is recommended that discussions are held to consider whether the following options may be suitable in the short term:

- ▮ Using the P&R to better meet parking demand for large-scale town centre events;
- ▮ Undertaking surveys into the use, and perceptions, of P&R; and
- ▮ Implementing modest bus fare increases to support the operation of the P&R services.

A review of existing on-street parking restrictions in surrounding the town centre may be required in parallel to the implementation of proposals in this strategy, to ensure that the needs of residents are put first in these locations, in accordance with Somerset Future Transport Plan.

This report outlines the strategy options considered and recommended options, followed by a series of chapters describing and analysing information relating to off-street parking, on-street arrangements, the P&R sites and future context and key issues.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

---

## 1.1 AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGY TIMESCALES

- 1.1.1. Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) has commissioned WSP to prepare an updated car parking strategy for Taunton, setting out a recommended approach for the provision of parking in the town centre over the next ten years to 2027. It mainly deals with car parking in Borough Council-operated off-street car parks in and around the town centre. However reference is also made to general arrangements and availability of on-street parking and the use of the town's park and ride (P&R) sites.
- 1.1.2. There are a number of privately-operated town centre car parks outside the control of the Borough Council. The Council recognises the role these play in providing parking for the town and information about these car parks is included in the strategy; however, the strategy recommendations do not cover them.
- 1.1.3. This periodic review includes survey data collected in June 2017, and reflects changes in circumstances which have occurred locally or nationally in recent years. It also considers how demands for parking are anticipated to change in future years.
- 1.1.4. The underlying context of the Strategy remains the requirement to manage the impact of congestion within the town whilst ensuring adequate parking provision for those needing to bring vehicles into the town for shopping, visiting or commercial purposes. The strategy aims have been informed by a review of several policies, including Taunton Deane Core Strategy and Somerset Future Transport Plan. This strategy supports *Connecting Our Garden Town*, which will set strategic direction for Taunton's transport investment, which has as one of its six themes *parking and park and ride*.
- 1.1.5. The Strategy aims are to identify measures which:

- Prioritise town centre spaces for short-stay shoppers and visitors;
- Provide for the needs of particular users - (e.g. disabled people, motorcyclists);
- Reduce the impact of congestion and pollution and enhance town centre environment;
- Improve actual and perceived safety and security; and
- Enhance parking quality and customer experience.

## 1.2 METHODOLOGY

- 1.2.1. A range of primary and secondary data sources have been used to inform this strategy, including the following:
- Snapshot surveys of car parks carried out on weekdays in June 2017 to understand current patterns of occupancy and duration of stay;
  - Ticket sales data for Borough Council car parks to understand length of stay and patterns of occupancy;
  - P&R traffic counts and bus passenger counts to understand usage;
  - Benchmarking analysis of car park pricing structures in other towns; and
  - Desk study into the feasibility of constructing additional decked levels in selected car parks.

## 1.3 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER KEY DOCUMENTS

1.3.1. This revised parking strategy has taken account of policies in a number of key documents, as listed in Table 1 below. Relevant excerpts are set out in Appendix A.

**Table 1 – Relevant transport and planning policy and guidance documents**

Document	Summary
<i>Connecting our Garden Town</i>	Currently in draft form, this will outline the strategic direction for transport investment in Taunton. Proposals and policies for parking and park and ride is one of six themes covered by the document. It references the new parking strategy and has a commitment to implement policies and proposals contained from it.
<i>Local Transport White Paper<sup>1</sup></i>	The White Paper, entitled <i>Cutting carbon, creating growth: Making sustainable growth happen</i> outlined that the priority for local transport is to <i>Encourage sustainable local travel and economic growth by making public transport and cycling and walking more attractive and effective, promoting lower carbon transport and tackling local road congestion.</i>
<i>Department for Transport Policies<sup>2</sup></i>	The department outlines summary policies on <i>Local transport, Roads and traffic and Transport emissions</i> outlining the government's broad approach to these topics.
<i>National Planning Policy Framework<sup>3</sup></i>	Sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these should be implemented. It constitutes guidance for preparing local plans and is a material consideration in determining planning applications. It states that the purpose of the planning system is to help achieve sustainable development and recognises three interlinked dimensions to achieve this – economic, social and environmental.
<i>Operational Guidance to Local Authorities: Parking Policy and Enforcement<sup>4</sup></i>	Published by the Department for Transport in 2015, this sets out the policy framework within which the Government believes that all English local authorities, both inside and outside London, should be setting their parking policies and, if appropriate, enforcing those policies
<i>Parking Strategies and Management</i>	Guidance prepared by the professional body, the Institution of Highways and Transportation, in 2005
<i>Planning Practice Guidance<sup>5</sup></i>	Web-based resource prepared by Department for Communities and Local Government bringing together planning guidance on various topics, with periodic updates to sections as required. Does not constitute government policy.
<i>Somerset Future Transport Plan<sup>6</sup></i>	Sets out the transport policy in Somerset over a 15 year time horizon, with a strategy containing five transport goals entitled <i>Making a positive contribution, Living sustainably, Ensuring economic wellbeing, Enjoying and achieving and Being healthy.</i>
<i>Taunton Deane Core Strategy<sup>7</sup></i>	Adopted in 2012 to provide strategic planning policy for the borough, with eight strategic objectives covering climate change, economy, town and other centres, housing, inclusive communities, accessibility, infrastructure and the environment.
<i>Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan<sup>8</sup></i>	Adopted in 2008, this focused on the delivery of major regeneration projects for large parts of the town centre. It set nine strategic objectives, including for a town centre that is well connected and less congested. Site-specific policies included transport proposals, some of which identified parking

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/creating-growth-cutting-carbon-making-sustainable-local-transport-happen>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies?organisations%5B%5D=department-for-transport>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/operational-guidance-to-local-authorities-parking-policy-and-enforcement>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/plans/future-transport-plan/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/talking-tomorrows>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/media/1099/tcaap-2008.pdf>

- 1.3.3. The Somerset Future Transport Plan provides useful background context and commentary on the role of parking. It states:

*The provision of opportunities to park in our town centres, employment sites, neighbourhoods and other essential destinations is key to enabling people the access to the facilities they need to visit to go about their daily lives. However, there are often competing demands for space and the management of parking is essential to ensure the continued vitality and viability of our neighbourhoods. Within town centres, there is a danger that long stay commuters can monopolise use of the car parks closest to shops, reducing the attractiveness of the town to car borne shoppers and visitors. The relative mix of long, medium and short stay parking, together with pricing approach, is therefore an important element of our strategy for the management of town centre car parking. The provision of Park and Ride facilities forms an important policy strand to the approach taken in major towns.*

*Where insufficient parking is available within both residential and employment areas, displacement of overspill vehicles can lead to congestion on nearby roads. It can also lead to vehicles being parked on footways and other anti-social behaviour, such as neighbour disputes. The management and enforcement of on-street parking restrictions is another element of our parking strategy, as is the application of appropriate parking standards for new development. The availability and cost of parking facilities can be a key determinant in how people choose to travel.*

*While recognising that we need to cater for car-drivers, we also need to encourage people to travel by more sustainable modes where they can as road and parking space is not unlimited. Provision of appropriately located and designed parking bays is essential for facilitating access for people with restricted mobility who are able to travel by car.*

## 1.4 BACKGROUND TO STRATEGY

- 1.4.1. The Parking Strategy for Taunton originates from the late 1990s when various options for improving traffic and congestion management in the town were proposed. The original Strategy was produced jointly by Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) and Somerset County Council.
- 1.4.2. The Strategy was developed alongside the County Council's Local Transport Plan, the Urban Design Framework, and the Vision for Taunton aspirations.
- 1.4.3. It was reviewed in 2005, and again in 2007, with reports going to the Borough Council Executive. The latter review looked at the impact of the first Park & Ride site at Silk Mills, the latest developments and timetable for the Project Taunton initiatives, and the overall need (demand) for off-street parking provision.
- 1.4.4. The Strategy was then updated in 2011 in the light of:
- i The draft (at that time) Core Strategy;
  - i Programme for regeneration initiatives;
  - i The adopted Taunton Town Centre Action Plan;
  - i Changes in government planning policy;
  - i The Somerset Future Transport Plan (2011-2026);
  - i The planned introduction of county-wide civil parking enforcement; and
  - i The recessionary economic climate of the time.

## 2 STRATEGY OPTIONS

---

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1.1. A long list of potential options for action have been identified which have broken down into eight broad themes. The list has been informed by the data analysis (see Chapters 4 to 6), an understanding of future context and key issues likely to influence parking in the town (see Chapter 7) relevant policy (see Appendix A), as well as considering best practice from other urban centres and discussions with officers. The options relate to Borough Council off-street car parks.
- 2.1.2. The following key assumptions have been used to guide the development of strategy options:
- i Surveys indicate that there is 25% spare weekday capacity across all Borough Council car parks at the time of weekday maximum occupancy. It is also anticipated that a net additional 355 spaces will become available for public use within the next five years as part of key town centre developments. There is calculated to be 7% capacity at the most popular times on Saturdays. On this basis an excess of supply is considered likely to continue in the short term and therefore there is no requirement to identify and provide for any further increase in spaces in the town centre;
  - i Looking into the longer term, additional parking spaces will be provided on the periphery of the town on the Wellington Road corridor (at Comeytrowe) and near Walford Cross (at Monkton Heathfield). This will either increase capacity further and/or provides the opportunity to reconsider the balance between town centre and periphery parking;
  - i In accordance with the Somerset Future Transport Plan, town centre spaces are prioritised for shoppers and visitors; and
  - i Providing parking is one part of the town's overall transport strategy, which also seeks to reduce congestion and recognises the larger contribution walking, cycling and public transport can have in the town. Emerging technology could also change travel behaviour, with implications for how and where people park or choose to travel. Some scenarios of the future suggest that current levels of town centre parking might not be required as people choose to travel in different ways. Levels of town centre parking for the longer term should therefore continue to be kept under periodic review.

### 2.2 OPTIONS AND APPRAISAL

- 2.2.1. Each option has been appraised against the five strategy objectives, outlined in Section 1.1, to gain a full understanding of each option and its likely positive and negative impacts.
- 2.2.2. The options have been scored against the following criteria, shown below:
- i Strongly supports aim üü
  - i Partly supports aim ü
  - i Neither supports nor conflicts with aim –
  - i Conflicts with aim 0
  - i Strongly conflicts with aim 00
- 2.2.3. An early sift led to some options being discarded. These include:
- i Increasing the amount of long-stay parking provided in the town centre – this would be contrary to existing policy;
  - i Preferential spaces for car sharers and / or parent and child spaces – this was considered to give rise to enforcement difficulties;
  - i Airline style car park pricing which fluctuates according to demand – technology not thought to be fully developed or available at this stage; and
  - i Cycle parking – guidance indicates that cycle parking should usually be located as close to the entrance of key destinations as possible, which will include a range of on-street locations and not necessarily in car parks. It is recommended that the potential be explored for additional cycling parking to be installed in place of a small number of on-street car parking spaces.
- 2.2.4. Table 2**Error! Reference source not found.** overleaf lists all the remaining options. The table includes a summary description and documents the outcome of the assessment against the strategy objectives.

**Table 2 – Appraisal of options**

Option	Prioritise town centre spaces for short-stay shoppers and visitors	Provide for the needs of particular users - (eg disabled people, motorcyclists)	Reduce the impact of congestion and pollution and enhance town centre environment	Improve actual and perceived safety and security	Enhance quality and customer experience	Notes and appraisal remarks	
<b>Theme 1 - Options to rebalance provision in favour of shoppers / short stay</b>							
A	Categorise car parks for either short stay users or long stay users	üü	–	ü	–	ü	Surveys indicated that more than 50% of users in commuter tariff car parks stay less than 4 hours. Length of stay could be limited in certain car parks, for example some or all of the car parks within, or adjacent to the 200m buffer of the primary shopping frontage could become short stay (Canon Street, Castle Street, Coal Orchard, The Crescent, Duke Street, High Street, Orchard Multistorey, Wood Street) <sup>9</sup> . Contributes to a higher turnover of shoppers, rather than commuters parking closest to the town centre. Is anticipated to lead to transfer of some long-stay parking to existing commuter tariff car parks and/or P&R. Care will need to be taken to sufficient supply of spaces are between different categories of car park.
B	Increase long-stay tariffs in Shopper 1 and / or Shopper 2 car parks / Increase short stay tariffs in Commuter car parks	ü	–	ü	–	ü	The car parking within Taunton offers relatively low charges for long stay parking. Increasing charges on long stay (over 4 hours) in both shopper car parks would make it a less attractive option for long stay parking in the town centre, and encourage the use of dedicated commuter car parks and / or the P&R. Increasing, rather than withdrawing, long-stay tariffs is likely to reduce but not entirely prevent long-stay users in central car parks. Similarly, higher tariffs for short stays in commuter car parks would limit the number of customers using them for these purposes. Whilst it retains car park flexibility it is considered less effective than option A.
C	Convert some commuter tariff car parks to short stay use only	üü	–	–	–	ü	Converting some existing commuter tariff car parks to short stay is anticipated to increase parking turnover and increase the availability of spaces for shoppers and visitors. It may encourage additional traffic into the centre. Whilst ticket sales data indicates that a substantial proportion of commuter tariff car park users stay for less than 4 hours, this does not take account of season ticket permit holders and thus the proportion of long-stay users is likely to be under-reported. It is suggested that this is not taken forward until after any options to more clearly differentiate between short and long stay car parks are implemented and outcomes monitored.
<b>Theme 2 – Options to improve car park efficiency</b>							
D	Measures to encourage use of Orchard multi-storey and High Street car parks	üü	–	ü	üü	üü	These two Shopper car parks are relatively under-used and have a large proportion of spare capacity. The reasons for this are not currently clear - it could for example relate to customer preferences, limited awareness of available spaces, or access issues (as vehicles can queue to enter the Marks & Spencer car park at certain times, and block the route to the Orchard and High Street car parks). The reasons could be investigated and, following this, measures introduced to encourage use. This could potentially highlight these car parks on VMS or place these car parks into a special tariff to encourage use, for example. This option is considered to perform well against several of the objectives. A separate tariff could, however, be confusing to customers.
E	Extend the use of VMS	–	–	üü	–	üü	The current VMS investment programme will cover seven town centre car parks and two P&R sites. The data collected for the VMS could be made available to the public in other ways, including real-time information online and via an app. This could encourage drivers to choose car parks with more available spaces, avoid the busiest times, reduce congestion and improve customer experience. In the longer term VMS could be made available to all car parks to enable drivers to identify available spaces and reduce numbers of vehicles driving around to find a space and contributing to congestion. It would be appropriate to monitor the impact of the existing investment in the short term before considering its extension.
F	Consolidate parking into fewer car parks (car park disposal)	–	–	ü	–	ü	Taunton has several car parks with a relatively small number of spaces dispersed around the town centre, such as Whirligig. This dispersal of spaces can contribute to more complex trip patterns across the town centre as drivers choose from the wide range of locations. One or more of the smaller car parks could be closed to concentrate parking into the larger car parks and could enable land to be redeveloped as part of the town's regeneration programme. Fewer car parks would allow for a more cost effective upgrade of infrastructure.
G	Make more efficient use of car park land in larger car parks (decking)	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	There is an opportunity to make more efficient use of land at some larger car parks with the introduction of decking to provide additional spaces. Placing greater reliance on larger car parks which are further from the principal town centre retail areas may lengthen distances between parking locations and key destinations which has potential to impact on blue badge holders in particular. This will need careful consideration. The majority of the car parks considered for decking are well-located to the principal town access routes, such as Tangier Way, which can help to minimise town congestion. Combining this with Option F, fewer bigger car parks with improved facilities will improve customer experience.
<b>Theme 3 – Options to manage parking outside of times of peak use</b>							

<sup>9</sup> Whirligig is already short stay

Option		Prioritise town centre spaces for short-stay shoppers and visitors	Provide for the needs of particular users - (eg disabled people, motorcyclists)	Reduce the impact of congestion and pollution and enhance town centre environment	Improve actual and perceived safety and security	Enhance quality and customer experience	Notes and appraisal remarks
H	Implement Charges in the Evenings	–	–	ü	–	0	The current charging tariff ends at 6pm. One option is to charge a flat tariff after this time for evening use. This is most likely to affect residents parking in public car parks and people coming to the town centre for leisure and events. This option is anticipated to reduce vehicle trips into the town out of peak periods, encourage use of other travel modes, and would have implications for on-street parking in and surrounding the town centre.
I	Implement charging on Sundays	–	–	ü	–	0	The current tariff system does not charge for parking on Sundays. One option is to charge a flat tariff for Sunday use or alternatively implement a charging structure similar to other days of the week. This option is anticipated to reduce vehicle trips into the town out of peak periods, encourage use of other travel modes, and would have implications for on-street parking in and surrounding the town centre.
<b>Theme 5 – Options to provide for specific user groups</b>							
J	Visitor management plans for major events	üü	ü	üü	–	üü	Major events place particular pressures on the town's car parks and the transport network in general. Working with major event organisers to prepare and implement management plans which include information to visitors, promotion of non-car access and maximising the use of P&R will help to address impacts associated with spikes in parking demand and guide visitors who may not be familiar with the town. It could help to meet the environment and customer experience objectives.
K	Review provision for blue badge holders	ü	üü	–	–	ü	Existing blue badge holder provision varies widely between car parks. Where it is provided it tends to be located in the most accessible part of car parks. If blue badge spaces are full, blue badge holders may choose to park on-street, even if spaces are available in other parts of the car park. A review of the current demand for and location of disabled parking spaces will help to ensure sufficient supply, especially in the light of changing demographics. This will ensure the needs of travellers with disabilities are catered for, and provision is tailored in terms of locations and numbers of spaces. This option has the potential to contribute to improved parking quality.
L	Tariffs or dedicated spaces for electric vehicles	–	ü	üü	–	ü	There are currently no electric vehicle charging points in the Borough Council's car parks. Providing spaces to allow electric vehicle charging will accelerate the public take-up of cleaner vehicles and reduce vehicle emissions. Spaces in car parks could be located in preferential locations to benefit those users. In parallel discounts could potentially be provided to those who have electric vehicles. However these options are likely to require significant investment in technology and make give rise to enforcement issues. Provision of charging points in the car parks will help encourage the use of electric vehicles, which will improve the general environment in the town centre through reduction of petrol / diesel cars.
M	Review provision of motorcycle spaces	–	üü	ü	ü	ü	Current provision of motorcycle spaces is limited low and does not meet recommended standards. Nevertheless, local conditions vary, so an assessment of demand is required for Taunton. Appropriate provision for motorcyclists will encourage use as a mode of transport and reduce traffic congestion within the town centre.
<b>Theme 6 – Options to improve customer experience</b>							
N	Pay on foot for all Borough Council car parks	0	–	–	–	üü	Taunton Deane Borough Council uses Pay and Display in all of its car parks as well as operating Phone and Pay. Pay on Exit is a more popular option with users, as motorists are issued a ticket and pay for the time they stay. This option will remove the stress of having to return to the car in their allocated time, and allow shoppers to enjoy their experience in Taunton. Pay on exit is also more convenient for customers as more payment options are available. This option is however only feasible for car parks that can cater for barriers and where access is not required to third party property.
O	Maintenance and aesthetic enhancement programme	–	ü	ü	üü	üü	Well-maintained car parks with common standards for facilities, lighting, surfacing and appearance can increase customers' perception of safety and security and provide a better welcome to the town. Improving the aesthetics of the car parks will contribute to an enhanced town centre environment.
P	Improved information and wayfinding	–	ü	ü	ü	ü	Improved signage to the main shopping areas from the car parks can improve the welcome to the town, improve customer experience and overcome perceptions that car parks are distant or poorly connected to the town centre.
<b>Theme 7 – Other options</b>							
Q	Energy efficiency measures	–	–	ü	–	–	Measures such as solar powered ticket machines, LED lighting, and the potential for installing solar panels in the car parks to generate electricity could be considered when upgrading car parks as means of improving energy efficiency, reducing energy costs and reducing carbon emissions
R	Phased withdrawal of cash payments in car parks	–	0	–	–	0	Customers can pay with coins or using Phone and Pay, with a large proportion of customers now using the latter option. Cash payments still require collection from the car parks and gives rise to the risk of theft attempts. A move away from cash payments could eliminate this; however, it is unlikely at this stage that alternative payment methods are suitable and available for all customer groups.





## 2.3 OPTIONS FOR PARK AND RIDE

- 2.3.1. The P&R sites are managed by the County Council. Existing policy in the Somerset Future Transport Plan identifies the role of P&R sites for long-stay commuter and visitor parking. This strategy assumes that the P&R sites will maintain, enhance and consolidate these roles.
- 2.3.2. A number of options for P&R have been considered as part of this study. In considering their relationship to the strategy objectives, the P&R options tend to offer a range of benefits including reducing congestion and emissions in the town centre and contributing to an enhanced town centre environment. Encouraging the use of P&R contributes to a more efficient use of car parking spaces in the town centre, where they can be focused on short stay parking requirements.
- 2.3.3. However, some of the P&R options are in part reliant on strategy options for the town centre car parks (and vice versa). Key P&R success factors tend to include the level of town centre congestion, along with the availability and price of town centre parking spaces.
- 2.3.4. The options are described in Table 3 **Error! Reference source not found..** It is recommended that the following three P&R options are considered further in the short term, with the remainder considered in the medium to long term:
- ┆ Catering for large-scale town centre events at the P&R sites;
  - ┆ Surveys into use and perceptions of P&R; and
  - ┆ Modest bus fare increases to support the operation of the P&R services.

**Table 3 – P&R options**

Option	Description	Consider as short-term option
Cater for large-scale town centre events at the P&R sites	Large events cause increased traffic and parking demand in the town centre. Encouraging the use of the P&R sites will reduce the impact on the traffic network and retain town centre spaces for other categories of user. This should consider opening the P&R on selected Saturdays to provide additional parking for events	ü
Carry out survey into use and perceptions of P&R	Little is known about the travel characteristics of P&R users, or why other groups opt not to use it. A thorough survey of P&R users and non-users will build on the existing data to get a full understanding of customer usage and their requirements, as well as why people choose not to use the P&R.	ü
Provide additional customer facilities at Taunton Gateway	A range of good quality facilities, including toilets, on-site can help to widen the appeal of the P&R to users	O(Medium)
Extend the opening hours of P&R sites	Longer opening hours would provide greater flexibility for potential customers, including workers who start earlier or finish later than standard office or retail hours, and could widen the appeal of the sites. However, unclear as to whether demand exists to justify lengthened opening hours at present.	O(Medium)
Amend Review P&R bus service routes	Current P&R bus service routes may not best meet existing customer destinations or may deter potential P&R users. Understanding customer destinations would ensure the bus routes best meets customer requirements, including main employment centres and new developments.	O(Medium)
Amend bus fares	Taunton's P&R fares are at the lower end of the range when compared with other towns. Modest price rises could help support the service. This has to be balanced against the potential dampening of demand which may occur if this progresses	ü
Reintroduce Saturday P&R services	This will reduce the demand for parking spaces in the town centre as well as traffic circulating around looking for parking spaces. However, if town centre supply exceeds demand or if prices are similar (P&R bus fares vs town centre parking) then demand for a Saturday P&R service will be remain dampened.	O(Medium)

Option	Description	Consider as short-term option
Rebalance levels of overall parking in favour of peripheral locations	Some car parks have the potential in the medium to long term to be redeveloped for other uses as part of the town's ambition to create a vibrant urban town centre. At that time it may be appropriate for a higher proportion of parking to be located on the periphery of the town, with improved connections into the centre. The success of this option would likely to rely on the P&R option to have a more attractive price than remaining town centre car parks	O(Long)
Plan for new sites at Comeytrowe and Monkton Heathfield	New edge-of-town parking sites are planned in the garden communities to the south-west and north-east of the town, adding to the town's total car park stock. These will be located adjacent to main road corridors into the town which do not have P&R services but which do have good frequencies of other bus services. It is assumed that, under existing policy, these would also be aimed at long-stay commuters and visitors. Demand for using these sites is likely to rely upon a range of factors, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- overall numbers of people making long-stay trips to the town centre;</li> <li>- the cost and ease of use/access to the town centre from the edge of town sites relative to parking in the town centre.</li> <li>- the quality and frequency and journey times of available bus services.</li> </ul>	O(Long)
Consider potential for Taunton Gateway as a wider interchange hub	Gateway P&R is well-located for the M5, which is served by intercity coaches, such as those serving Bristol Airport, and interurban bus services on the neighbouring A358. There may be potential for the P&R to provide a wider interchange role, as occurs at Oxford's Thornhill P&R or Exeter's Honiton Road P&R. This could increase demand but brings its own management challenges with a range of potential operators and journey patterns.	O(Medium)

## 2.4 ON-STREET PARKING

2.4.1. As indicated earlier, the availability and use of on-street parking is not the focus of this strategy; however it is recognised that it has an influence on how off-street car parking is used. A review of existing on-street parking restrictions in surrounding the town centre may be required in parallel to the implementation of proposals in this strategy, to ensure that the needs of residents are put first in these locations, in accordance with Somerset Future Transport Plan.

### 3 STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1. The options set in the previous chapter have been given numerical scores as follows:

Strongly conflicts with aim	Conflicts with aim	Neither supports nor conflicts with aim	Partly supports aim	Strongly supports aim
00	0	-	ü	üü
-2	-1	0	1	2

3.1.2. The outcome of the option appraisal is set out below in Table 4 **Error! Reference source not found.** in descending order of their score.

**Table 4 – Option Appraisal Scores**

Option Ref	Description	Score
K	Visitor management plans for major events	7
D	Measures to encourage use of Orchard multi-storey and High Street car parks	7
O	Maintenance and aesthetic enhancement programme	6
M	Review motorcycle spaces	5
A	Categorise car parks for either short stay users or long stay users	4
E	Extend use of VMS	4
J	Provision for blue badge holders	4
Q	Improved information and wayfinding	4
G	Make more efficient use of car park land in larger car parks	4
L	Tariffs or dedicated spaces for electric vehicles	4
B	Increase long-stay tariffs in Shopper 1 and / or Shopper 2 car parks / increase short-stay tariffs in long-stay car parks	3
C	Convert selected commuter tariff car parks to shopper tariffs	3
F	Consolidate parking into fewer car parks	2
N	Pay on foot for all Borough Council car parks	1
Q	Energy efficiency measures	1
H	Implement Charges in the Evenings	0
I	Implement charging on Sundays	0
R	Phased withdrawal of cash payments in car parks	-2

## 3.2 RECOMMENDED OPTIONS

3.2.1. It is therefore recommended that a range of well-performing options be taken forward for implementation, as follows:

- i *Creation of dedicated short-stay and long-stay tariff car parks* – this option is particularly aimed at ensuring that spaces are available, and used, for short stay visits, and to give certainty to customers. In parallel a small number of car parks should be dedicated to long-stay users. It may be appropriate for the four existing commuter tariff car parks to fulfil this purpose but this should be kept under review;
- i *Visitor management plans for major events* – large-scale events tend to create spikes in demand for car parking and place particular pressure on the transport network in general. It is recommended that visitor management plans are prepared by event organisers in consultation with the Councils to ensure the parking and travel demands are addressed appropriately;
- i *Measures to encourage use of Orchard multi-storey and High Street car parks* – these car parks were found to have spare capacity and are close to key retail areas. A range of measures should be considered, including upgrading their appearance and potentially a special tariff, to encourage their use;
- i *Extend the use of VMS* – the existing investment in VMS and pay on foot can enable more detailed, real-time information to be provided to car park customers in advance of their arrival, with live information provided on the Borough Council website or via an app, helping shape travel choices;
- i *Review provision for blue badge holders and motorcycles* – existing provision should be reviewed to ensure suitable space is being provided in the right locations;
- i *Maintenance and aesthetic enhancement programme and improved information and wayfinding* – the appearance of the car parks, and the associated infrastructure to guide users to the rest of the town, can be an important factor shaping where people choose to park and influencing visitors' impressions of the town. Investment in these aspects could help rebalance demand across the town, improve car park quality and customer experience.
- i *Installation of electric charging points* – to provide facilities for people wishing to use electric vehicles; and
- i *Make more efficient use of car park space* – this is a combination of option F and G. Consolidating the number of car parks into fewer, but bigger car parks will allow for a more efficient and cost effective maintenance and management strategy and will free up land within the town centre for development. Further work is required on this option to demonstrate that it has a robust business case before further pursuit.

3.2.2. A further 1,800 parking spaces are located at the two P&R sites. Existing policy identifies their role in providing for commuters and long-stay visitor parking, supporting and supplementing the town centre offer. It is recommended that discussions are held to consider whether the following options may be suitable in the short term:

- i Using the P&R to better meet parking demand for large-scale town centre events;
- i Undertaking surveys into the use, and perceptions, of P&R; and
- i Implementing modest bus fare increases to support the operation of the P&R services.

3.2.3. A review of existing on-street parking restrictions in surrounding the town centre may be required in parallel to the implementation of proposals in this strategy, to ensure that the needs of residents are put first in these locations, in accordance with Somerset Future Transport Plan.

## 4 ANALYSIS – OFF-STREET CAR PARKS

### 4.1 TOTAL CAR PARK CAPACITY

4.1.1. At present there are approximately 4,400 publicly available parking spaces<sup>10</sup> available for general use on weekdays in and surrounding Taunton town centre, distributed in 24 car parks. Summary details of car park name, ownership, tariff or use category, and the number of weekday spaces are outlined in Table 5 below.

**Table 5 – Schedule of Car Park Capacity by Ownership and Tariff**

Ownership	Car Park Name	Weekday Spaces	Tariff / Use
Borough Council	Ash Meadows	39	Shopper 2
	Belvedere Road	117	Shopper 2
	Canon Street	306	Shopper 1
	Castle Street	51	Shopper 2
	Coal Orchard	118	Shopper 1
	The Crescent	232	Shopper 1
	Duke Street	58	Shopper 2
	Elms Parade	28	Shopper 2
	Enfield	149	Commuter
	Fons George	79	Shopper 2
	High Street	269	Shopper 1
	Kilkenny	224	Commuter
	Orchard Multi Storey Levels 1, 1a, 2, 2a, 3 and 3a	402	Shopper 1
	Orchard Multi Storey Levels 4, 4a, 5 and 5a	203	Shopper 2
	Tangier	219	Commuter
	Victoria Gate	72	Commuter
	Whirligig	37	Very short stay
Private	County Ground	200 approx	Long-stay
	Lidl	70	Retail
	Marks & Spencer	60	Retail
	Morrison's	470	Retail
	Railway Station	213	Rail users
	Sainsbury's	240	Retail
	Tesco	350	Retail
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>4,403</b>	

Source: Data for Borough Council car parks from TDBC website. Data for private car parks from 2017 surveys

<sup>10</sup> Includes spaces reserved for blue badge holders. Excludes 5 coach bays at Tangier, 10 limited waiting bays at Kilkenny, spaces reserved for medical centre staff at Victoria Gate and 15 limited waiting (1hr) bays at Belvedere Road (Deane House outer circle). Data for Borough Council car parks from TDBC website. Data for private car parks from 2017 surveys

4.1.2. The above table indicates that there are 2,800 spaces in Borough Council car parks, 1190 in private retail car parks and a further 413 in other privately operated car parks (County Ground and Railway Station). In terms of other headline statistics:

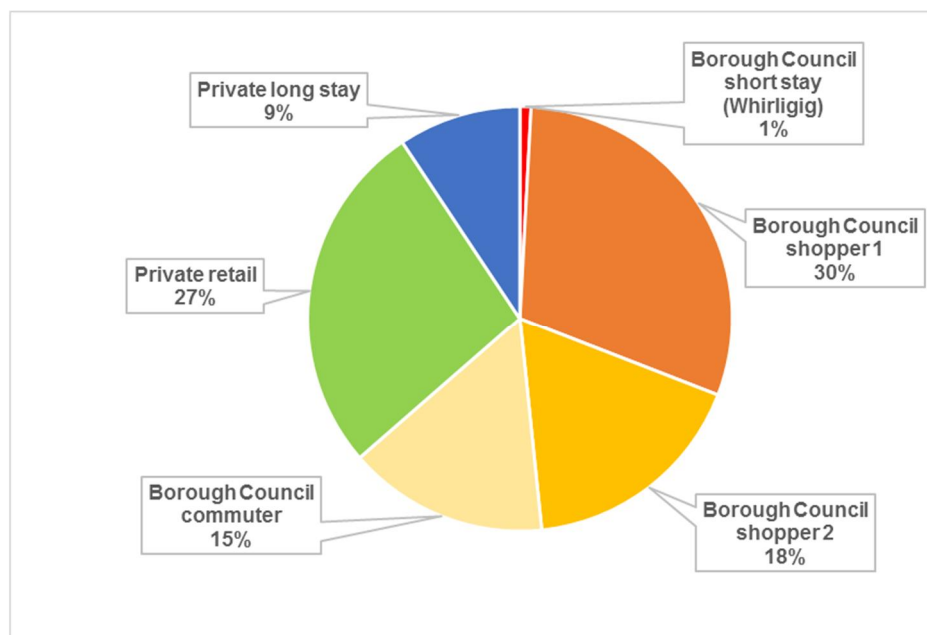
- ▮ Nine car parks have fewer than 100 spaces;
- ▮ Seven have more than 250 spaces;
- ▮ Four of the largest seven car parks are privately owned supermarket retail car parks; and
- ▮ The largest car park is the Orchard multi-storey, which comprises 14% of the available parking spaces.

4.1.3. An additional 148 general use spaces are available on Saturdays in the Belvedere Road car park.

4.1.4. Figure 1 below shows the ratio of public (Borough Council) to privately owned car park spaces. The key statistics are:

- ▮ The ratio of spaces in Borough Council control compared to those in private ownership is 64:36;
- ▮ Almost 50% of spaces are Borough Council shopper tariff spaces (aimed at short-stay users), with a further 15% of spaces being in Borough Council Commuter tariff car parks (aimed at long stay users);
- ▮ The remaining 36% are in private control, the majority of which are in 5 short stay car parks associated with retail stores. The remainder are provided on the south side of the railway station (car park tariffs aimed at providing long-stay parking for rail passengers) and at the County Ground, which is available for commuter parking on non-match days.

**Figure 1 – Taunton town centre weekday parking capacity by category**



Note: Based on 4,403 spaces

## CHANGES IN PARKING LOCATIONS AND CAPACITY SINCE 2011

- 4.1.5. Since 2011, there has been a reduction in car parking capacity, through the closure of a couple of car parks, and a revision of others. Capacity has been reduced following the closure of the following car parks:
- i Priors Bridge Car Park – closed to public use in preparation for the Firepool development. There were previously 464 commuter spaces available;
  - i Castle Green – this car park has been converted into a public square and resulted in the reduction of 61 shopper car parking spaces;
  - i Lidl – the store has relocated west of the former location; and
  - i Tangier Car Park – was revised with a reduction in 38 spaces.

This represents a loss of 563 car parking spaces in the centre of Taunton up to 2016.

## 4.2 CAR PARK LOCATIONS

- 4.2.1. Figure 1 overleaf shows the location and capacity of off-street car parks in and surrounding Taunton town centre, and their proximity to the town centre retail areas, with isochrones showing 200m and 400m distances town centre primary shopping frontages. Table 6 below summarises the number, and proportion, of spaces in each isochrone. It indicates that the majority of spaces are within 200m of Taunton’s area of primary shopping frontages.

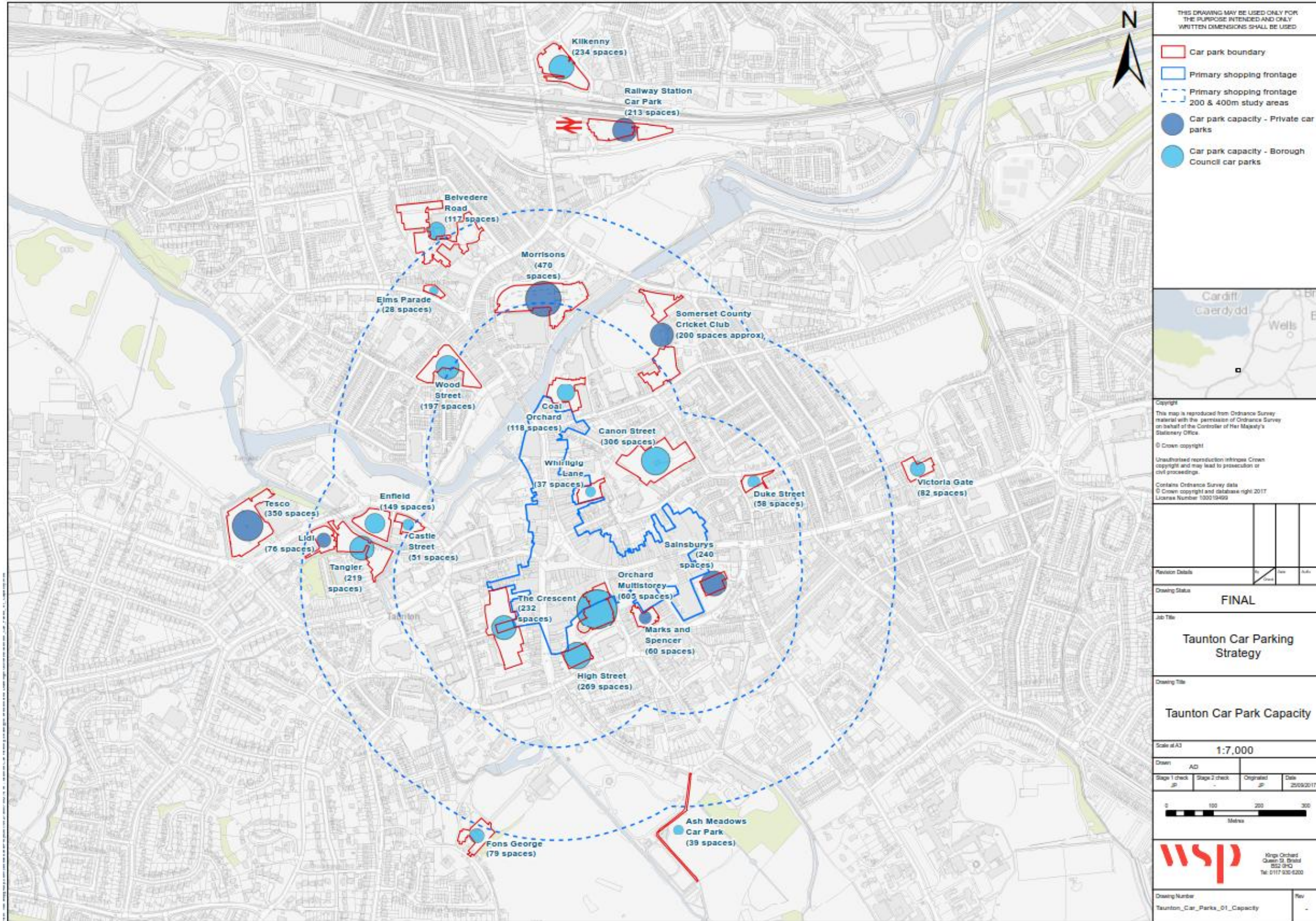
**Table 6 – Parking spaces and distance from primary shopping frontages**

Distance from primary shopping frontage	Borough Council spaces	% of Borough Council spaces	Private spaces	% of private spaces	Total Number of spaces	% of total spaces
Within 200m	1873	66.9%	970	60.5%	2,843	64.6%
200m to 400m	631	22.5%	70	4.4%	701	15.9%
Beyond 400m	296	10.6%	1603	35.1%	859	19.5%
Totals	2,800	100%	1,603	100%	<b>4,403</b>	100%

Notes: distance category based on closest part of the car park

- 4.2.2. The Borough Council broadly uses distance from the shopping frontage to guide the setting of tariffs in car parks (Shopper 1, Shopper 2 and Commuter). The current outcome of this process is as follows:
- i All car parks within 200m of the primary shopping frontages are either Shopper tariff or very short stay (Whirligig);
  - i Most car parks between 200m to 400m of the primary shopping frontages are Shopper tariff apart from Enfield and Tangier, which are Commuter tariff; and
  - i Car parks beyond 400m are designated as Commuter tariff.

Figure 2 – Location of key off-street car parks in and surrounding to Taunton town centre





## PROVISION FOR SPECIFIC USER GROUPS OR VEHICLE TYPES

4.2.3. There are 79 blue badge holder spaces in the 19 Borough Council town centre car parks. This provision is set out in Table 7 below.

**Table 7 – Blue Badge Holder spaces in Borough Council car parks**

Car Park Name	Blue Badge Holder Spaces	Total Weekday Spaces	% of total capacity	Tariff / Use
Ash Meadows	0	39	0%	Shopper 2
Belvedere Road	7	117*	6%	Shopper 2
Canon Street	9	306	3%	Shopper 1
Castle Street	3	51	6%	Shopper 2
Coal Orchard	8	118	7%	Shopper 1
The Crescent	1	232	0%	Shopper 1
Duke Street	0	58	0%	Shopper 2
Elms Parade	1	28	4%	Shopper 2
Enfield	0	149	0%	Commuter
Fons George	2	79	3%	Shopper 2
High Street	12	269	4%	Shopper 1
Kilkenny	4	224*	2%	Commuter
Orchard Multi-Storey	20	605	3%	Shopper 1 and 2
Tangier	0	219	0%	Commuter
Victoria Gate	2	72	3%	Commuter
Whirligig	3	37	8%	Very short stay
Wood Street	7	197	4%	Shopper 2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>2,800</b>		

Note: \* Excludes 5 coach bays at Tangier, 10 limited waiting bays at Kilkenny, the spaces reserved for medical centre staff at Victoria Gate and the 15 limited waiting (1hr) bays at Belvedere Road (Deane House outer circle).. Numbers of blue badge holder spaces were not surveyed in private car parks

Source – [TDBC](#)

4.2.4. Government guidance<sup>11</sup> identifies that car parks associated with shopping areas, leisure or recreational facilities should have a minimum of one space for each employee who is a disabled motorist, plus 6% of the total capacity for visiting disabled motorists.

4.2.5. The majority of public car parks have dedicated provision for blue badge holders, with four locations having more than 6% of the total capacity reserved for blue badge holders – Belvedere Road (6%), Castle Street (6%), Coal Orchard (7%) and Whirligig (8%). With the exception of Belvedere Road, these are some of the closest off-street spaces to the town centre principal shopping frontages. 13 of the Borough Council car parks do not meet minimum standard of blue badge holder provision. If dedicated spaces are full, blue badge holders may choose to park on-street, even if spaces are available in other parts of the same car park.

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/3695/inclusive-mobility.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/3695/inclusive-mobility.pdf)

4.2.6. In terms of provision for other vehicle types:

- i Limited numbers of motorcycle bays are available in three of the borough council’s car parks – Crescent South (1 bay), Enfield (2) and Wood Street (2). Signed motorcycle spaces are also provided underneath the spiral ramp of the Orchard multi-storey car park, accessed from Old Pig Market beyond the multi-storey entrance. The British Motorcyclists Federation guidance suggests that one motorcycle space should be provided in every car park, with an additional 1 for every 10 car spaces, used as a minimum;
- i Five coach parking bays are provided in Tangier Car Park, with a tariff of £6.00 per day;
- i Motor home owners are advised to use Tangier Car Park. If a motor home takes up more than one parking space a Pay and Display ticket must be purchased for each parking space used; and
- i 32 reserved shopmobility spaces in Orchard multi-storey car park.

4.2.7. There are currently no electric vehicle charging bays in Borough Council or private car parks.

## 4.3 OFF-STREET PARKING CHARGES

### BOROUGH COUNCIL CAR PARKS

4.3.1. Parking charges are in force in Borough Council car parks from 8am until 6pm Monday to Saturday (including bank holidays). The current tariffs were updated in April 2017 and they are reviewed and updated annually.

4.3.2. In general three bands of charges are operated – shopper 1, shopper 2 and commuter. Shopper 1 car parks are located closest to the town centre retail area and have the most expensive scale of charges; commuter car parks tended to be furthest away from the town centre retail area and have the least expensive scale of charges. Whirligig has its own separate scale of charges which are higher than the shopper 1 and parking is restricted to a maximum of 2hrs.

4.3.3. The charges applicable to each car park are described below in Table 8. The car parks in each charging category are shown previously in Table 8.

**Table 8 – Car Park tariffs**

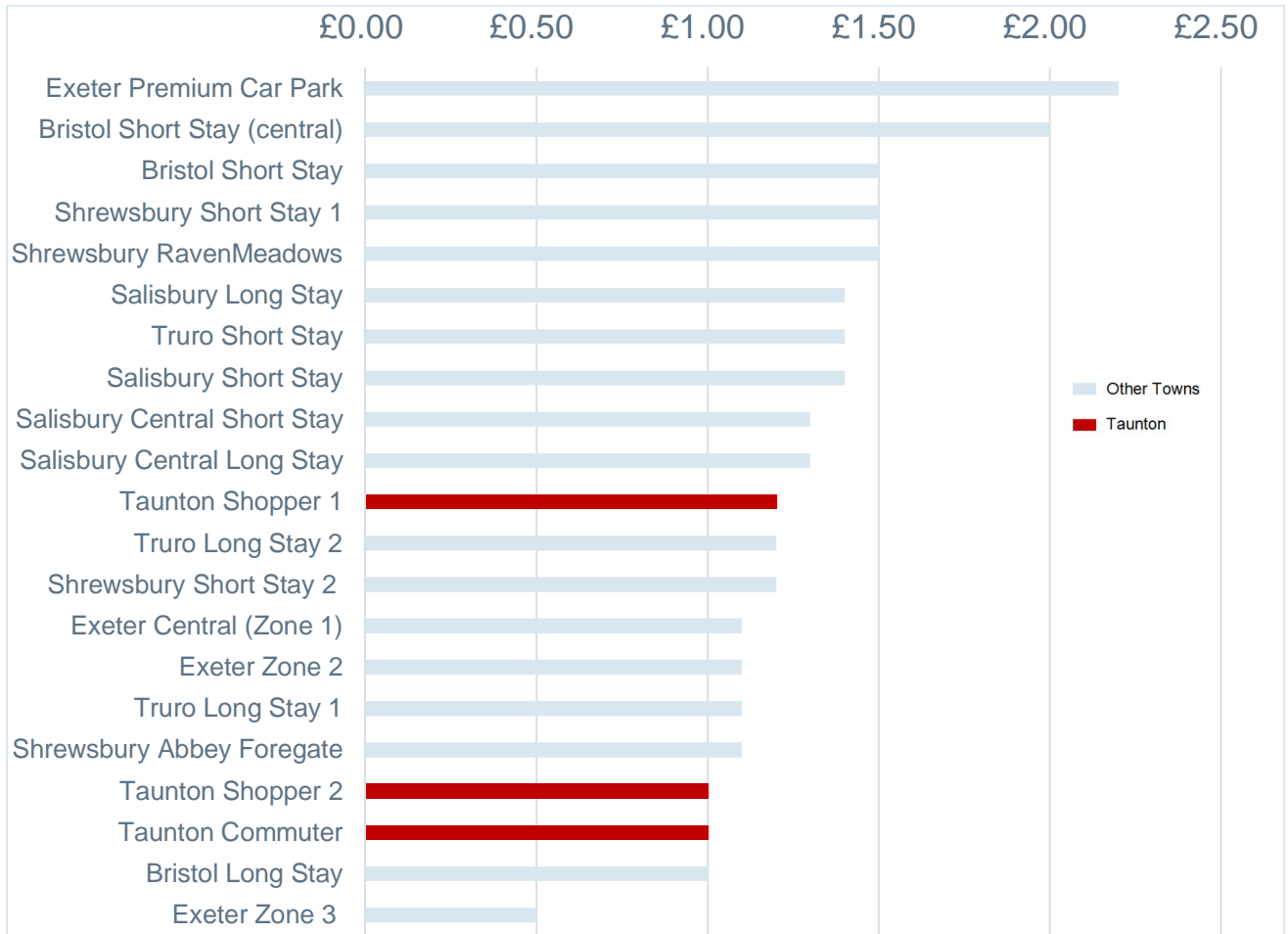
	Shopper 1	Shopper 2	Commuter	Whirligig (Short Stay)
Up to 1 hr	£1.20	£1.00	£1.00	£1.60
Up to 2 hrs	£2.40	£2.00	£2.00	£3.00
Up to 3 hrs	£3.60	£3.00	£3.00	N/A
Up to 4 hrs	£4.80	£4.00	£4.00	
Up to 5 hrs	£6.00	£5.00	£4.50	
Up to 6 hrs	£7.20	£6.00	£5.00	
Up to 7 hrs	£8.40	£7.00	£5.50	
Up to 10 hrs	£9.60	£8.00	£6.00	

Source: [TDBC](#)

### BENCHMARKING OF PRICES

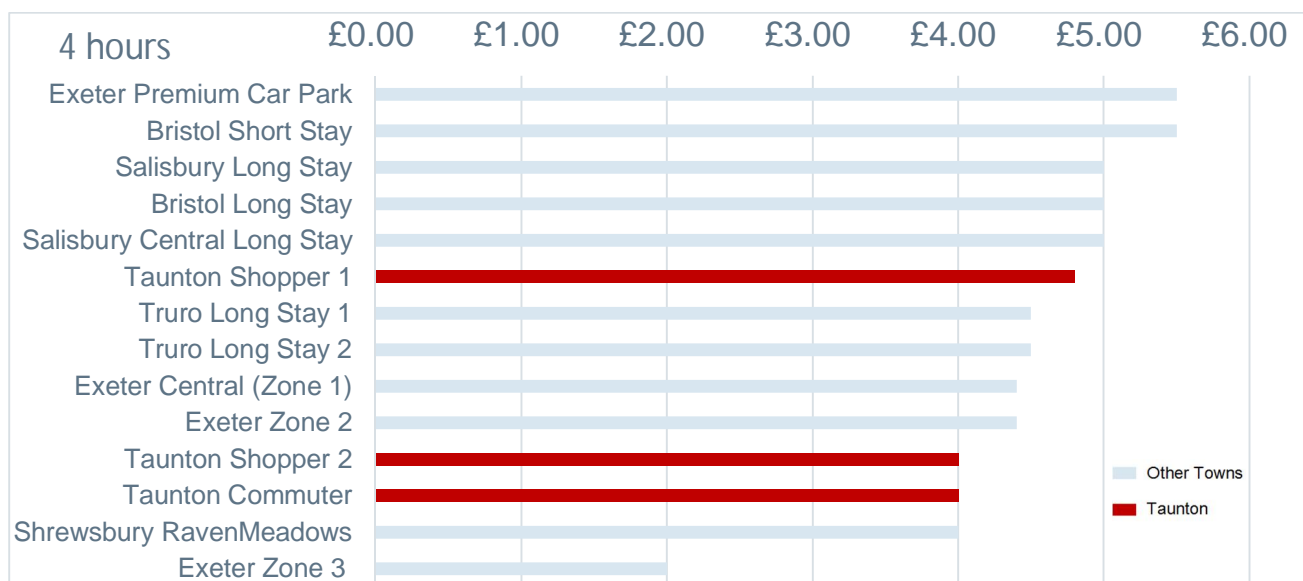
4.3.4. A benchmarking exercise has been undertaken of parking prices in Taunton and a selection of comparator towns. The outcome of this analysis is shown for 2 hour, 4 hour and 10 hour parking tariffs in Figure 3, Figure 4 and Figure 5 respectively.

**Figure 3 – Benchmarking parking tariffs in Taunton and comparable towns – 1 hour**



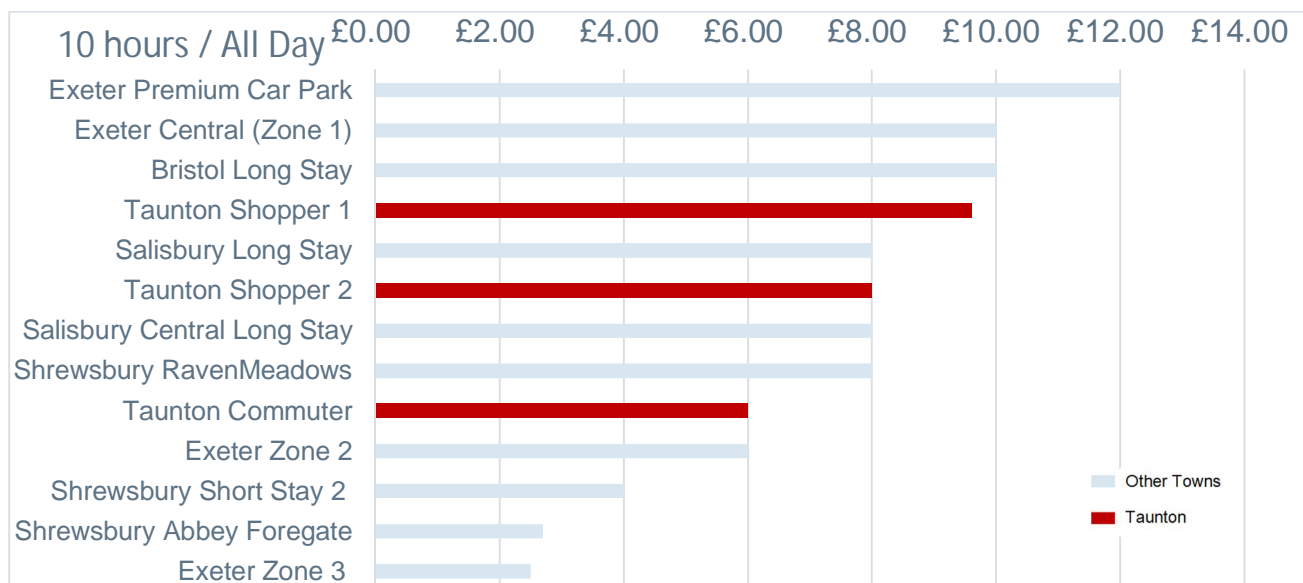
Source: Local authority websites. Note: Data correct at May 2017

**Figure 4 – Benchmarking parking tariffs in Taunton and comparable towns – 4 hour**



Source: Local authority websites. Note: Data correct at May 2017

**Figure 5 – Benchmarking car park tariffs in Taunton and comparable towns – 10 hour**



Source: Local authority websites. Note: Data correct at May 2017

4.3.5. The figures above highlight the difference in prices between Taunton and other comparable towns. It highlights that Taunton short stay parking (below four hours) offers cheaper parking charges than its comparable towns. The majority of selected towns only offer hourly charging up to three or four hours in the short stay car parks. An option for all-day parking is only available in designated long stay car parks in comparator towns, unlike in Taunton, where all-day parking is available in all of the car parks.

## PAYMENT METHODS

4.3.6. Currently all Borough Council car parks operate a pay and display system, with two payment methods available – coin payments and the cashless Phone and Pay system<sup>12</sup>. Payment via the latter is accepted from all major cards via phone call, text or the smartphone app. 25% of Borough Council parking income in 2016/17 was derived from the phone and pay system; however this varies widely by car park, as set out in Table 9 below. The data indicates that Whirligig, with short stay tariffs only, has the lowest proportion of Phone and Pay transactions, whereas almost 50% of transactions in commuter car parks use this method.

4.3.7. At present customers are charged a 14p transaction fee for using Phone and Pay, which may disincentivise take-up of this payment method. It is understood that in some local authorities the transaction fee is higher, whereas in other areas no transaction fee is charged to customers at all.

**Table 9 – Borough Council parking transactions by payment type and car park, 2016/17**

Car Park Category	Car Park	% of payments by Phone & Pay	% of payments by Ticket machine
Short stay	Whirligig	12	88
Shopper 1	Canon Street	20	80
	Coal Orchard	22	78
	The Crescent	21	79
	High Street	19	81
	Orchard Multi- Storey 1-3	17	83
	<i>All Shopper 1 car parks</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>80</i>
Shopper 2	Belvedere Road	23	77
	Castle Street	31	69
	Duke Street	22	78
	Elms Parade	20	80
	Orchard Multi- Storey 4-5	33	67
	Wood Street	18	82
	<i>All Shopper 2 car parks</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>76</i>
Commuter	Enfield	33	67
	Kilkenny	63	37
	Tangier	46	54
	Victoria Gate	30	70
	<i>All commuter car parks</i>	<i>48</i>	<i>52</i>
<i>Totals</i>		<i>75</i>	<i>25</i>

Source: TDBC ticket sales data. Data not provided for Ash Meadows or Fons George

4.3.8. All pay and display machines will accept overpayment, but do not give change. The tickets issued are specific to each vehicle and are not transferable between vehicles or car parks.

4.3.9. A Pay on Foot payment system will be introduced to selected car parks over the next two years (see Chapter 7 for more information).

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.phoneandpay.co.uk/>

## ENFORCEMENT AND FINES

- 4.3.10. Through a partnership the Borough Council are responsible for parking enforcement, payments and appeals and the County Council, as Somerset Parking Services, provide the service.

## ARRANGEMENTS FOR BLUE BADGE HOLDERS

- 4.3.11. In December 2015, following the review of Fees and Charges, the Borough Council made the decision to remove the zero tariff for blue badge holders within off-street car parks. Nevertheless, a vehicle displaying a valid blue badge is entitled to one extra hour of free parking in recognition that those who hold blue badges may require additional time due to their mobility issues.

## PERMITS

- 4.3.12. The Borough Council offers three different types of parking permits, all for a six-month period. Permits can be purchased throughout the year, and used across a combination of car parks. Permits offer a saving to regular car park users and the convenience of not having to find change for Pay and Display machines. The permits are described below in Table 10. Less than 60 permits were sold in 2016/17.

**Table 10 – Six-month season permits for Borough Council car parks**

Permit Type	Price	Applicable Car Parks	
Shopper 1	£990	Belvedere Road Canon Street Castle Street Coal Orchard Duke Street Enfield High Street	Kilkenny Orchard Levels 1, 1A, 2, 2A, 3 and 3A Orchard Levels 4, 4A, 5 and 5A Tangier Victoria Gate Wood Street
Shopper 2	£770	Belvedere Road Castle Street Duke Street Enfield Kilkenny	Orchard Levels 4, 4A, 5 and 5A Tangier Victoria Gate Wood Street
Commuter	£660	Enfield Kilkenny	Tangier Victoria Gate

Data correct at September 2017

**A benchmarking exercise has been carried out to compare permit prices in other towns, the results of which are set out in**

- 4.3.13. Table 11 below. It indicates that in most comparison locations season tickets are available for a range of time periods, typically monthly, quarterly, and annual, as well the six months which Taunton offers. In similarity to Taunton, a range of season ticket price bands are charged in Bristol, Shrewsbury and Truro, depending on the car park. The higher prices are charged for the car parks which are closest to the respective town centres.
- 4.3.14. Season ticket prices in Taunton are more expensive than in Truro, Exeter and Salisbury and most of the Shrewsbury car park categories. They are less expensive than Bristol and the most expensive Shrewsbury car park category.

**Table 11 – Benchmarking of season ticket permit prices in local authority car parks**

Town	Location	Month	3 months	6 months	Annual
Bristol	Temple Gate	n/a	n/a	n/a	£1,872.00
	West End	n/a	n/a	n/a	£2,184.00
	Trenchard Street	n/a	n/a	n/a	£2,496.00
Exeter	9 Council run car parks		£300.00	£600.00	£1,200.00
Salisbury	Standard	£86.70	£260.00	£520.00	£1,040.00
Shrewsbury	Abbey Foregate	£41.00	£115.00	£216.00	£405.00
	Frankwell Main / St. Julian's Friars	£60.00	£110.00	£320.00	£600.00
	St. Austin's / Bridge Street	n/a	£456.10	n/a	£1519.30
Truro	Group 1	£33.33	£100.00	£200.00	£400.00
	Group 2	£41.67	£125.00	£250.00	£500.00
Taunton	<i>Shopper 1</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>£990.00</i>	<i>n/a</i>
	<i>Shopper 2</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>£770.00</i>	<i>n/a</i>
	<i>Commuter</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>£660.00</i>	<i>n/a</i>

Local authority websites<sup>13</sup>, November 2017

## PRIVATE CAR PARKS

- 4.3.15. Tariffs in the privately operated short-stay and long-stay car parks are detailed below in Table 12 and Table 13 respectively. Marks and Spencer is more expensive than Borough Council Shopper 1 tariffs whilst Sainsbury's is in line with Borough Council Shopper 2 tariffs.

**Table 12 – Tariffs in privately operated car parks – short stay**

Car Park	1 hour	2 hour	3 hours
Lidl	Automatic Number Plate Recognition – maximum stay of 90 minutes, no return within 2 hours		N/A
Marks and Spencer	£1.50	£2.50	£4.50
Morrisons	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sainsbury's	£1.00	£2.00	N/A
Tesco	Controlled by Automatic Number Plate Recognition – maximum of 2 hours, no return within 1 hour		N/A

Data correct at September 2017

**Table 13 – Tariffs in privately operated car parks – long stay**

Car Park	1 hour	2 hour	3 hours
Cricket Club	Information not available		N/A
Railway Station	£6.40 per day (Mon-Fri), £3.90 per day (Sat-Sun) Weekly ticket rate £32.00		

Data correct at September 2017

<sup>13</sup> [Bristol City Council - Annual season tickets and pre-paid tickets](#); [Cornwall Council - Season Ticket Prices, 2017-18](#); [Exeter City Council - About car park season tickets](#); [Shropshire Council – Shrewsbury season tickets](#); [Wiltshire Council - MiPermit Portal](#)



- 4.3.16. Sainsbury's and Marks and Spencer car park tickets can be refunded when a minimum-spend transaction is made within the store.

### **FINES**

- 4.3.17. Somerset Parking Services issue penalty charge notices. A charge of £50 applies to the off-street car parking if vehicles have overstayed a time limit, or failed to pay for parking. The charge is reduced to £25 if paid within 14 days of issue.
- 4.3.18. Separate parking penalty arrangements are applicable to the private car parks if users stay longer than the allocated hours, or fail to pay and display a valid ticket, as detailed below in Table 14.

**Table 14 – Private car park fines**

<b>Car Park</b>	<b>Parking charge notice</b>
Lidl	£90
Marks and Spencer	£70, however £40 if paid within 14 days of issue
Morrison's	£85, however £50 if paid within 14 days of issue
Sainsbury's	£60
Tesco	£70

## 4.4 OFF-STREET PARKING DEMAND

### METHODOLOGY

4.4.1. The following elements of data collection have been used to understand off-street parking demand:

- i Snapshot surveys of 21 town centre car parks to understand car park occupancy and duration of stay; and
- i Ticket sales data (for Borough Council owned car parks only) indicating number of car park users and duration of stay.

### SURVEYS

4.4.2. 21 town centre car parks were surveyed in June 2017. Each car park was surveyed for a single midweek day (either a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday) for a 12 hour period between 0700 and 1900. These were undertaken in the neutral month of June to avoid any bias from the school summer holiday period. Further details are set out in Appendix B.

4.4.3. The following car parks were not surveyed for the following reasons:

- i Railway station – excluded due to its specialised role in providing parking for railway users, with only daily parking tariffs available; and
- i County Ground – excluded in consultation with the cricket club due to a large proportion of the spaces being used by television vehicles ahead of an upcoming cricket international.

4.4.4. In consultation with the Borough Council the following car park was not surveyed:

- i Ash Meadows: Located 400m from the town centre primary shopping frontage and away from retail premises. It has a 6 hour maximum stay and its primary purpose is to serve leisure uses at Vivary golf course and Vivary Park and Taunton Deane Cricket Club. It is less likely to be used by shoppers and commuters in the town centre.

### WEEKDAY DEMAND AND CAR PARK OCCUPANCY

4.4.5. The June 2017 surveys recorded 7,844 vehicles parked in 21 town centre car parks on a weekday. The maximum occupancy during the day by car park category is shown in Table 15. The headlines from the table are as follows:

- i Taking all car parks together, peak occupancy occurs at 11:44 when there is 22% spare capacity. At that time:
  - Borough Council car parks as a whole have 25% spare capacity;
  - Borough Council Commuter car parks have 14% spare capacity. However they reach peak occupancy at 11:10 with 13% spare capacity;
  - Borough Council Shopper car parks have 28% spare capacity; and
  - Private retail car parks have 17% spare capacity.

**Table 15 – Peak weekday car park occupancy by car park category**

	Total Available Spaces	Peak Number of Spaces Occupied on Survey Day		Remaining Available Spaces at Maximum Occupancy	
		spaces occupied	% of total	spaces available	% of total
Borough Council Shopper + Whirligig	2,097	1,509	72%	588	28%
Borough Council Commuter	664	574	86%	90	14%
<b>Borough Council totals</b>	<b>2,761</b>	<b>2,083</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>678</b>	<b>25%</b>
Private Retail	1,190	991	83%	199	17%
<b>Combined totals</b>	<b>3,951</b>	<b>3,074</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>877</b>	<b>22%</b>

Source: June 2017 surveys. Total surveyed spaces: 3,951

4.4.6. The information in the above table indicates basis that 28% of all vehicles parked in the Borough Council town centre car parks on a weekday are parked at the time of peak occupancy, in the late morning (2,083 of the 7,574 vehicles recorded). The remaining 72% of parking occurs across the rest of the day when there are greater levels of spare capacity.

4.4.7. Table 16 shows the maximum weekday car park occupancy for each surveyed Borough Council car park. It should be noted that not all car parks reach maximum occupancy at the same time.

**Table 16 – Maximum car park occupancy by individual Borough Council car park**

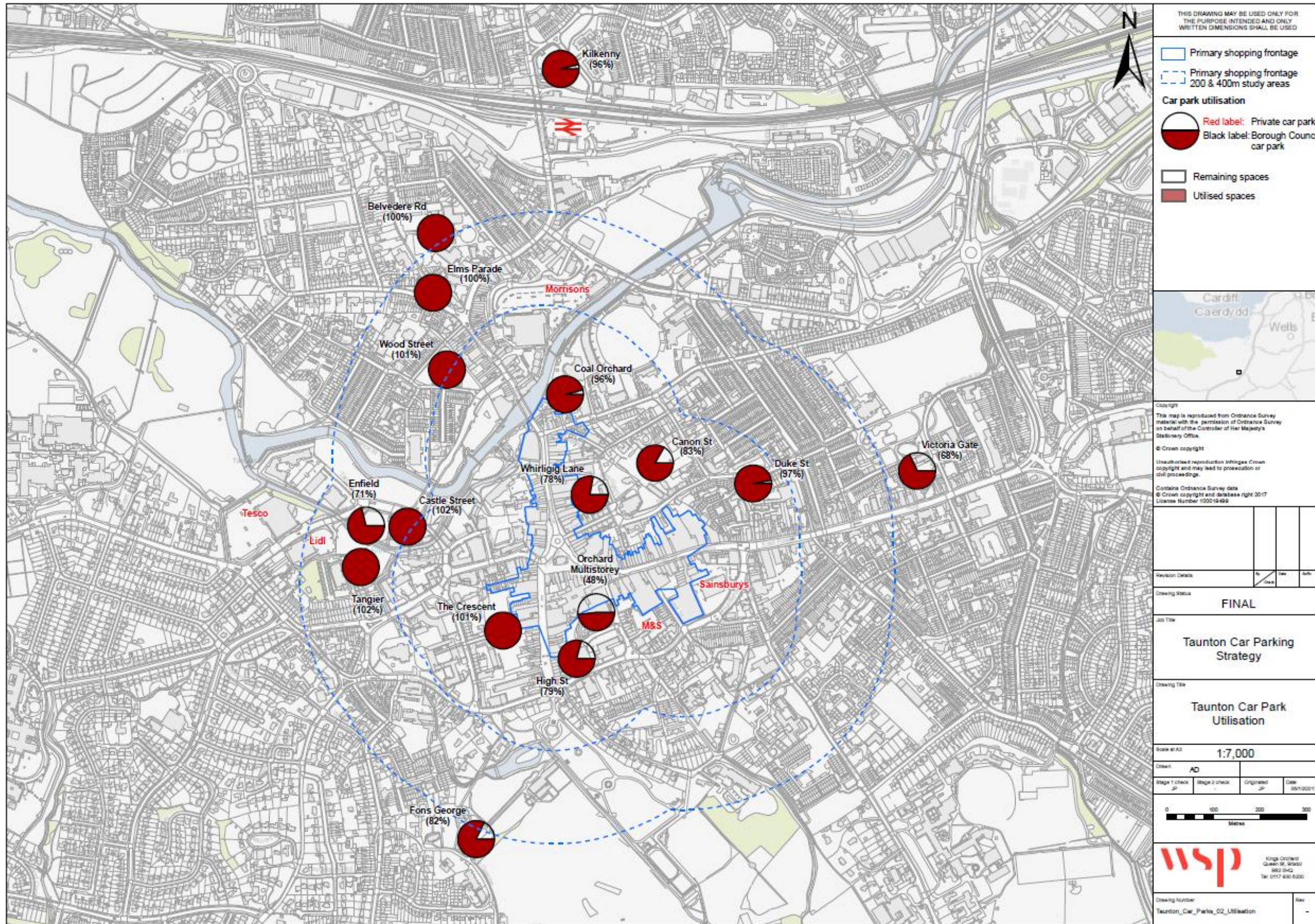
Car Park		total spaces	Maximum Spaces Occupied on Survey Day		Remaining Available Spaces at Maximum Occupancy	
			spaces occupied	% of total spaces	spaces available	% of total
Belvedere Road	Shopper	117	117	100%	0	0%
Canon Street	Shopper	306	254	83%	52	17%
Castle Street	Shopper	51	52	102%	-1	-2%
Coal Orchard	Shopper	118	113	96%	5	4%
The Crescent	Shopper	232	234	101%	-2	-1%
Duke Street	Shopper	58	56	97%	2	3%
Elms Parade	Shopper	28	28	100%	0	0%
Enfield	Commuter	149	106	71%	43	29%
Fons George	Shopper	79	65	82%	14	18%
High Street	Shopper	269	212	79%	57	21%
Kilkenny	Commuter	234	225	96%	9	4%
Orchard Multistorey	Shopper	605	289	48%	316	52%
Tangier	Commuter	219	223	102%	-4	-2%
Victoria Gate	Commuter	82	56	68%	26	32%
Whirligig	Shopper	37	29	78%	8	22%
Wood Street	Shopper	197	199	101%	-2	-1%
<b>Totals</b>			<b>3,977</b>			

Total surveyed Borough Council spaces: 3,977

4.4.8. In some cases, the maximum number of vehicles surveyed at any one point exceeds the capacity of a car park. This is due to vehicles entering the car park once capacity has been reached and waiting (or circling) the car parks until a space became available. Of particular note is the relatively low occupancy levels of the Orchard multi-storey, with more than 45% spare capacity when surveyed (316 free spaces).

4.4.9. Figure 6 shows the maximum occupancy of each car park.

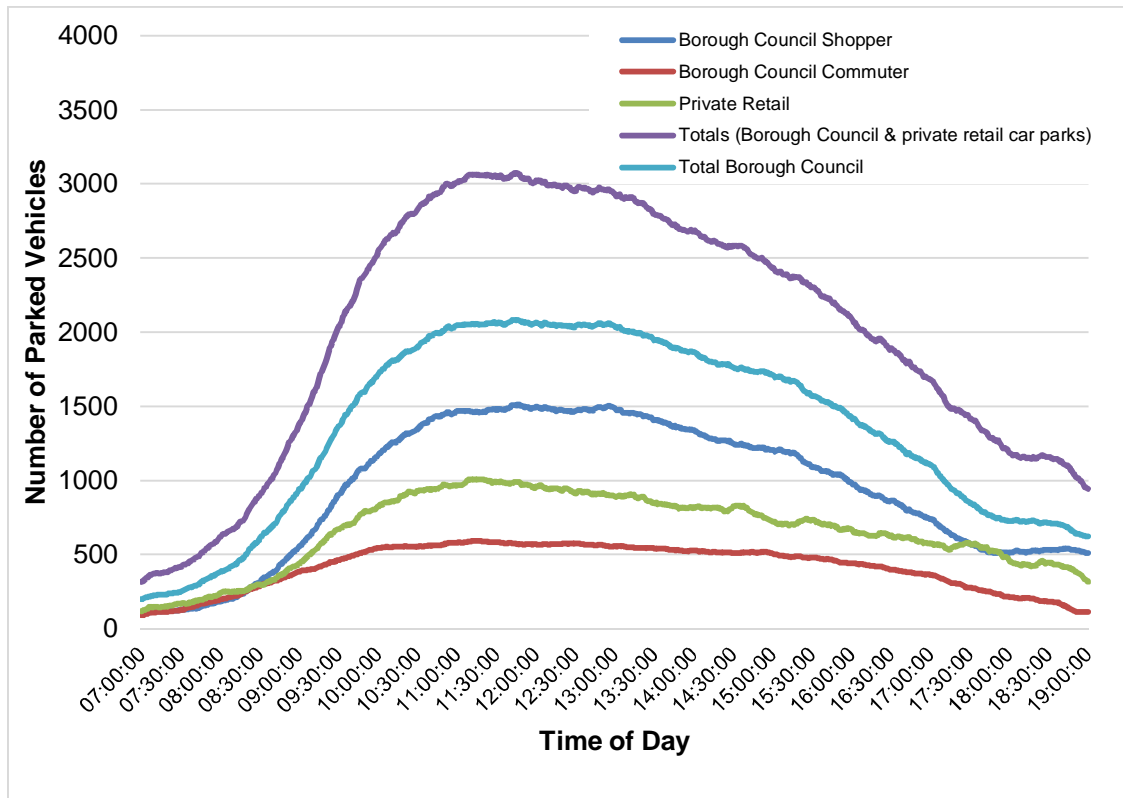
Figure 6 – Maximum surveyed car park utilisation - weekdays



## WEEKDAY CAR PARK OCCUPANCY – CHANGE THROUGH THE DAY

4.4.10. Figure 7 below shows how weekday car park occupancy, disaggregated by car park category, varies through the day. It highlights that demand rises until the late morning before peaking and then decreasing through the afternoon. As indicated earlier, the surveys indicated that overall there is 23% spare capacity across the town centre (Borough Council and private car parks) at the time of peak occupancy; therefore the shoulder periods in the earlier morning and later afternoon have greater levels of available spaces than this figure. For example at 10:00 the surveys recorded 2,538 vehicles being parked, giving 36% spare capacity, and at 14:00 2,677 parked vehicles were recorded (32% spare capacity).

**Figure 7 – Weekday car park occupancy**



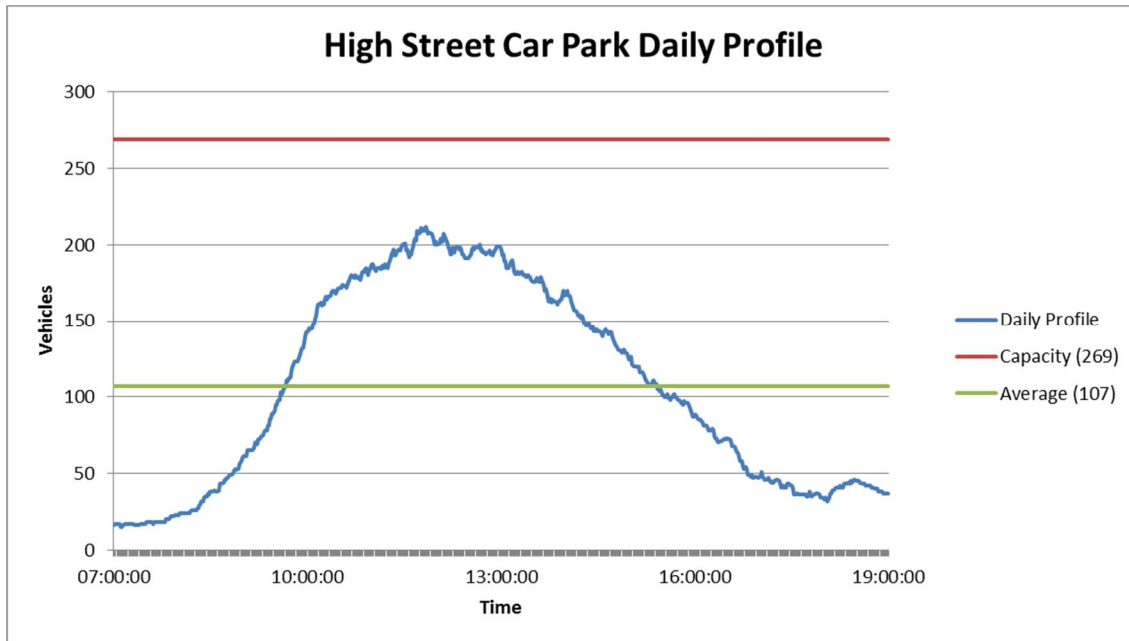
Source: June 2017 surveys. Based on 3951 spaces

4.4.11. Occupancy profiles for each surveyed Borough Council car park, showing how the total number of vehicles parked changes through the day from 07:00 to 19:00, are included in Appendix B.

The majority of car parks reach peak occupancy levels during the late morning, between 11:00 and 12:00, with occupancy tailing off in the afternoon. The example of High Street is shown below in

Figure 8. The exceptions to these characteristics this are Tangier and The Crescent, where peak occupancy was recorded earlier in the morning, around or before 10:00, and Fons George, where occupancy peaked at or after 19:00.

**Figure 8 – Car occupancy profile – High Street car park**



Source: June 2017 car park surveys

4.4.12. Several car parks show a single peak car park occupancy period, after which demand decreases, the implication being that a greater number of unoccupied spaces are available in the afternoon and earlier morning than the lunchtime peak. However, some car parks exhibit different profiles, as follows:

- i Belvedere Road, Coal Orchard, Kilkenny – reach a peak occupancy level and remain at or near to this level for several hours; and
- i Castle Street, The Crescent, Elms Parade, Whirligig – have more than one peak occupancy period, as demand fluctuates through the day.

### WEEKEND DEMAND

4.4.13. The snapshot surveys of car park occupancy and duration of stay were carried out on weekdays. However, use of car parks at the weekend differs from weekdays, with particular demand generated by visitors to large events, such as cricket matches or performances at the Brewhouse, alongside that from Saturday shoppers. The Borough Council’s car parking ticket sales data for the last full financial year has been used to give insights on the variance between Saturday and weekday demand and is set out in Table 17. Transactions for December have been excluded as parking demand in that month tends not to share the same characteristics as the rest of the year.

**Table 17 – Comparison of ticket machine sales on weekdays and Saturdays in Borough Council car parks, 2016/17**

Car park category	Car park name	Average number of tickets sold on weekdays	Average number of tickets sold on Saturdays	% difference
Short stay	Whirligig	147	147	0%
Shopper 1	Canon Street	745	965	30%
	Crescent	794	896	13%
	Coal Orchard	381	403	6%
	High Street	421	571	36%
	Orchard 1-3a	490	776	58%
Shopper 2	Ash Meadows	23	37	62%
	Belvedere Road	163	138	-17%
	Castle Street	120	155	32%
	Duke Street	131	184	44%
	Elms Parade	67	58	-12%
	Fons George	85	110	28%
	Orchard Multi-Storey 4-5a	92	245	167%
	Wood Street	234	276	18%
Commuter	Enfield	128	185	45%
	Kilkenny	87	90	4%
	Tangier	184	301	64%
	Victoria Gate	88	67	-24%
Totals		4,370	5,601	28%

Source: TDBC Ticket machine data. Notes: Does not include Phone and Pay transactions or season tickets. Assumes proportion of car park users using Phone and Pay and season tickets remains the same on Saturdays as on weekdays. Excludes December Data.

- 4.4.14. The data above indicates that numbers of parked vehicles is 28% higher on Saturdays than on weekdays. The highest proportional increase was reported for the upper floors (4-5a) of Orchard multi-storey, with a 167% increase in transactions on Saturdays compared to weekdays. The lower floors (1-3a) had 58% more transactions on Saturdays and High Street shows a 36% increase. This appears to indicate that, whilst these car parks have spare capacity on weekdays, these locations are more heavily used on Saturdays when demand for spaces across the town as a whole is higher.
- 4.4.15. Two of the four commuter car parks – Enfield and Tangier - record significant increases in transactions on Saturdays. Analysis of the ticket price paid indicates that average Saturday users pay for shorter time periods than weekdays in these two car parks, suggesting that weekday commuters are replaced with shorter-stay Saturday shoppers.
- 4.4.16. Three car parks recorded lower numbers of transactions on Saturdays than weekdays – Belvedere Road, Fons George and Victoria Gate.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR SATURDAY MAXIMUM CAR PARK OCCUPANCY**

- 4.4.17. To understand the implications of Saturday demand on car park capacity, a 28% uplift was applied to the weekday survey figures. This indicates that around 9,700 vehicles may park in town centre Borough Council car parks on an average Saturday.

- 4.4.18. Applying the weekday pattern of vehicle arrivals and departures to Saturday ticket figures would suggest that the surveyed Borough Council car parks have around 2,715 parked vehicles in late morning / early afternoon, compared to 2,909 Borough Council parking spaces (including Saturday spaces at Belvedere Road). This would equate to approximately 7% spare capacity at the most popular times.
- 4.4.19. However, it is possible that parking on Saturdays may exhibit a lower, later, peak than weekdays, with parking demand spread over a longer time period, reflecting the different nature of weekend travel patterns and activities. If this were the case then the number of available spaces at the time of maximum occupancy would be greater.

## 4.5 TRENDS IN OVERALL CAR PARK USE

- 4.5.1. Table 18 below summarises the trends in numbers of car park users over the four-year period from 2013/14 to 2016/17.

**Table 18 – Summary of car park ticket transactions, 2013/14 to 2016/17**

	2013/14	2016/17	Change over 4 year period (2013/14 to 2016/17)	
	Parking transactions	Parking transactions	Parking transactions	% change
Shopper 1	1,056,426	1,142,200	85,774	8.1
Shopper 2	346,341	358,014	11,673	3.4
Whirligig	43,433	52,474	9,041	20.8
Commuter	220,400	244,442	24,042	10.9
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,666,600</b>	<b>1,797,130</b>	<b>130,530</b>	<b>7.8</b>

Source: TDBC ticket sales data. Data includes Phone & Pay sales as well as from ticket machines

- 4.5.2. Total numbers of car park ticket transactions have increased over the last four years by 130,530 (7.8% increase), with strongest growth in commuter tariff locations (10.9% increase in transactions) and shopper 1 tariff locations (8.1% growth in transactions over 4 years). In 2016/17 the proportional split of transactions was as follows:
- i 64% in shopper 1 tariff locations;
  - i 20% in shopper 2 tariff locations;
  - i 14% in commuter tariff locations; and
  - i 3% in Whirligig (short stay).

These proportional splits have remained stable for the four year period from 2013/14.

- 4.5.3. Table 19 below describes ticket transactions for each individual financial year. Total numbers of car park transactions fell back slightly in 2015/16 relative to 2014/15, due to fewer transactions in shopper 2 and commuter tariff car parks in that year.



**Table 19 –Car park transactions by year and car park tariff, 2013/14 to 2016/17**

	2013/14	2014/15		2015/16		2016/17	
	Parking transactions	Parking transactions	% change from previous year	Parking transactions	% change from previous year	Parking transactions	% change from previous year
Shopper 1	1,056,426	1,058,210	0.2	1,094,124	3.4	1,142,200	4.4
Shopper 2	346,341	367,327	6.1	322,076	-12.3	358,014	11.2
Whirligig	43,433	42,543	-2.0	46,186	8.6	52,474	13.6
Commuter	220,400	245,256	11.3	239,478	-2.4	244,442	2.1
Totals	<b>1,666,600</b>	<b>1,713,336</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>1,701,864</b>	<b>-0.7</b>	<b>1,797,130</b>	<b>5.6</b>

Source: TDBC ticket sales data. Data includes Phone & Pay sales as well as from ticket machines

4.5.4. Key statistics on a location-by-location basis are as follows:

- i The greatest proportional increase in transactions has been recorded at Castle Street (24%), Duke Street (21%), Victoria Gate (20%) and Canon Street (12%), covering car parks of all tariffs;
- i The greatest absolute increases in transactions has been recorded at Canon Street (31,090) and The Crescent (28,398), both of which are shopper 1 tariff locations; and
- i A decrease in transactions occurred at three shopper 2 tariff locations,–
  - Wood Street: -19,347 (-17%);
  - Elms Parade: -883 (-4%); and
  - Belvedere Road: - 1,591 (-3%).

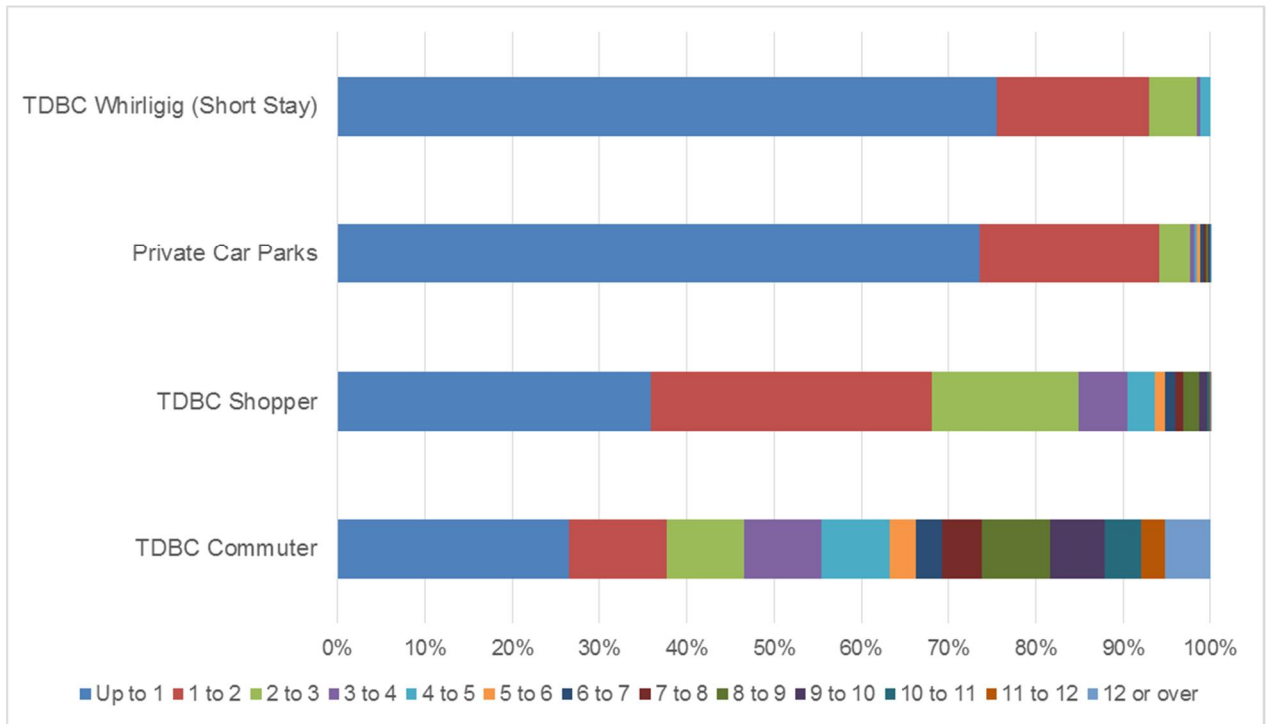
These car parks are all situated to the north-west of the town centre and the decrease in ticket sales may in part be attributable to the change in parking tariffs at Morrison’s, whereby the first two hours is now free.

## 4.6 DURATION OF STAY

4.6.1. Length of stay in car parks has been calculated from the car park surveys and the analysis is shown below in Figure 9. Data is presented for the following car park categories:

- i Borough Council Shopper Car Parks;
- i Borough Council Commuter car parks;
- i Borough Council Whirligig car park (short stay tariff); and
- i Private retail car parks.

**Figure 9 – Duration of stay by car park category and/or tariff**



Source: June 2017 car park surveys

4.6.2. Figure 9 shows that 75% of those using private retail car parks and the Borough Council’s Whirligig car park (short stay) were recorded staying less than one hour. Shopper tariff car park users broadly divide into thirds – 36% stay less than 1 hour, 32% stay between 1-2 hours, and 32% stay more than 2 hours. Less than 10% stay longer than 4 hours.

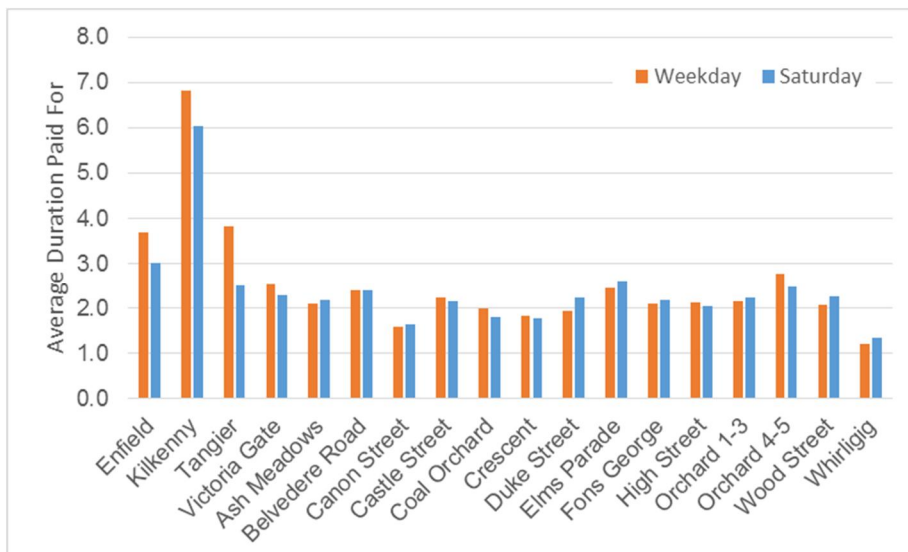
4.6.3. Commuter tariff car parks users tend to stay longer, with 56% of users staying more than 4 hours. However, in terms of the remainder, 25% stay less than 1 hour and another 25% stay less than 4 hours.

Ticket machine data for 2016/17 was also analysed to calculate average duration of stay which customers pay for in Borough Council car parks on weekdays and Saturdays. This is set out in



4.6.4. Figure 10 overleaf.

**Figure 10 – Duration of stay, Borough Council car parks, 2016/17**



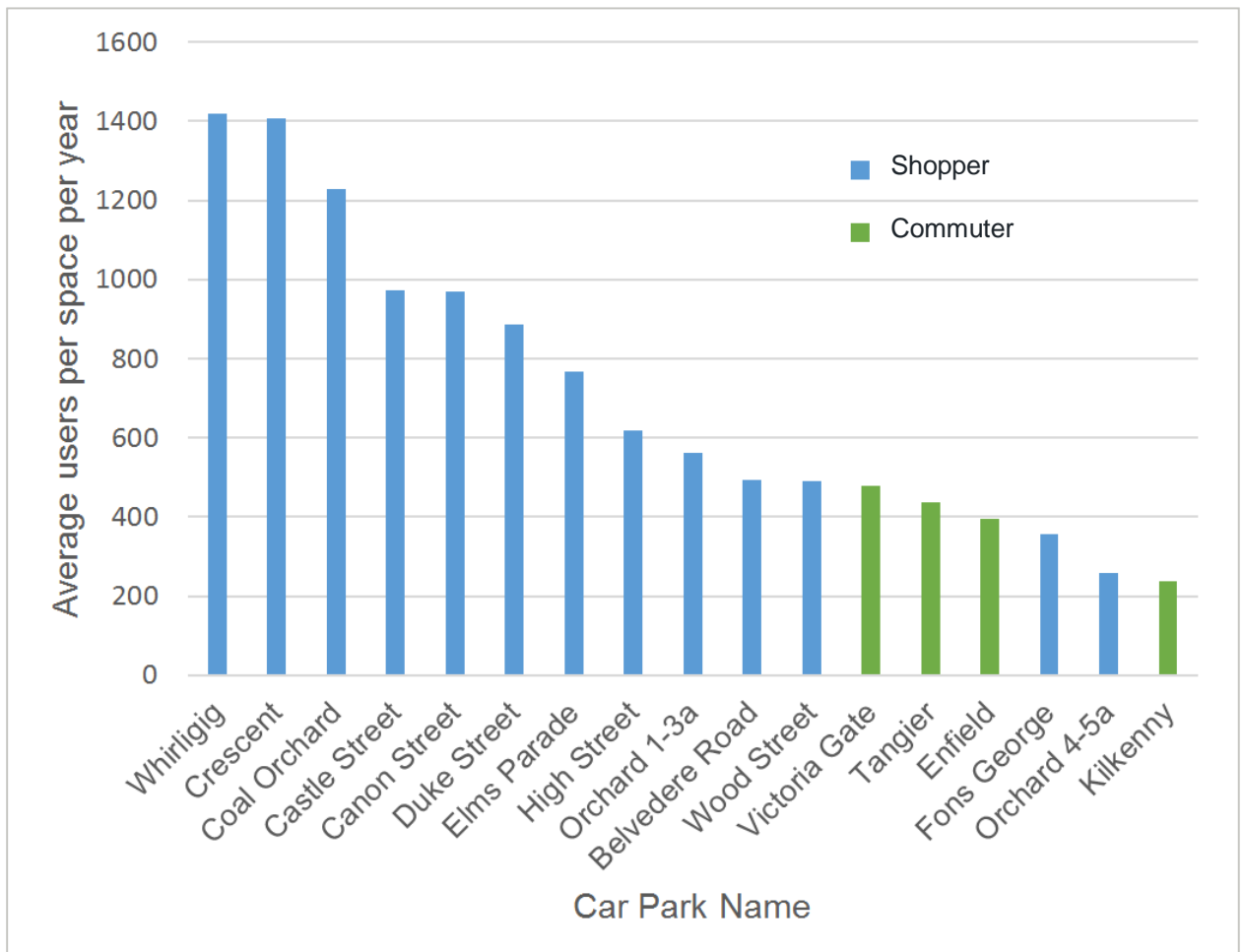
TDBC Ticket machine data. Note: Based on price paid, rather than actual duration of stay

- 4.6.5. The chart shows that, in most car parks, the average duration of stay paid for is between 2-3 hours. Average stay is longer (3-4 hours) in the Enfield and Tangier commuter car parks and in Kilkenny it is nearly 7 hours. Victoria Gate exhibits more similar characteristics to shopper car parks than with the other commuter car parks.
- 4.6.6. In most car parks there is little difference in average length of stay between weekdays and Saturdays. The exceptions to this are three commuter car parks (Enfield, Kilkenny and Tangier), where duration of stay is lower on Saturdays than on weekdays.

**INTENSITY OF USE**

- 4.6.7. Figure 11 details how intensively each car park is used, based on number of tickets sold for the 2016/17 financial year. Intensity of use is a ratio of the number of vehicles parked to the number of spaces; the higher the ratio, the more intensively the use of the car park. Note however that:
  - i this analysis does not take into account season tickets which may comprise a proportion of regular users in some commuter tariff car parks; nor that
  - i long stay users will by their very nature limit the turnover of spaces in some car parks.

Figure 11 – Intensity of use of car parks, 2016/2017



Source: TDBC Ticket sales data, 2016/17

4.6.8. The chart indicates that there are substantial variations in how intensively each car park is used:

- i Whirligig, The Crescent and Coal Orchard are the most intensively used – with the use of each of them equating to an average of nearly 4 users per space per day;
- i All four commuter tariff car parks (Enfield, Kilkenny, Tangier and Victoria Gate) are amongst the six least intensively used car parks, in line with their intended long-stay role. Kilkenny appears much less intensively used than the other three but may have higher numbers of season ticket holders, not captured in the data;
- i Four Shopper 2 tariff car parks have an average of less than 1 user per space per day (High Street, Orchard 1-3a, Belvedere Road and Wood Street); and
- i A further 2 Shopper tariffs car parks have on average less than 2 users per space per day (Fons George and Orchard 4-5a).

4.6.9. Table 20 below outlines the proportion of Borough Council car park spaces by tariff category and the proportion of ticket sales. This underlines the fact that 65% of tickets were sold for shopper 1 tariff locations, despite comprising 47% of the spaces. Conversely 14% of tickets sold were for commuter tariff locations, despite representing nearly a quarter of all the spaces. As highlighted earlier, a higher proportion of commuter tariff car park users stay for longer time periods, in line with their intended role, which limits the turnover of spaces, and consequently impacts on the number of tickets sold.

**Table 20 – Comparison of car park spaces to number of transactions**

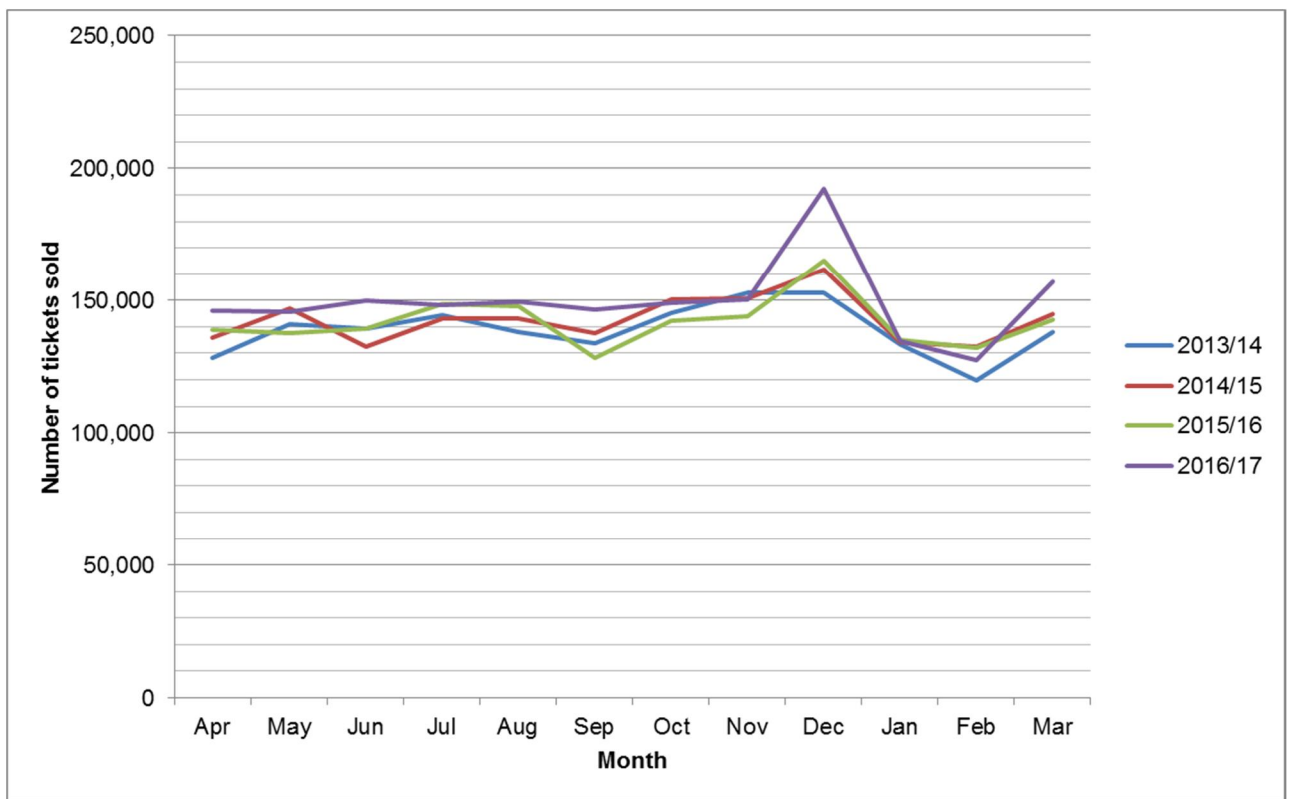
	Shopper 1	Shopper 2	Commuter	Whirligig (short stay)
% of all Borough Council spaces	47%	27%	24%	1%
% of ticket sales	65%	20%	14%	3%

Source: TDBC car park ticket sales 2013/14 to 2016/17

**SEASONAL VARIATION**

4.6.10. Monthly total ticket sales for 2013/14 to 2016/17 were analysed to understand how car park demand varies through the year and the results are shown in Figure 12 below.

**Figure 12 – Total tickets sold for Borough Council car parks, 2013/14 to 2016/17, disaggregated by month**



Source: TDBC Ticket sales data, 2016/17

4.6.11. The chart above indicates that December has the greatest number of tickets sold and the fewest are sold in February, with other fluctuations through other parts of the year. The most recent financial year has shown a particularly prominent spike in ticket sales during December 2016, with the preceding months exhibiting relatively little variation. 34% fewer tickets were sold in February 2017 than December 2016.

## 5 ANALYSIS – ON-STREET PARKING

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.1.1. The availability, location and price of on-street parking can be a key influence on demand for off-street car parking. On-street parking in the town is regulated by the County Council and a traffic regulation order covers Taunton town centre streets<sup>14</sup>. Table 21 outlines the town centre streets with parking bays and the charges to use them. In addition the town centre has several loading and limited / no waiting bays around Taunton town centre and dedicated blue badge holder parking bays.

**Table 21 – Selected Taunton on-street parking charges**

Location	Total Number of Spaces	30 mins	1 hour	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours	Notes
Billet Street	13	£1.00	£2.00				1 hour no return within 1 hour
Church Square (including Magdalene Street)	13	£1.00					(30 mins no return within 30 mins)
Corporation Street	7	£1.00	£2.00				1 Hour No Return Within 1 Hour
The Crescent	14		£1.50	£2.00	£3.00	£4.00	4 Hours No Return Within 1 Hour
Duke Street	6	£1.00	£2.00				1 hour no return within 1 hour
East Street	18	£1.00					30 mins no return within 30 mins
St James Street	8	£1.00	£2.00				1 Hour No Return Within 1 Hour
The Mount	7	£1.00	£2.00				1 Hour No Return Within 1 Hour
Victoria Gate	33	£4.50 for any length of stay (maximum stay 10 hours)					
Wilton Orchard	15	£4.50 for any length of stay (maximum stay 10 hours)					
Total	145						

5.1.2. Days and hours of operation tend to be force Monday and Saturday from 8am to 6pm<sup>15</sup>, but there are some variants of this. In addition there are a range of tariffs and variations of maximum permitted lengths of stay, depending on the location. This appears to create a more complex tariff system than the off-street car parks. On-street parking charges are more expensive than off-street car parks in Taunton.

<sup>14</sup> [The County of Somerset Prohibition and Restriction of Stopping, Waiting, Loading and Unloading and On-street Parking Taunton Deane Order 2012 \(Amendment No.8\) Order 2015](#)

<sup>15</sup> An exception to these hours is The Mount where hours of operation are Monday to Friday 0800 – 0900, 0930 – 1200, 1230 – 1800 and Saturdays 0800 – 1800

## 5.2 ON-STREET PARKING SURROUNDING THE TOWN CENTRE RESIDENTS' PARKING

- 5.2.1. Parking on many residential streets surrounding Taunton town centre is restricted to permit holders during certain hours on weekdays and Saturdays, with 11 zones around the town<sup>16</sup>. A revised Resident Parking Policy was approved in 2017<sup>17</sup>.
- 5.2.2. Residents can apply for parking permits to the County Council, subject to demonstrating resident status. The first Resident's Permit costs £60, the second costs £100. Motorcycle permits are available at the reduced rate of £17.50.
- 5.2.3. The following specialist categories of permits are also available by application to County Council:
- Annual Visitor's Permit;
  - Visitor Scratch cards;
  - Care Worker Parking Permits;
  - Non-residential Landlords' Parking Permits;
  - Loading Permits; and
  - Business Parking Permits.

The process for applying for residential parking permits is currently under review by the County Council.

### ENFORCEMENT

- 5.2.4. Somerset County Council is responsible for all parking Penalty Charge Notices served on highways in Somerset, in the County Hall and Shire Hall car parks. It is also responsible for the enforcement of parking restrictions in resident permit zones, at bus stops, in taxi ranks, on-street disabled parking areas and limited waiting areas.

### COMMENTARY

- 5.2.5. The parking restrictions in force on streets surrounding the town centre limit the availability of free, all-day, on-street parking spaces which might otherwise be used by commuters and other long-stay visitors. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that long-stay weekday parking continues to take place on roads beyond the existing outer edge of the permit parking areas.

---

<sup>16</sup>

<http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/documents/s4901/Notification%20of%20Updated%20Policy%20on%20the%20Introduction%20of%20Residents%20Parking%20Schemes.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> *ibid*



## 6 ANALYSIS – PARK AND RIDE

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

- 6.1.1. Taunton has two P&R sites, Taunton Gateway and Silk Mills, situated to the east and west of the town respectively. Parking at the sites is free of charge and there are staffed information centres and waiting facilities. Bus services are operated by Buses of Somerset (First Group) on contract to the County Council. County Council Cabinet Member approval was given on 24 November 2016 for a new contract to be awarded to the incumbent operator for a period of 1 year with an option to extend for a further 12 months<sup>18</sup>.
- 6.1.2. The P&R sites are open Monday – Friday 0630 – 2000, with bus services operating on a 12-minute peak time frequency (from 0730-0930 and (1530-1800) and 15-minute off-peak frequency (0630-0730, 0930-1530 and 1800-1930).
- 6.1.3. The County Council made the decision in October 2017 to withdraw funding for Saturday P&R bus operations due to the relatively low usage compared with weekdays (see Table 24 below). The sites will close on Saturdays to general traffic from January 2018<sup>19</sup>. However, the current bus operator may be receptive to discussions regarding the potential to run services for large events occurring at the weekend. Similarly there may be potential for commercial bus services to call at the P&R sites on a Saturday; however, early discussions are still being made.
- 6.1.4. The P&R sites are not open for general use on Sundays or public holidays.
- 6.1.5. A range of tickets are available for bus passengers, detailed below in Table 22.

**Table 22 – P&R bus service fares**

Type of ticket	Fare	Validity
Adult return	£2.40	
Child day return	£1.40	(5 to 15 years old inclusive)
Weekly ticket	£10.00	
Monthly ticket	£33.00	Based on calendar months
Annual	£330.00	Requires application
Shopper special	£1.70	Valid for up to 5 people travelling in the same vehicle, who must travel together on the outward and return bus journey/ Available between 10am and 4pm Monday to Friday
Group ticket	£6.00	Up to 5 people travelling together, valid on day of purchase only. Aimed at incentivising groups of people who lift share to the sites.
Flexirider	£12.00	12 single journeys valid within 1 calendar month of issue

- 6.1.6. Non P&R users can use the bus services as a town service. The two P&R facilities operate to provide a complete cross town service through Taunton; however for those doing this, town service fares apply, (£2.20 single or £3.30 return).

<sup>18</sup> <http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=179>

<sup>19</sup> At present the sites operate on Saturdays between 0700-1900, opening half an hour before/after the first / last bus service.

## 6.2 BENCHMARKING PARK AND RIDE

- 6.2.1. A benchmarking exercise has been undertaken to compare P&R prices in Taunton and a selection of comparator towns. The outcome of this analysis is shown in Table 23 below. Taunton's P&R bus fares are at the lower end of the range charged in selected comparator locations, second only to Shrewsbury. In similarity to Taunton, none of the comparator locations charge for parking in P&R sites. Weekday frequencies are similar to other comparator locations, with some peak time services in Bristol and Truro operating at slightly higher frequencies (1 every 10 minutes). Sunday services do not operate in the comparator locations which are smaller than Taunton (Truro and Salisbury) nor in the larger settlement of Shrewsbury. Sunday services do operate in the larger comparator locations – Bath, Bristol and Exeter – although only from selected sites in Exeter & Bristol.

**Table 23 – Park and rides in selected comparator locations**

P&R Location	Bus day return	Weekday frequency	Sunday service?	Car park charges
Bath	£3.30	12-15 mins	Yes	No
Bristol	£4.00	10, 12 or 15 mins	Yes (2 of 3)	No
Exeter	£2.70	12 or 15 mins (depending on site)	Honiton Road service only	No
Salisbury	£3.00	12 mins peak time, 15 mins off-peak	No	No
Shrewsbury	£1.60	20 mins	No	
<b>Taunton</b>	<b>£2.40</b>	12 mins peak time, 15 mins off-peak	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
Truro	£2.00	10min peak time, 15 min off-peak	No	No

Note: Details correct at September 2017

## 6.3 PARK AND RIDE DEMAND

- 6.3.1. Table 16 below shows the average numbers of vehicles using each P&R on weekdays and Saturdays over the last 3 years. Silk Mills is the more popular site, accounting for 55% of weekday P&R use and 58% of Saturday use. There have been small increases in vehicles using Silk Mills on weekdays and Saturdays; in similarity, there has been a slight rise in average weekday use at Gateway but average weekend use has remained almost constant.
- 6.3.2. In terms of average occupancy, Silk Mills is 75% full on weekdays, falling to 32% on Saturdays. With its larger car park Gateway is 37% occupied on weekdays, reducing to 15% on Saturdays.

**Table 24 – Total vehicles entering P&R sites, 2015, 2016 and 2017**

	Silk Mills (600 spaces)			Gateway (1000 spaces)			Both sites		
	Vehicles			Passengers			Passengers		
	Weekday average	Saturday average	Daily average	Weekday average	Saturday average	Daily average	Weekday average	Saturday average	Daily average
2015	442	169	397	368	148	331	810	317	728
2016	449	173	403	371	145	333	820	318	736
2017	459	195	414	380	145	340	839	339	755

Source: County Council data. Excludes Bank Holidays

- 6.3.3. Table 25 details the number of passengers using the bus services from the P&R sites for 2015, 2016 and 2017. It indicates a steady rise in passengers over the last three years. This either indicates that average car occupancy has risen (from 1.4 people per vehicle to 1.7 people per vehicle) or that there has been a rise in numbers of passengers using the service but who do not park / board the bus at the sites.

**Table 25 – Total daily average bus passengers from the P&R sites, 2015, 2016 and 2017**

	Silk Mills (600 spaces)	Gateway (1000 spaces)	Both sites
	Passengers	Passengers	Passengers
2015 <sup>20</sup>	-	-	1,042
2016	558	543	1,101
2017 <sup>21</sup>	648	643	1,291

Source: County Council data. Average takes account of the fact that the number of operational days varies by month

- 6.3.4. Little information is known about users' end destinations or the motivations for using the sites and therefore it cannot be assumed that P&R users would automatically park in the town centre if the P&R did not exist. It is for example known that some people park and share or park and cycle from the two sites. For the purposes of this strategy it has been assumed that 75% of P&R users contribute to the overall demand for car parking in Taunton town centre.

<sup>20</sup> November 2014 to October 2015

<sup>21</sup> January 2017 to August 2017 inclusive

## 7 ANALYSIS – FUTURE CONTEXT AND KEY ISSUES

---

### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

The strategy has considered the following issues which may have a bearing on car park supply, demand and customer experience of parking:

- ▮ Town growth and Garden Town status;
- ▮ Town centre developments;
- ▮ Major events;
- ▮ Future supply of town centre parking;
- ▮ Future supply of peripheral town parking;
- ▮ Planning changes to Borough Council car parks, in terms of the introduction of variable message signs (VMS) and pay on foot payment systems;
- ▮ Consideration of car park decking in Borough car parks; and
- ▮ Factors influencing parking demand.

### 7.2 TOWN GROWTH AND GARDEN TOWN STATUS

- 7.2.1. Taunton is expected to continue growing rapidly over the next 20 years. The adopted Core Strategy<sup>22</sup> makes provision for around 13,000 additional dwellings to be constructed in the town between 2011 and 2028, of which 1700-2000 are likely to be built in the town centre. Growth will continue after 2028, with further potential for 4,000-6,000 dwellings in the south west sector of Taunton, subject to further work to consider the physical infrastructure constraints and solutions<sup>23</sup>. This increase in residents and workforce will bring additional travel demands and place additional pressure on the transport network. Whilst the Councils can work in partnership with developers to provide new or improved transport infrastructure, or in technology and innovative solutions, there will also be a need to change the culture of travel in the town, and move away from a reliance on using the car for short-distance trips.
- 7.2.2. Taunton's Garden town status was announced by government in January 2017. Much of Taunton's growth will occur in three garden communities – Monkton Heathfield to the north-east, Comeytrowe to the south-west and Staplegrove to the north. The new garden communities are viewed to be a key means of achieving transformational growth and vision for Taunton. They are intended to be *'unique settings, coordinating landscape, wildlife, and leisure in a person friendly environment. Sustainable public transport links and improved footpaths and cycleways, will reduce car dependence and deliver wider physical and mental health benefits for residents.'*<sup>24</sup>
- 7.2.3. Regeneration of the town centre will support the Garden Town vision, providing a stronger and more vibrant core with a dynamic and diversified economy. The town centre is recognised as already having many positive attributes – compact, flat, riverside frontage and high quality green spaces, good retail offer, with a significant number of high quality independent shops and a farmers' market. However, at present the River Tone is underutilised; vehicles dominate key shopping streets; the cultural and leisure offer must be enhanced to attract more people into the town and support wider investment in Taunton.

### 7.3 TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENTS

- 7.3.1. As highlighted earlier, the Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan, adopted in 2008, identified several sites for redevelopment, and outlined the anticipated requirements for car parking (a combination of reductions in some places and additional spaces in others) across the town centre sites. Changing circumstances since that time mean that some of these have not come forward for development. However, two major town centre developments in particular are in progress and which have implications for transport and parking. They are outlined below.

---

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/media/1745/adopted-core-strategy-2011-2028.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/media/1678/taunton-garden-town.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> *ibid*

## **FIREPOOL**

- 7.3.2. Development of the Firepool site, south of the rail station and north of Priory Bridge Road, is currently the subject of a planning application (reference 38/17/0150) for a substantial mixed-use development. The proposal includes convenience and non-food retail uses, food and drink establishments, office or hotel uses, assembly/leisure and non-residential institutions (D1) uses and up to 200 homes. The submitted proposals will provide up to 425 car parking spaces, excluding those reserved for occupiers and visitors of the new homes.

## **COAL ORCHARD**

- 7.3.3. A mixed use development of retail, commercial, restaurant, residential uses and public realm works is proposed for the Coal Orchard site, between St. James' Street and the River Tone, with a planning application<sup>25</sup> currently being determined. The proposed development will result in 70 fewer parking spaces (reduced from 120 at present to approximately 49 post-construction). The construction is programmed to be completed by 2021.

## **7.4 TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC SPACE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

- 7.4.1. Following the summer consultation, the 18-month trial of the public space improvement project to make town centre streets more people-friendly will commence in early 2018. It includes the following key components:

- i A section of East Street will be closed to all traffic except buses and cycles;
- i Hammet Street will be closed to vehicles during the day; and
- i St. James Street will be pedestrianised between North Street and Lower Middle Street.

The trial will amend routes available for drivers reaching certain car parks, such as Canon Street and Whirligig.

## **7.5 MAJOR EVENTS**

- 7.5.1. Major events taking place in the town centre often generate significant numbers of vehicle journeys and lead to spikes in demand for parking above levels normally associated with a usual weekday. Examples of this include recent international matches held at the Somerset County Cricket Club, on the northern side of the town centre. Managing parking for events is usually best addressed as a part of a wider visitor and traffic management strategy prepared by event organisers in liaison with partners, implementing a range of measures to effectively deal with travel demand.

## **7.6 FUTURE SUPPLY OF TOWN CENTRE CAR PARKING**

- 7.6.1. The following changes in parking supply are envisaged in or adjacent to the town centre during the strategy period:

- i A decrease in public spaces by 70 (Coal Orchard Redevelopment); and
- i An increase in private retail spaces by 425 (Firepool).

In addition the Taunton Rail Station Upgrade major transport scheme includes a proposal to consolidate and increase the capacity of long-stay station parking into a multi-storey car park between the Northern Inner Distributor Road and the station buildings. The likely change in the quantity of spaces is not known at this stage.

## **7.7 FUTURE SUPPLY OF PARKING SPACES OUTSIDE THE TOWN CENTRE**

- 7.7.1. Two additional locations are identified for parking to be provided on the edge of the town with journeys being completed by bus, as follows:

- i Monkton Heathfield, on the A38 corridor from Bridgwater; and
- i Comeytrove, on the A38 corridor from Wellington.

---

<sup>25</sup> <http://www2.tauntondeane.gov.uk/asp/webpages/plan/PIAppDets.asp?casefullref=38/16/0357>

- 7.7.2. The Monkton Heathfield site is identified in Core Strategy Policies SP2 and SS1. Policy SS1 states that P&R will be delivered south of the A38, west of Walford Cross as part of the new sustainable neighbourhood. At Comeytrowe a submitted planning application<sup>26</sup> includes proposals for a 300-space park and bus facility adjacent to A38 Wellington Road.
- 7.7.3. Taken together these two additional sites are likely to substantially increase the available parking on the edge of the town.

## 7.8 PLANNED BOROUGH COUNCIL CAR PARK INVESTMENT VARIABLE MESSAGE SIGNS (VMS)

- 7.8.1. Variable Message Signs (VMS) are digital signs which can display different messages to road users as need dictates. They can be helpful tools to enable drivers to find a car parking space and reduce traffic circulating as drivers look for a parking space. WSP has been assisting the Borough and County Councils to implement a strategy for VMS, to provide parking space availability information at key points around the town.
- 7.8.2. Nine car parks – seven town centre car parks, and the two P&R sites – will be included in the VMS scheme to provide information on the number of spaces available. As a result 10 VMS signs will be installed as follows:
- i an outer ring on the approach roads from Minehead (A358), Wellington (A38), Ilminster (A358) and on the M5 J25 southbound and northbound slip roads; and
  - i an inner ring on East Reach, Priorswood Rod, Staplegrove Road and Wellington Road.
- 7.8.3. The investment is planned for spring 2018. Alongside the VMS signs there will also be an ancillary package of investment in static signs.
- 7.8.4. Real time counts of available spaces will be displayed on VMS from data obtained using car park counters from participating car parks, controlled by SCC's Urban Traffic Management and Control system. When operational the technology is anticipated to give much improved and continuous data insights into the use of these nine car parks.

### PAY ON FOOT

- 7.8.5. The Borough Council are introducing pay on foot payment system at seven car parks:
- i 5 of the Shopper tariff car parks – Canon Street, Castle Street, High Street, Wood Street and Orchard multi-storey; and
  - i 2 of the 4 commuter tariff car parks – Enfield and Tangier.
- 7.8.6. The investment comprises pay-on-foot payment machines, entry and exit barriers, vehicle detection technology (not automatic number plate recognition), ticket dispensers/readers deployed at the car parks, supported by a back office Parking Management System.
- 7.8.7. Some other physical works will be also be required to all car parks, in terms of renewing the white line delineation of spaces, kerbing and / or entrance and exit re-alignments to provide space for the barriers, and resurfacing as a result of any pay on foot works.
- 7.8.8. Car park occupancy counts for the seven car parks will be able to be displayed on the VMS, via an adaptor within the County Council's existing Urban Traffic Management and Control system. The investment is planned for spring 2018, along with the VMS.

## 7.9 CONSIDERATION OF CAR PARK DECKING

- 7.9.1. The Borough Council has identified four car parks – Canon Street, Enfield, Tangier and Wood Street – which may have the potential to have their capacity increased through the construction of a temporary car park deck. WSP carried out a feasibility study in March 2017 to understand the key constraints and issues with constructing a single car park deck. It has been provided in Appendix D.
- 7.9.2. Pedestrian access and impact on nearby buildings were the common identified issues. Form of structure, design life and durability were some of the design considerations that formed the

<sup>26</sup> Application reference 42/14/0069

recommendations of decking. Table 26 sets out the estimated additional spaces if a single deck was constructed.

**Table 26 – Estimated potential car parking spaces from car deck**

Car Park	Existing spaces	Estimated additional spaces	Estimated spaces lost	Estimated net total spaces	Estimated net increase in spaces	% increase
Canon Street	306	118	25	399	93	30%
Enfield	149	102	20	231	82	55%
Tangier	219	44	10	253	34	16%
Wood Street	197	80	20	257	60	30%

7.9.3. Detailed cost estimates have been set out in Appendix D, but it is estimated, that construction per single car park deck will be between £1million and £1.5million, depending on the form of construction.

## 7.10 FACTORS INFLUENCING FUTURE DEMAND FOR OFF-STREET CAR PARKING

7.10.1. Future demand for car parking – in the town centre, on-street outside the town centre and at the P&R sites – are influenced by a range of interdependent factors, a selection of which are outlined in Table 27.

**Table 27 – Selected factors influencing parking demand**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Town centre economic performance and changing retail patterns</li> <li>❖ Popularity of public transport and active travel relative to vehicle journeys</li> <li>❖ Levels of traffic congestion</li> <li>❖ Cost of parking (relative to other car parks, or other modes)</li> <li>❖ Emerging technology, such as uber</li> <li>❖ Availability and proximity of free on-street spaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Government and local policy, strategy and investment priorities</li> <li>❖ Distance from key town centre destinations</li> <li>❖ Extra travel demand generated by residents and workers of the new garden communities</li> <li>❖ The potential longer-term implications arising from connected and autonomous vehicles</li> </ul>
---	--

7.10.2. The Taunton Strategic Traffic Model (known as TSTM4) future year model (2031) has been used to understand how traffic volumes may change on different parts of the highway network under different scenarios. The 2031 future year model includes all the development envisaged by the Core Strategy. Analysis of the model indicates that traffic growth in town centre is forecast to increase by 10% between 2017 and 2031. Following this logic, if we were to increase the parking demand by 10%, then this would show that, based on existing surveys of spare capacity, there would be sufficient weekday parking supply across the town centre to meet demand in 2031. Demand on Saturdays in 2031 is forecast to exceed town centre supply (excluding the capacity which is available at P&R) during the late morning and early afternoon.

7.10.3. The IHT guidance document '*Parking Strategies and Management*' suggests that for retail parking, a degree of capacity should always be retained to allow for people circulating car parks looking for a space. It is suggested that this figure is somewhere between 10% and 15%. For the purposes of this strategy, this figure has been set at 10% as the VMS, guiding drivers to available spaces, are anticipated to reduce drivers circulating looking for spaces.

## 7.11 EMERGING TECHNOLOGY

- 7.11.1. Future changes in technology and mobility may radically change how and where parking is provided. There will be an acceleration towards cleaner, less-polluting types of vehicle (including electric vehicles) in the next few years, aided by national government support and manufacturer innovation. Government outlined a target to end the sale of conventional petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2040<sup>27</sup>. The Automated and Electric Vehicles Bill<sup>28</sup> currently includes provisions requiring motorway services and large petrol retailers to install charge points for electric cars. Government also wishes to make it easier for drivers to run electric vehicles by allowing them to locate charging facilities using satnavs and mobile apps. Parliament is currently discussing amendments to the Bill, with suggestions being made that electric vehicle charging points should be provided in all publicly-owned car parks, for example<sup>29</sup>.
- 7.11.2. The *UK Plan for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide Emissions*<sup>30</sup> highlighted the role of existing actions for electric vehicle charging, including:
- i Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme to help with installation costs for residential off-street charging;
  - i On-Street Residential Charging Scheme, giving access to grant funding and guidance on installation of charging infrastructure where there is no off-street parking available; and
  - i Workplace Charging Scheme for eligible businesses, charities and public sector organisations.
- 7.11.3. Advances are likely to continue in fields including connected vehicles (which communicate with their surroundings, such as via smartphones or the internet) and autonomous vehicles (which use technology to require less driver input for some or all of the journey) but their impacts on parking provision in the short term is less clear.
- 7.11.4. Further technology solutions are underway to help connect drivers with free spaces. As an example, Cardiff<sup>31</sup> is pioneering the introduction of sensors underneath each parking space to identify when and where parking spaces are available. This information is publicised via an app.

<sup>27</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/633270/air-quality-plan-detail.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/633270/air-quality-plan-detail.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/2017-2019/0112/18112.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2017-10-23/debates/BDAB60DC-D67C-44CF-B0CB-9FBE8DAE3F30/AutomatedAndElectricVehiclesBill>

<sup>30</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/633270/air-quality-plan-detail.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/633270/air-quality-plan-detail.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.keepingcardiffmoving.co.uk/car/parking-sensors/>



# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Full Council – 22 February 2018

### Designation of Car Parks into Short and Long Stay and Pricing Strategy

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Roger Habgood

Report Author: Scott Weetch, Community and Client Services Manager

#### 1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 To explain a proposal to change the designation of Taunton car parks from Shopper 1, Shopper 2 and Commuter to Short and Long Stay car parks. The intention is for this to bring greater clarity to the public. It is also necessary to revise the charging structure slightly as each of the current designations have a different charging point. The changes outlined are overall intended to be cost neutral.

#### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Full Council is recommended to support the proposed change in designation from Shopper 1, Shopper 2 and commuter to the more readily understood Short and Long Stay, alongside changes to the charging regime to allow this to be carried out with a neutral effect on income.

#### 3 Risk Assessment (if appropriate)

##### Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
The Council fails to recover sufficient income to make the project cost neutral	2	3	6

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

### 4.1 Car Park Designation

The Taunton Car Parking Strategy 2017 highlights the creation of dedicated short stay and long stay tariff car parks as desirable to ensure ‘that spaces are available and used for short stay visits and to give certainty to customers. In parallel a small number of car parks should be dedicated to long stay users.’

As part of the Pay On Foot (POF) and Variable Message Signing (VMS) project it is desirable to also simplify the designations of the car parks for the benefit of visitors to the town and achieve the maximum benefit of VMS.

Currently we use the designations of:-

- Shopper 1
- Shopper 2
- Commuter

These do not mean a great deal to the public and were we to continue with these on the VMS signs they wouldn't support customer choice in selecting the most appropriate car park for their needs.

The universal language of Short Stay and Long Stay is much more descriptive and better recognised.

It is therefore proposed that all car parks are re-designated with this language, including those not within the POF and VMS project. This would mean that signage in the VMS scheme and fixed finger post signs would be updated to reflect this.

The proposed designations are:-

### **Long stay**

Canon Street  
 High Street  
 Orchard  
 Belvedere Road  
 Castle Street  
 Wood Street  
 Enfield  
 Firepool  
 Kilkenny  
 Tangier  
 Victoria Gate

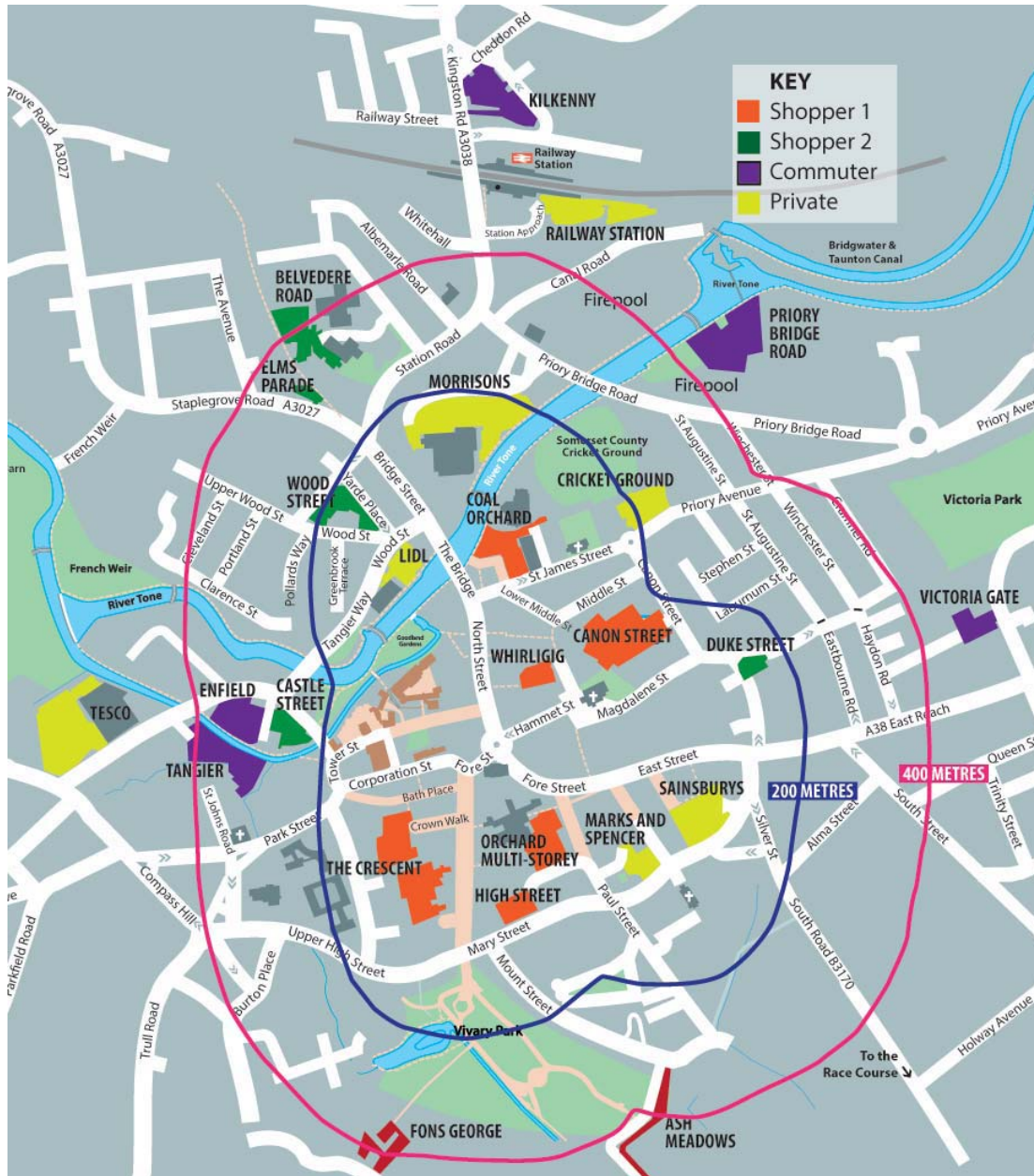
### **Short Stay**

Coal Orchard\*<sub>1</sub>  
 Crescent  
 Ash meadows  
 Duke Street\*<sub>1</sub>  
 Elms Parade\*<sub>1</sub>  
 Whirligig\*<sub>2</sub>  
 Fons George

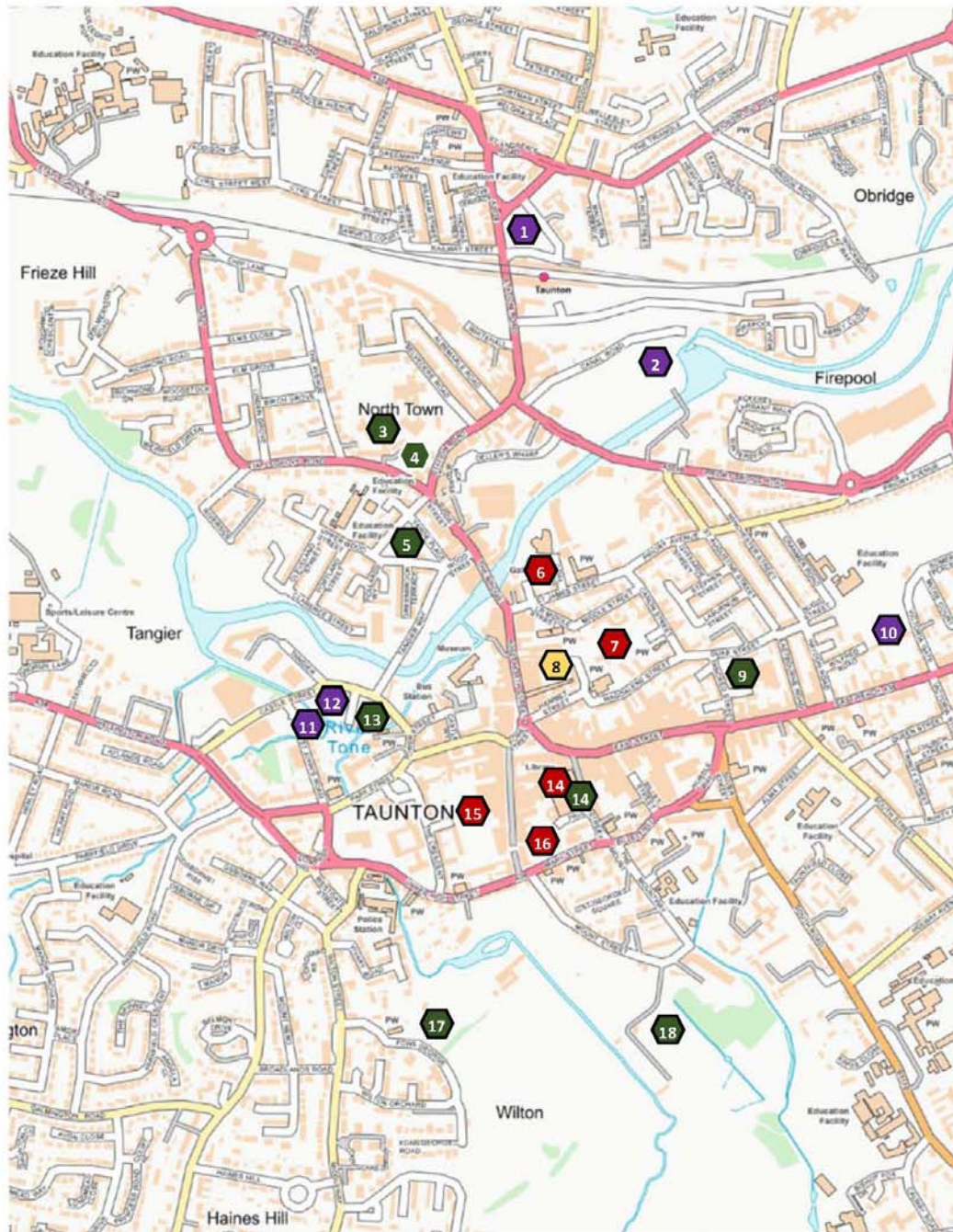
\*<sub>1</sub> These car parks have previously not had a time restriction on the length of stay

\*<sub>2</sub> This car park has a proposed stay change from 2 hours to a limit of 3 hours

# Map of current car park locations and designations



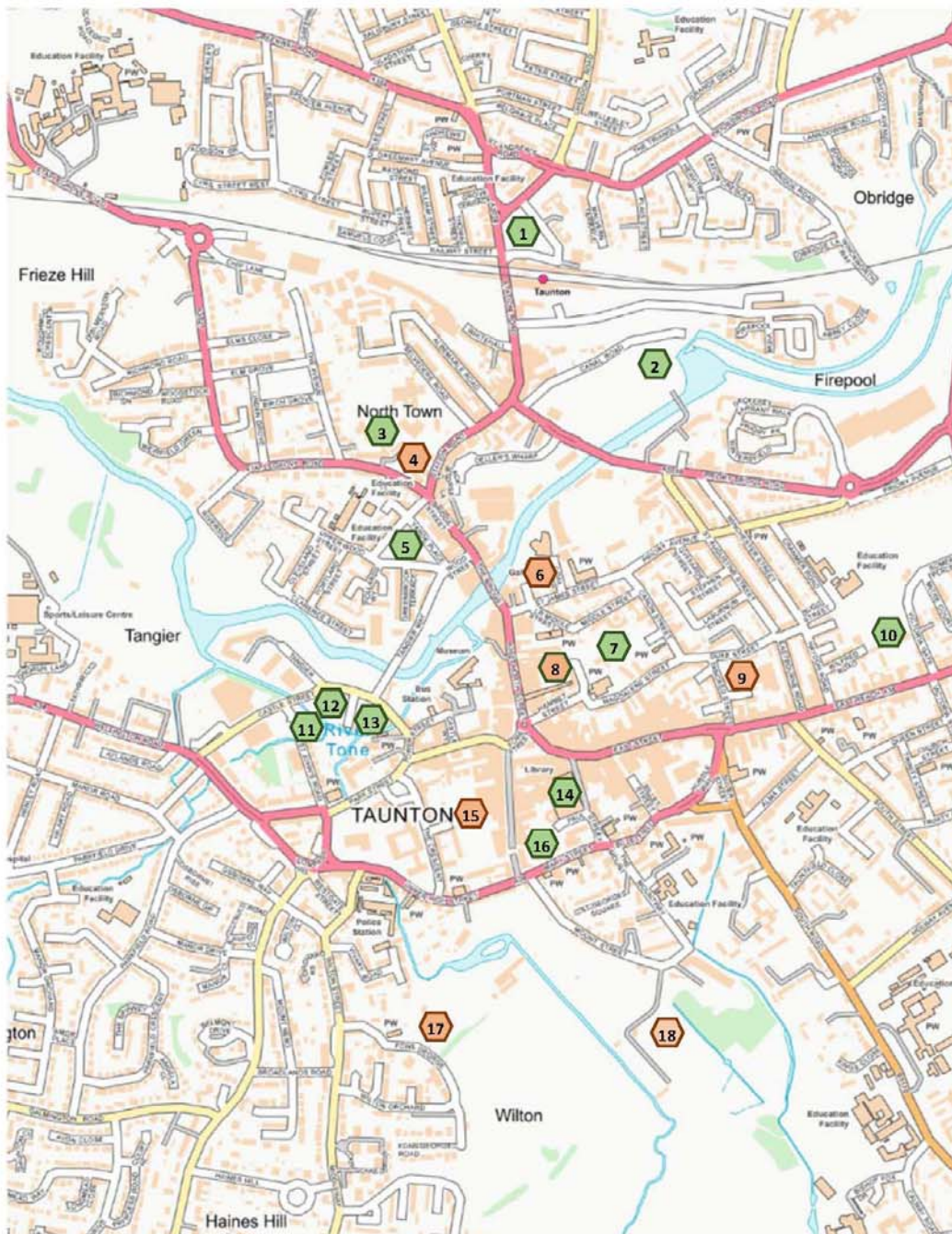
## CURRENT DESIGNATION OF TAUNTON CAR PARKS



*Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2018)*

SHOPPER 1	SHOPPER 2	COMMUTER
6 Coal Orchard	3 Belvedere Road	1 Kilkenny
7 Canon Street	4 Elms Parade	2 Firepool
14 Orchard Multi Storey (1-3a)	5 Wood Street	10 Victoria Gate
15 The Crescent	9 Duke Street	11 Tangier
16 High Street	13 Castle Street	12 Enfield
	14 Orchard Multi Storey (4-5a)	
	17 Fons George	
	18 Ash Meadows	
		OTHER
		8 Whirligig

## PROPOSED DESIGNATION FOR TDBC LONG STAY AND SHORT STAY CAR PARKS WITHIN TAUNTON



*Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2018)*

### LONG STAY

- |                  |                         |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Kilkeny        | 12 Enfield              |
| 2 Firepool       | 13 Castle Street        |
| 3 Belvedere Road | 14 Orchard Multi Storey |
| 5 Wood Street    | 16 High Street          |
| 7 Canon Street   |                         |
| 10 Victoria Gate |                         |
| 11 Tangier       |                         |

### SHORT STAY

- |                 |
|-----------------|
| 4 Elms Parade   |
| 6 Coal Orchard  |
| 8 Whirligig     |
| 9 Duke Street   |
| 15 The Crescent |
| 17 Fons George  |
| 18 Ash Meadows  |

## Table of Current Parking Charges

### TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Parking Charges from 4 April 2016



The Deane House, Belvedere Road  
Taunton, Somerset TA1 1HE  
[www.tauntondeane.gov.uk](http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk)

Location Code	Tariff Charges								
	Up to 1hr	Up to 2hrs	Up to 3hrs	Up to 4hrs	Up to 5hrs	Up to 6hrs	Up to 7hrs	Up to 10hrs	
<b>SHOPPER 1</b>									
Canon Street 2124	£1.20	£2.40	£3.60	£4.80	£6.00	£7.20	£8.40	£9.60	
Coal Orchard 2126	£1.20	£2.40	£3.60	£4.80	£6.00	£7.20	£8.40	£9.60	
High Street 2120	£1.20	£2.40	£3.60	£4.80	£6.00	£7.20	£8.40	£9.60	
Orchard - Levels 1, 1A, 2, 2A, 3 & 3A 2128	£1.20	£2.40	£3.60	£4.80	£6.00	£7.20	£8.40	£9.60	
The Crescent (maximum stay 4hrs) 2122	£1.20	£2.40	£3.60	£4.80					
<b>SHOPPER 2</b>									
Ash Meadows (maximum stay 3hrs) 2144	£1.00	£2.00	£3.00						
Belvedere Road 2131	£1.00	£2.00	£3.00	£4.00	£5.00	£6.00	£7.00	£8.00	
Castle Street 2125	£1.00	£2.00	£3.00	£4.00	£5.00	£6.00	£7.00	£8.00	
Duke Street 2138	£1.00	£2.00	£3.00	£4.00	£5.00	£6.00	£7.00	£8.00	
Elms Parade 2137	£1.00	£2.00	£3.00	£4.00	£5.00	£6.00	£7.00	£8.00	
Fons George (maximum stay 6hrs) -	£1.00	£2.00	£3.00	£4.00	£5.00	£6.00			
Orchard - Levels 4, 4A, 5 & 5A 2139	£1.00	£2.00	£3.00	£4.00	£5.00	£6.00	£7.00	£8.00	
Wood Street 2135	£1.00	£2.00	£3.00	£4.00	£5.00	£6.00	£7.00	£8.00	
<b>COMMUTER</b>									
Enfield 2140	£1.00	£2.00	£3.00	£4.00	£4.50	£5.00	£5.50	£6.00	
Firepool 2145	£1.00	£2.00	£3.00	£4.00	£4.50	£5.00	£5.50	£6.00	
Kilkenny 2136	£1.00	£2.00	£3.00	£4.00	£4.50	£5.00	£5.50	£6.00	
Tangier 2133	£1.00	£2.00	£3.00	£4.00	£4.50	£5.00	£5.50	£6.00	
Victoria Gate 2134	£1.00	£2.00	£3.00	£4.00	£4.50	£5.00	£5.50	£6.00	
<b>WELLINGTON</b>									
Longforth Road 2143		£1.00	£1.50	£2.00				2.50	
North Street 2142		£1.00	£1.50	£2.00				2.50	
South Street 2141	£0.70	£1.00	£1.50	£2.00				2.50	
<b>OTHER</b>									
Whirligig (maximum stay 2hrs) 2123	£1.60	£3.00							
Tangier Coach Park								£6.00	

**Blue Badge Holders** - with the display of a valid disabled blue badge showing the time of arrival and appropriate payment made, an allowance of an additional 60 minutes time is granted free of charge

# TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Permit Charges from 4 April 2016

The Deane House, Belvedere Road  
Taunton, Somerset TA1 1HE  
[www.tauntondeane.gov.uk](http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk)



Car Park	Shopper 1 £990.00 per six months	Shopper 2 £770.00 per six months	Commuter £660.00 per six months	Wellington £300.00 per six months
Ash Meadows	✓	✓		
Belvedere Road	✓	✓		
Canon Street	✓			
Castle Street	✓	✓		
Coal Orchard	✓			
Duke Street	✓	✓		
Elms Parade				
Enfield	✓	✓	✓	
Fons George				
High Street	✓			
Kilkenny	✓	✓	✓	
Orchard Levels 1, 1A, 2, 2A, 3 and 3A	✓			
Orchard Levels 4, 4A, 5 and 5A	✓	✓		
Tangier	✓	✓	✓	
The Crescent				
Victoria Gate	✓	✓	✓	
Whirligig Lane				
Wood Street	✓	✓		
Longforth Road				✓
North Street				✓
South Street				✓



## Options for pricing structure

A number of pricing options have been explored. It became apparent that two principles should underpin the process. Firstly that the changes should aim to be neutral in terms of income to the Council and therefore overall costs to the motorist, even though the service to the public should be enhanced by VMS and POF. Secondly, that the public in Wellington should not have to bear any cost through their car parking charges for a project that only has benefits in Taunton. These options were nonetheless originally costed and explored before being rejected.

It is considered that these changes could support the POF project and business case, whilst providing the necessary mix of parking opportunities.

There is one car park that is considered as an exception to the above rules. Fons George serves Vivary Park and the golf course. There is good reason for not wanting this to become a Long Stay car park as it may become clogged up with people parking all day and prevent the necessary churn in spaces. Equally limiting the stay to 3 hours as a short stay car park would cause issues for the golf course and the leisure operator. It is therefore proposed that this is a short stay car park with relaxed limits to 6 hours in recognition of the area it serves. It is further proposed that the pricing structure is maintained at £1 per hour.

If this proposal is supported then the necessary changes would be applied at the point of POF systems going live.

To enable these changes, the Council will require a new Taunton Deane Borough Council (Off Street Parking Place Order) prior to implementation of POF to the seven selected car parks.

- Canon Street
- Castle Street
- Enfield
- High Street
- Orchard Multi Storey
- Tangier
- Wood Street

The proposed model is the best all round solution because the cost of parking all day will be reduced for those parking in the old designated Shopper 1 and Shopper 2 car parks. It will however be more expensive to park all day in the five currently designated 'commuter' car parks. This change would mean that Wellington is not subsidising changes that are beneficial to Taunton. The current prices for short stay car parks would remain the same. This will ensure that the majority that currently visit the town with an average stay of two hours are encouraged to maintain that relationship and therefore mean the least change.

## Table of proposed Parking Charges:

# TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Proposed Parking Charges from start of Pay on Foot

Date tbc



The Deane House, Belvedere Road  
Taunton, Somerset TA1 1HE  
[www.tauntondeane.gov.uk](http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk)

LONG STAY	PnP Location Code	Tariff Charges							
		Up to 1hr	Up to 2hrs	Up to 3hrs	Up to 4hrs	Up to 5hrs	Up to 6hrs	Up to 7hrs	Up to 10hrs
Belvedere Road	2131	£1.10	£2.20	£3.30	£4.40	£5.50	£6.60	£7.00	£7.50
Canon Street*	N/A	£1.10	£2.20	£3.30	£4.40	£5.50	£6.60	£7.00	£7.50
Castle Street*	N/A	£1.10	£2.20	£3.30	£4.40	£5.50	£6.60	£7.00	£7.50
Enfield*	N/A	£1.10	£2.20	£3.30	£4.40	£5.50	£6.60	£7.00	£7.50
Firepool	2145	£1.10	£2.20	£3.30	£4.40	£5.50	£6.60	£7.00	£7.50
High Street*	N/A	£1.10	£2.20	£3.30	£4.40	£5.50	£6.60	£7.00	£7.50
Kilkenny	2136	£1.10	£2.20	£3.30	£4.40	£5.50	£6.60	£7.00	£7.50
Orchard Multi Storey*	N/A	£1.10	£2.20	£3.30	£4.40	£5.50	£6.60	£7.00	£7.50
Tangier*	N/A	£1.10	£2.20	£3.30	£4.40	£5.50	£6.60	£7.00	£7.50
Victoria Gate	2134	£1.10	£2.20	£3.30	£4.40	£5.50	£6.60	£7.00	£7.50
Wood Street*	N/A	£1.10	£2.20	£3.30	£4.40	£5.50	£6.60	£7.00	£7.50

\* Car Park operating with entry/exit barriers

SHORT STAY	PnP Location Code	Tariff Charges							
		Up to 1hr	Up to 2hrs	Up to 3hrs	Up to 4hrs	Up to 5hrs	Up to 6hrs	Up to 7hrs	Up to 10hrs
Ash Meadows	2144	£1.20	£2.40	£3.60	-	-	-	-	-
Coal Orchard	2126	£1.20	£2.40	£3.60	-	-	-	-	-
Duke Street	2138	£1.20	£2.40	£3.60	-	-	-	-	-
Elms Parade	2137	£1.20	£2.40	£3.60	-	-	-	-	-
Fons George	2146	£1.00	£2.00	£3.00	£4.00	£5.00	£6.00	-	-
The Crescent	2122	£1.20	£2.40	£3.60	-	-	-	-	-
Whirligig Lane	2123	£1.20	£2.40	£3.60	-	-	-	-	-

WELLINGTON	PnP Location Code	Tariff Charges							
		Up to 1hr	Up to 2hrs	Up to 3hrs	Up to 4hrs	Up to 5hrs	Up to 6hrs	Up to 7hrs	Up to 10hrs
Longforth Road	2143		£1.00	£1.50	£2.00	-	-	-	2.50
North Street	2142		£1.00	£1.50	£2.00	-	-	-	2.50
South Street	2141	£0.70	£1.00	£1.50	£2.00	-	-	-	2.50

OTHER	PnP Location Code	Tariff Charges							
		Up to 1hr	Up to 2hrs	Up to 3hrs	Up to 4hrs	Up to 5hrs	Up to 6hrs	Up to 7hrs	Up to 10hrs
Longforth Coach park	N/A	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Tangier Coach park	N/A	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	£6.00

**Blue Badge Holders** - with the display of a valid disabled blue badge showing the time of arrival and appropriate payment made, an allowance of an additional 1 hour time is granted free of charge in all non-barrier car parks

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

- 5.1 Supports 'Our Place' – Key Issue - Make finding a car parking space in Taunton quicker and easier through the provision of electronic parking signs;

## **6 Finance / Resource Implications**

- 6.1 The options set out in this report are intended to be cost neutral to the Council.

## **7 Legal Implications (if any)**

- 7.1 The Traffic Regulation Order will need to be amended to implement these changes.

## **8 Environmental Impact Implications (if any)**

- 8.1 The Parking Strategy sets out expectations in relation to reducing the impact of congestion and pollution. An action plan will need to be drawn up to achieve this. This will be done under separate cover.

## **9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications (if any)**

- 9.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

## **10 Equality and Diversity Implications (if any)**

- 10.1 The Car Parking Strategy and associated action plan outline the provision for particular users.
- 10.2 It should be noted that the 'free hour' currently offered may no longer be available in Pay on Foot car parks. This affects 39 of the 79 designated Blue Badge spaces available. 20 of these are in the Orchard Shopping Centre which also houses Shopmobility. The free hour is a concession that it will take some customers with mobility issues longer to carry out some routine tasks. Further work is required to understand the demand profile in this area alongside ability to pay. This will be carried out as part of consultation to be undertaken for the wider VMS/Pay on Foot project. There remain 40 dedicated spaces that are not affected by this change and many of these spaces are central. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Whirligig car park is important for this purpose.

## **11 Social Value Implications (if any)**

- 11.1 The car parking strategy aims to identify measures to enhance safety and security and to enhance parking quality and customer experience.

## **12 Partnership Implications (if any)**

12.1 The changes identified here will have implications for the contract with NSL relating to enforcement of off street car parking. However, there are unlikely to be significant changes as a result.

**13 Health and Wellbeing Implications (if any)**

13.1 None

**14 Asset Management Implications (if any)**

14.1 None

**15 Consultation Implications (if any)**

15.1 None

**16 Recommendation(s)**

16.1 Adoption of the terms short and long stay car parks.

16.2 Approval of pricing option described above, which is cost neutral and provides the best all round solution, affecting the least number of users.

**Democratic Path:**

- **Scrutiny – No** (delete as appropriate)
- **Cabinet/Executive – No** (delete as appropriate)
- **Full Council – Yes** (delete as appropriate)

**Reporting Frequency :**  **Once only**    **Ad-hoc**    **Quarterly**

**Twice-yearly**    **Annually**

**List of Appendices (delete if not applicable)**

Appendix A	
Appendix B	
Appendix C	

**Contact Officers**

Name	Scott Weetch	Name	
Direct Dial	01823 219566	Direct Dial	
Email	s.weetch@tauntondeane.gov.uk	Email	

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Full Council – 22 February 2018

### Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy 2018/2019

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

Report Author: Andrew Stark, Interim Financial Services Manager

#### 1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the recommended strategy for managing the Council's cash resources including the approach to borrowing and investments. It also seeks the formal approval of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Annual Investment Strategy and MRP Policy which must be approved by Full Council by 31 March each year in line with regulations.
- 1.2 The Strategy has been prepared taking into account professional advice and information from the Council's treasury management advisor Arlingclose.
- 1.3 The Strategy continues to prioritise security and liquidity of cash over investment returns.
- 1.4 The Council currently holds £85.5m of loans, which relate solely to the HRA. This sum increased significantly in March 2012 when the Council took on £85.2m of loans through the introduction of HRA Self Financing and the abolition of the old Housing Subsidy system. General Fund borrowing may be required in 2018/19 to support new projects which have been approved in 2017/18 although Table 1 of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) suggests that this may be covered initially from internal funds.
- 1.5 The Council's investment balances, in the past 12 months, have ranged between £34.4 million and £55.4 million, this is expected to reduce in 2018/19 as more of the Capital Programme is delivered.
- 1.6 The Council's treasury management advisor, Arlingclose, has advised that their central case is for the UK Bank Rate to remain at 0.50% during 2018/19.

#### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Full Council approves the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS), Annual Investment Strategy and MRP Policy as included with this report.

2.2 Full Council approves the Prudential Indicators included within the TMSS which include limits for borrowing and investment.

2.3 Full Council approves the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy.

### 3 Risk Assessment

#### Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
The Treasury Management Strategy and associated policies are not approved by Full Council in advance of the new financial year and become outdated.	Possible (2)	Major (4)	Medium (8)
<i>The Treasury Management Strategy is approved by Full Council in March 2018 at the latest.</i>	<i>Rare (1)</i>	<i>Minor (2)</i>	<i>Low (2)</i>

#### Risk Scoring Matrix

Likelihood	5	Very Likely	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	Feasible	Low (3)	Low (6)	Medium (9)	Medium (12)	High (15)
	2	Slight	Low (2)	Low (4)	Low (6)	Medium (8)	Medium (10)
	1	Very Unlikely	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 some 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 Information

- 4.1 The Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS), Annual Investment Strategy (AIS) and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy are attached to this report. Due to the nature of the subject, and also in order to comply with both legislative and policy requirements, the documents contain a significant amount of technical detail and data.
- 4.2 The TMSS and related policies have been prepared taking into account the 2011 revised CIPFA Treasury Management in Public Services Code of Practice and Cross Sectorial Guidance Notes (“the Code”) and CLG Guidance on Local Government Investments (“the Guidance”).
- 4.3 CIPFA has also published its new 2017 editions of the *Treasury Management Code* and the *Prudential Code*. Here they list the changes since the 2011 editions, and offer guidance on producing the 2018/19 Treasury Management Strategy.
- 4.4 The key principles of the Code are as follows:
- Ensuring that public bodies put in place the necessary framework to ensure the effective management and control of treasury management activities;
  - That the framework clearly states that responsibility for treasury management lies within the organisation and that the Strategy states the appetite for risk;
  - That value for money and suitable performance measures should be reflected in the framework.
- 4.5 The Code also identifies four clauses to be adopted and these are as follows:
- The creation and maintenance of a policy statement and suitable treasury management practices which set out the means of achieving the policies and ensuring management and control;
  - The minimum reports (to the body that approves the budget) should be an annual strategy and plan prior to the start of the financial year, a mid-year review and an annual report after its close. A local council should ensure that its’ reporting enables those responsible for treasury management to effectively discharge their duties;
  - Details of delegated responsibility for implementation and monitoring of policies and for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions. For this Council the delegated person is the Section 151 Officer;

- Details of the body responsible for the scrutiny of treasury management strategy and policies. For this Council the delegated body is the Corporate Governance Committee.

4.6 The Council's finance officers have worked closely with Arlingclose, our treasury advisor, to consider the requirements of the Code and Guidance and determine the proposed TMSS, AIS and MRP Policy that ensure compliance and provide a set of 'rules' for the Council to follow in dealing with investments, borrowing and cash flow management.

4.7 The current core principles remain in place within the proposed TMSS for 2018/19, which is to prioritise security (avoiding loss of council funds) and liquidity (quick access to cash) over return (interest costs and income).

4.8 However the TMSS for 2018/19 continues to recognise the increasing risks due to the new regulations in respect of 'bail in' for banks. In response to this risk and the wider ongoing risks in the financial sector the treasury strategy continues to build in greater "diversification" – so that we will hold surplus funds in a wider range of investments/accounts i.e. we are spreading the risk. Table 2 within the TMSS sets this out in a useful summary.

## **5 Treasury Management Strategy Statement**

5.1 The proposed treasury strategy, investment strategy, prudential indicators are set out in the appendices to this report.

5.2 Council approves the strategy in advance of the new financial year and receives annual and mid-year reports, in accordance with the Code.

5.3 This Strategy is written in continuing challenging and uncertain economic times. The current economic outlook has several key treasury management implications:

- Investment returns are likely to remain relatively low during 2018/19
- With short-term borrowing interest rates currently much lower than long-term rates, it is likely to be more cost effective in the short-term to either use internal resources, or to borrow short-term
- The timing of any borrowing will need to be monitored carefully; there will remain a cost of carry – any borrowing undertaken that results in an increase in investments will incur a revenue loss between borrowing costs and investment returns.

5.4 This Strategy looks to reduce exposure to risk and volatility at this time of significant economic uncertainty by

- Considering security, liquidity and yield, in that order

- Considering alternative assessments of credit strength
- Spreading investments over a range of approved counterparties
- Only investing for longer periods to gain higher rates of return where there are acceptable levels of counterparty risk.

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

5.6 The Council's general fund capital financing requirement (CFR) for 2018/19 is £18.277m which is currently anticipated to be funded through internal borrowing.

5.7 The Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) CFR for 2018/19 is £101m which is currently funded through external borrowing of £82.5m plus internal borrowing of £18.5m. The Government sets a debt cap for the HRA which currently limits borrowing to £115.8m.

5.8 Attached to this report is the draft recommended full Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Annual Investment Strategy and MRP Policy.

5.9 The Council's current authorised borrowing limit is £220 million as specified in the TMSS.

5.10 It is important to emphasise that the operational boundary relates to controls surrounding the Council's treasury management activities, and is not in itself "approval to borrow" for capital purposes. Any plans to support capital investment through borrowing would come forward to Council for approval in line with the normal budget decision process, supported with appropriate business case(s).

## **6 Minimum Revenue Provision**

6.1 The proposed Minimum Revenue Provision Policy continues the policy approved for 2017/18. This is included in Appendix E.

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

7.1 The Council must approve and maintain appropriate treasury management arrangements to ensure good governance and stewardship of public resources, and to comply with relevant regulations and guidance.

## **8 Finance / Resource Implications**

8.1 The estimated costs and income of projected investment and borrowing requirements have been reflected in the Council's MTFP forecasts. The Council procures specialist treasury management advice to assist finance officers with advice and support to ensure robust treasury management arrangements are

delivered. Additionally, appropriate training is undertaken by staff. These costs are incorporated within existing budgets.

## **9 Legal Implications**

9.1 This report fulfils the Council's legal obligation under the *Local Government Act 2003* to have regard to both the CIPFA Code and the CLG Guidance.

9.2 In March 2012 the Council adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2011 Edition (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Council to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year.

9.3 In addition, the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) issued revised *Guidance on Local Authority Investments* in March 2010 that requires the Council to approve an investment strategy before the start of each financial year.

## **10 Environmental Impact Implications**

10.1 None

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

11.1 None.

## **12 Equalities and Diversity Implications**

12.1 None.

## **13 Social Value Implications**

13.1 None.

## **14 Partnership Implications**

14.1 None.

## **15 Health & Wellbeing Implications**

15.1 None.

## **16 Asset Management Implications**

16.1 None.

## 17 Consultation Implications

17.1 None.

## 18 Scrutiny Comments / Recommendation(s)

18.1 Corporate Scrutiny Committee noted the report and supported the recommendations to Executive and Full Council.

### Democratic Path:

- Corporate Scrutiny – 25 January 2018
- Executive – 8 February 2018
- Full Council – 22 February 2018

Reporting Frequency: Annual

### List of Appendices

Appendix A	Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy 2018/19
Appendix B	Arlingclose Economic and Interest Rate Forecast – November 2017
Appendix C	Existing Investment and Debt Portfolio Position
Appendix D	Prudential Indicators 2018/19
Appendix E	Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2018/19

### Contact Officers

Name	Andrew Stark	Name	Steve Plenty
Direct Dial	01823 356537	Direct Dial	01984 635217
Email	<a href="mailto:a.stark@tauntondeane.gov.uk">a.stark@tauntondeane.gov.uk</a>	Email	<a href="mailto:sjplenty@westsomerset.gov.uk">sjplenty@westsomerset.gov.uk</a>

## Taunton Deane Borough Council

### Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2018/19

#### Introduction

In February 2011 the Council adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2011 Edition* (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Council to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year. CIPFA consulted on changes to the Code in 2017, but has yet to publish a revised Code.

In addition, the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) issued revised *Guidance on Local Authority Investments* in March 2010 that requires the Council to approve an investment strategy before the start of each financial year.

This report fulfils the Council's legal obligation under the *Local Government Act 2003* to have regard to both the CIPFA Code and the CLG Guidance.

The Council has borrowed and invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk are therefore central to the Council's treasury management strategy.

**Revised strategy:** In accordance with the CLG Guidance, the Council will be asked to approve a revised Treasury Management Strategy Statement should the assumptions on which this report is based change significantly. Such circumstances would include, for example, a large unexpected change in interest rates, in the Council's capital programme or in the level of its investment balance.

#### External Context

**Economic background:** The major external influence on the Authority's treasury management strategy for 2018/19 will be the UK's progress in negotiating its exit from the European Union and agreeing future trading arrangements. The domestic economy has remained relatively robust since the surprise outcome of the 2016 referendum, but there are indications that uncertainty over the future is now weighing on growth. Transitional arrangements may prevent a cliff-edge, but will also extend the period of uncertainty for several years. Economic growth is therefore forecast to remain sluggish throughout 2018/19.

Consumer price inflation reached 3.0% in September 2017 as the post-referendum devaluation of sterling continued to feed through to imports. Unemployment continued

to fall and the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee judged that the extent of spare capacity in the economy seemed limited and the pace at which the economy can grow without generating inflationary pressure had fallen over recent years. With its inflation-control mandate in mind, the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee raised official interest rates to 0.5% in November 2017.

In contrast, the US economy is performing well and the Federal Reserve is raising interest rates in regular steps to remove some of the emergency monetary stimulus it has provided for the past decade. The European Central Bank is yet to raise rates, but has started to taper its quantitative easing programme, signalling some confidence in the Eurozone economy.

**Credit outlook:** High profile bank failures in Italy and Portugal have reinforced concerns over the health of the European banking sector. Sluggish economies and fines for pre-crisis behaviour continue to weigh on bank profits, and any future economic slowdown will exacerbate concerns in this regard.

Bail-in legislation, which ensures that large investors including local authorities will rescue failing banks instead of taxpayers in the future, has now been fully implemented in the European Union, Switzerland and USA, while Australia and Canada are progressing with their own plans. In addition, the largest UK banks will ring-fence their retail banking functions into separate legal entities during 2018. There remains some uncertainty over how these changes will impact upon the credit strength of the residual legal entities.

The credit risk associated with making unsecured bank deposits has therefore increased relative to the risk of other investment options available to the Authority; returns from cash deposits however remain very low.

**Interest rate forecast:** The Authority's treasury adviser Arlingclose's central case is for UK Bank Rate to remain at 0.50% during 2018/19, following the rise from the historic low of 0.25%. The Monetary Policy Committee re-emphasised that any prospective increases in Bank Rate would be expected to be at a gradual pace and to a limited extent.

Future expectations for higher short term interest rates are subdued and on-going decisions remain data dependant and negotiations on exiting the EU cast a shadow over monetary policy decisions. The risks to Arlingclose's forecast are broadly balanced on both sides. The Arlingclose central case is for gilt yields to remain broadly stable across the medium term. Upward movement will be limited, although the UK government's seemingly deteriorating fiscal stance is an upside risk.

A more detailed economic and interest rate forecast provided by Arlingclose is attached at **Appendix A**.

## Local Context

On 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017 the Council held £89.5m of borrowing and £49.7m of investments. This is set out in further detail at **Appendix B**. Forecast changes in these sums are shown in the balance sheet analysis in table 1 below.

**Table 1: Balance sheet summary and forecast**

	<b>31.3.17 Actual £000</b>	<b>31.3.18 Estimate £000</b>	<b>31.3.19 Forecast £000</b>	<b>31.3.20 Forecast £000</b>	<b>31.3.21 Forecast £000</b>
General Fund CFR	7,283	7,048	18,277	17,858	17,458
HRA CFR	104,371	102,550	100,729	98,908	97,087
Total CFR	111,654	109,598	119,006	116,766	114,545
Less: External Borrowing *	(89,500)	(85,500)	(82,500)	(79,000)	(75,500)
<b>Gross Borrowing Requirement/Internal Borrowing</b>	22,154	24,098	36,506	37,766	39,045
Less: Usable Reserves	46,398	42,859	44,122	45,045	48,400
<b>Net Borrowing Requirement/(Investments)</b>	(24,244)	(18,761)	(7,616)	(7,279)	(9,355)

\* shows only loans to which the Council is committed and excludes optional refinancing

The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital are the underlying resources available for investment. The Council's current strategy is to maintain borrowing and investments below their underlying levels, sometimes known as internal borrowing.

CIPFA's *Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities* recommends that the Council's total debt should be lower than its highest forecast CFR over the next three years. Table 1 shows that the Council expects to comply with this recommendation during 2018/19.

## Borrowing Strategy

The Council currently holds £89.5m of loans, as part of its strategy for funding previous years' capital programmes. This sum increased significantly in March 2012 when the Council took on £82.5m of loans through the introduction of Housing Revenue Account Self Financing and the abolition of the old Housing Subsidy system. The balance sheet forecast in table 1 shows that the Council does not expect to need to borrow externally in 2018/19. The Council may, however, borrow to pre-fund future years' requirements, providing this does not exceed the authorised limit for borrowing of £220m.



The Council's chief objective when borrowing money is to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving certainty of those costs over the period for which funds are required. The flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Council's long-term plans change is a secondary objective.

Given the significant cuts to public expenditure and in particular to local government funding, the Council's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio. With short-term interest rates currently much lower than long-term rates, it is likely to be more cost effective in the short-term to either use internal resources, or to borrow short-term loans instead.

By doing so, the Council is able to reduce net borrowing costs (despite foregone investment income) and reduce overall treasury risk. The benefits of internal borrowing will be monitored regularly against the potential for incurring additional costs by deferring borrowing into future years when long-term borrowing rates are forecast to rise modestly. Arlingclose will assist the Council with this 'cost of carry' and breakeven analysis. Its output may determine whether the Council borrows additional sums at long-term fixed rates in 2018/19 with a view to keeping future interest costs low, even if this causes additional cost in the short-term.

In addition, the Council may borrow short-term loans (normally for up to one month) to cover unplanned cash flow shortages.

**Sources of borrowing:** The approved sources of long-term and short-term borrowing are:

- Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) and any successor body
- Any institution approved for investments (see below)
- Any other bank or building society authorised to operate in the UK
- UK public and private sector pension funds (except Somerset Pension Fund)
- Capital market bond investors
- UK Municipal Bonds Agency plc and other special purpose companies created to enable local authority bond issues
- UK Local Authorities

In addition, capital finance may be raised by the following methods that are not borrowing, but may be classed as other debt liabilities:

- operating and finance leases
- hire purchase
- Private Finance Initiative
- sale and leaseback

The Council has previously raised the majority of its long-term borrowing from the PWLB but it continues to investigate other sources of finance, such as local authority loans and bank loans, which may be available at more favourable rates.

**Municipal Bonds Agency:** UK Municipal Bonds Agency plc was established in 2014 by the Local Government Association as an alternative to the PWLB. It plans to issue bonds on the capital markets and lend the proceeds to local authorities. This will be a more complicated source of finance than the PWLB for two reasons: borrowing authorities will be required to provide bond investors with a joint and several guarantee to refund their investment in the event that the agency is unable to for any reason; and there will be a lead time of several months between committing to borrow and knowing the interest rate payable. Any decision to borrow from the Agency will therefore be the subject of a separate report to Full Council.

**LOBOs:** The Council holds no LOBO (Lender's Option Borrower's Option) loans where the lender has the option to propose an increase in the interest rate at set dates, following which the Council has the option to either accept the new rate or to repay the loan at no additional cost. The Council will take the option to repay LOBO loans at no cost if it has the opportunity to do so.

**Short-term and variable rate loans:** These loans leave the Council exposed to the risk of short-term interest rate rises and are therefore subject to the limit on the net exposure to variable interest rates in the treasury management indicators below.

**Debt rescheduling:** The PWLB allows authorities to repay loans before maturity and either pay a premium or receive a discount according to a set formula based on current interest rates. Other lenders may also be prepared to negotiate premature redemption terms. The Council may take advantage of this and replace some loans with new loans, or repay loans without replacement, where this is expected to lead to an overall cost saving or a reduction in risk.

### **Investment Strategy**

The Council holds invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. In the past 12 months, the Council's investment balance has ranged between £34.449m and £55.371m this is expected to reduce in 2018/19 as more of the Capital Programme is delivered.

**Objectives:** Both the CIPFA Code and the CLG Guidance require the Council to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return, or yield. The Council's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income. Where balances are expected to be invested for more than one

year, the Council will aim to achieve a total return that is equal or higher than the prevailing rate of inflation, in order to maintain the spending power of the sum invested.

**Negative interest rates:** If the UK enters into a recession in 2018/19, there is a small chance that the Bank of England could set its Bank Rate at or below zero, which is likely to feed through to negative interest rates on all low risk, short-term investment options. This situation already exists in many other European countries. In this event, security will be measured as receiving the contractually agreed amount at maturity, even though this may be less than the amount originally invested.

**Strategy:** Given the increasing risk and very low returns from short-term unsecured bank investments, the Council aims to diversify into more secure and/or higher yielding asset classes during 2018/19. Less of the Council's surplus cash is now invested in short-term unsecured bank deposits, certificates of deposit and money market funds. This diversification will represent a continuation of our current investment strategy over the coming year.

**Approved counterparties:** The Council may invest its surplus funds with any of the counterparty types in table 2 below, subject to the cash limits (per counterparty) and the time limits shown.

**Table 2: Approved investment counterparties and limits**

<b>Credit rating</b>	<b>Banks unsecured</b>	<b>Banks secured</b>	<b>Government</b>	<b>Corporates</b>	<b>Registered Providers</b>
UK Govt	n/a	n/a	£ Unlimited 50 years	n/a	n/a
AAA	£3m 5 years	£6m 20 years	£6m 50 years	£3m 20 years	£3m 20 years
AA+	£3m 5 years	£6m 10 years	£6m 25 years	£3m 10 years	£3m 10 years
AA	£3m 4 years	£6m 5 years	£6m 15 years	£3m 5 years	£3m 10 years
AA-	£3m 3 years	£6m 4 years	£3m 10 years	£3m 4 years	£3m 10 years
A+	£3m 2 years	£6m 3 years	£3m 5 years	£3m 3 years	£3m 5 years
A	£3m 13 months	£6m 2 years	£3m 5 years	£3m 2 years	£3m 5 years
A-	£3m 6 months	£6m 13 months	£3m 5 years	£3m 13 months	£3m 5 years
BBB+	£1m 100 days	£3m 6 months	£1m 2 years	£1m 6 months	£1m 2 years
Unrated	£1m	n/a	£6m	£50k	£3m

	6 months		25 years	5 years	5 years
<b>Pooled funds</b>	Up to 50% of total investments limited to £6m each fund				

This table must be read in conjunction with the notes below

**Credit rating:** Investment limits are set by reference to the lowest published long-term credit rating from Fitch, Moody's or Standard & Poor's. Where available, the credit rating relevant to the specific investment or class of investment is used, otherwise the counterparty credit rating is used. However, investment decisions are never made solely based on credit ratings, and all other relevant factors including external advice will be taken into account.

**Banks unsecured:** Accounts, deposits, certificates of deposit and senior unsecured bonds with banks and building societies, other than multilateral development banks. These investments are subject to the risk of credit loss via a bail-in should the regulator determine that the bank is failing or likely to fail. See below for arrangements relating to operational bank accounts.

**Banks secured:** Covered bonds, reverse repurchase agreements and other collateralised arrangements with banks and building societies. These investments are secured on the bank's assets, which limits the potential losses in the unlikely event of insolvency, and means that they are exempt from bail-in. Where there is no investment specific credit rating, but the collateral upon which the investment is secured has a credit rating, the higher of the collateral credit rating and the counterparty credit rating will be used to determine cash and time limits. The combined secured and unsecured investments in any one bank will not exceed the cash limit for secured investments.

**Government:** Loans, bonds and bills issued or guaranteed by national governments, regional and local authorities and multilateral development banks. These investments are not subject to bail-in, and there is an insignificant risk of insolvency. Investments with the UK Central Government may be made in unlimited amounts for up to 50 years.

**Corporates:** Loans, bonds and commercial paper issued by companies other than banks and registered providers. These investments are not subject to bail-in, but are exposed to the risk of the company going insolvent. Loans to unrated companies will only be made either following an external credit assessment as part of a diversified pool in order to spread the risk widely.

**Registered providers:** Loans and bonds issued by, guaranteed by or secured on the assets of registered providers of social housing, formerly known as housing associations. These bodies are tightly regulated by the Homes and Communities Agency and, as providers of public services, they retain the likelihood of receiving government support if needed.

**Pooled funds:** Shares in diversified investment vehicles consisting of the any of the above investment types, plus equity shares and property. These funds have the advantage of providing wide diversification of investment risks, coupled with the services of a professional fund manager in return for a fee. Short-term Money Market Funds that offer same-day liquidity and very low or no volatility will be used as an alternative to instant access bank accounts, while pooled funds whose value changes with market prices and/or have a notice period will be used for longer investment periods.

Bond, equity and property funds offer enhanced returns over the longer term, but are more volatile in the short term. These allow the Council to diversify into asset classes other than cash without the need to own and manage the underlying investments. Because these funds have no defined maturity date, but are available for withdrawal after a notice period, their performance and continued suitability in meeting the Council's investment objectives will be monitored regularly.

**Operational bank accounts:** The Council may incur operational exposures, for example through current accounts, collection accounts and merchant acquiring services, to any UK bank with credit ratings no lower than BBB- and with assets greater than £25 billion. These are not classed as investments, but are still subject to the risk of a bank bail-in. The Council uses Natwest as its operational bank, which has a current rating of BBB+. With this in mind balances held overnight will therefore not exceed £500k. The Bank of England has stated that in the event of failure, banks with assets greater than £25 billion are more likely to be bailed-in than made insolvent, increasing the chance of the Council maintaining operational continuity.

**Risk assessment and credit ratings:** Credit ratings are obtained and monitored by the Council's treasury advisers, who will notify changes in ratings as they occur. Where an entity has its credit rating downgraded so that it fails to meet the approved investment criteria then:

- no new investments will be made,
- any existing investments that can be recalled or sold at no cost will be, and
- full consideration will be given to the recall or sale of all other existing investments with the affected counterparty.

Where a credit rating agency announces that a credit rating is on review for possible downgrade (also known as "rating watch negative" or "credit watch negative") so that it may fall below the approved rating criteria, then only investments that can be withdrawn on the next working day will be made with that organisation until the outcome of the review is announced. This policy will not apply to negative outlooks, which indicate a long-term direction of travel rather than an imminent change of rating.

**Other information on the security of investments:** The Council understands that credit ratings are good, but not perfect, predictors of investment default. Full regard will

therefore be given to other available information on the credit quality of the organisations in which it invests, including credit default swap prices, financial statements, information on potential government support and reports in the quality financial press. No investments will be made with an organisation if there are substantive doubts about its credit quality, even though it may meet the credit rating criteria.

When deteriorating financial market conditions affect the creditworthiness of all organisations, as happened in 2008 and 2011, this is not generally reflected in credit ratings, but can be seen in other market measures. In these circumstances, the Council will restrict its investments to those organisations of higher credit quality and reduce the maximum duration of its investments to maintain the required level of security. The extent of these restrictions will be in line with prevailing financial market conditions. If these restrictions mean that insufficient commercial organisations of high credit quality are available to invest the Council's cash balances, then the surplus will be deposited with the UK Government, via the Debt Management Office or invested in government treasury bills for example, or with other local authorities. This will cause a reduction in the level of investment income earned, but will protect the principal sum invested.

**Specified investments:** The CLG Guidance defines specified investments as those:

- denominated in pound sterling,
- due to be repaid within 12 months of arrangement,
- not defined as capital expenditure by legislation, and
- invested with one of:
  - the UK Government,
  - a UK local authority, parish council or community council, or
  - a body or investment scheme of “high credit quality”.

The Council defines “high credit quality” organisations and securities as those having a credit rating of A- or higher that are domiciled in the UK or a foreign country with a sovereign rating of AA+ or higher. For money market funds and other pooled funds “high credit quality” is defined as those having a credit rating of A- or higher.

**Non-specified investments:** Any investment not meeting the definition of a specified investment is classed as non-specified. The Council does not intend to make any investments denominated in foreign currencies, nor any that are defined as capital expenditure by legislation, such as company shares. Non-specified investments will therefore be limited to long-term investments, i.e. those that are due to mature 12 months or longer from the date of arrangement, and investments with bodies and schemes not meeting the definition on high credit quality. Limits on non-specified investments are shown in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Non-specified investment limits**

	<b>Cash limit</b>
Total long-term investments	£20m
Total investments without credit ratings or rated below BBB+	£10m
Total non-specified investments	£30m

**Investment limits:** The Council's General Fund revenue reserves available to cover investment losses are forecast to be £42.859m on 31st March 2018. In order that no more than 25% of available reserves will be put at risk in the case of a single default, the maximum that will be lent to any one organisation (other than the UK Government) will be £6m. A group of banks under the same ownership will be treated as a single organisation for limit purposes. Limits will also be placed on fund managers, investments in brokers' nominee accounts (e.g. King & Shaxon), foreign countries and industry sectors as below. Investments in pooled funds and multilateral development banks do not count against the limit for any single foreign country, since the risk is diversified over many countries.

**Table 4: Investment limits**

	<b>Cash limit</b>
Any single organisation, except the UK Central Government	£6m each
UK Central Government	Unlimited
Any group of organisations under the same ownership	£6m per group
Any group of pooled funds under the same management	£15m per manager
Negotiable instruments held in a broker's nominee account	£20m per broker
Foreign countries	£6m per country
Registered providers	£14m in total
Loans to unrated corporates	£6m in total
Money Market Funds	£28m in total

**Liquidity management:** The Council uses a spreadsheet which details the Council's cash flow on a daily basis to determine the maximum period for which funds may prudently be committed. The forecast is compiled on a prudent basis to minimise the risk of the Council being forced to borrow on unfavourable terms to meet its financial commitments. Limits on long-term investments are set by reference to the Council's medium term financial plan and cash flow forecast.

## **Non-Treasury Investments**

Although not classed as treasury management activities and therefore not covered by the CIPFA Code or the CLG Guidance, the Council may also purchase property for investment purposes and may also make loans and investments for service purposes, for example in shared ownership housing, as loans to local businesses and landlords, or as equity investments and loans to the Council's subsidiaries.

Such loans and investments will be subject to the Council's normal approval processes for revenue and capital expenditure and need not comply with this treasury management strategy.

## **Treasury Management Indicators**

The Council measures and manages its exposures to treasury management risks using the following indicators.

**Security:** The Council has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to credit risk by monitoring the value-weighted average credit rating of its investment portfolio. This is calculated by applying a score to each investment (AAA=1, AA+=2, etc.) and taking the arithmetic average, weighted by the size of each investment. Unrated investments are assigned a score based on their perceived risk.

	<b>Target</b>
Portfolio average credit rating	A-

**Liquidity:** The Council has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to liquidity risk by monitoring the amount of cash available to meet unexpected payments within a rolling three month period, without additional borrowing.

	<b>Target</b>
Total cash available within 3 months	£6m

**Interest rate exposures:** This indicator is set to control the Council's exposure to interest rate risk. The upper limits on fixed and variable rate interest rate exposures, expressed as the proportion of net principal borrowed will be:

	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>
Upper limit on fixed interest rate exposure	100%	100%	100%
Upper limit on variable interest rate exposure	100%	100%	100%

Fixed rate investments and borrowings are those where the rate of interest is fixed for at least 12 months, measured from the start of the financial year or the transaction date if later. All other instruments are classed as variable rate.



**Maturity structure of borrowing:** This indicator is set to control the Council’s exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing will be:

	<b>Upper</b>	<b>Lower</b>
Under 12 months	50%	0%
12 months and within 24 months	50%	0%
24 months and within 5 years	50%	0%
5 years and within 10 years	75%	0%
10 years and within 20 years	100%	0%
20 years and within 30 years	100%	0%
30 years and within 40 years	100%	0%
40 years and within 50 years	100%	0%
50 years and above	100%	0%

Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment.

**Principal sums invested for periods longer than 364 days:** The purpose of this indicator is to control the Council’s exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The limits on the long-term principal sum invested to final maturities beyond the period end will be:

	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£30m	£30m	£30m

### **Other Items**

There are a number of additional items that the Council is obliged by CIPFA or CLG to include in its Treasury Management Strategy.

**Policy on the use of financial derivatives:** Local authorities have previously made use of financial derivatives embedded into loans and investments both to reduce interest rate risk (e.g. interest rate collars and forward deals) and to reduce costs or increase income at the expense of greater risk (e.g. LOBO loans and callable deposits). The general power of competence in Section 1 of the *Localism Act 2011* removes much of the uncertainty over local authorities’ use of standalone financial derivatives (i.e. those that are not embedded into a loan or investment).

The Council will only use standalone financial derivatives (such as swaps, forwards, futures and options) where they can be clearly demonstrated to reduce the overall level of the financial risks that the Council is exposed to. Additional risks presented, such as credit exposure to derivative counterparties, will be taken into account when

determining the overall level of risk. Embedded derivatives, including those present in pooled funds and forward starting transactions, will not be subject to this policy, although the risks they present will be managed in line with the overall treasury risk management strategy.

Financial derivative transactions may be arranged with any organisation that meets the approved investment criteria. The current value of any amount due from a derivative counterparty will count against the counterparty credit limit and the relevant foreign country limit.

**Policy on apportioning interest to the HRA:** On 1st April 2012, the Council notionally split each of its existing long-term loans into General Fund and HRA pools. In the future, new long-term loans borrowed will be assigned in their entirety to one pool or the other. Interest payable and other costs/income arising from long-term loans (e.g. premiums and discounts on early redemption) will be charged/ credited to the respective revenue account. Differences between the value of the HRA loans pool and the HRA's underlying need to borrow (adjusted for HRA balance sheet resources available for investment) will result in a notional cash balance which may be positive or negative. This balance will be measured each month and interest transferred between the General Fund and HRA at the Council's average interest rate on investments, adjusted for credit risk.

**Investment training:** The needs of the Council's treasury management staff for training in investment management are assessed regularly as part of the staff appraisal process, and additionally when the responsibilities of individual members of staff change.

Staff regularly attend training courses, seminars and conferences provided by Arlingclose and CIPFA.

**Investment advisers:** The Council has appointed Arlingclose Limited as treasury management advisers and receives specific advice on investment, debt and capital finance issues. The quality of this service is controlled by holding quarterly meetings and tendering periodically. The last tender was completed in March 2013.

**Investment of money borrowed in advance of need:** The Council may, from time to time, borrow in advance of need, where this is expected to provide the best long-term value for money. Since amounts borrowed will be invested until spent, the Council is aware that it will be exposed to the risk of loss of the borrowed sums, and the risk that investment and borrowing interest rates may change in the intervening period. These risks will be managed as part of the Council's overall management of its treasury risks.

The total amount borrowed will not exceed the authorised borrowing limit of £220m. The maximum period between borrowing and expenditure is expected to be two years,

although the Council is not required to link particular loans with particular items of expenditure.

### **Financial Implications**

The budget for investment income in 2018/19 is £0.746m (General Fund = £0.614m, HRA = £0.132m). The budget for debt interest to be paid in 2018/19 is £2.912m (General Fund = £0.170m, HRA = £2.742m). If actual levels of investments and borrowing, and actual interest rates differ from those forecast, performance against budget will be correspondingly different.

### **Other Options Considered**

The CLG Guidance and the CIPFA Code do not prescribe any particular treasury management strategy for local authorities to adopt. The Assistant Director – Strategic Finance and S151 Officer, believes that the above strategy represents an appropriate balance between risk management and cost effectiveness. Some alternative strategies, with their financial and risk management implications, are listed below.

<b>Alternative</b>	<b>Impact on income and expenditure</b>	<b>Impact on risk management</b>
Invest in a narrower range of counterparties and/or for shorter times	Interest income will be lower	Lower chance of losses from credit related defaults, but any such losses may be greater
Invest in a wider range of counterparties and/or for longer times	Interest income will be higher	Increased risk of losses from credit related defaults, but any such losses may be smaller
Borrow additional sums at long-term fixed interest rates	Debt interest costs will rise; this is unlikely to be offset by higher investment income	Higher investment balance leading to a higher impact in the event of a default; however long-term interest costs may be more certain
Borrow short-term or variable loans instead of long-term fixed rates	Debt interest costs will initially be lower	Increases in debt interest costs will be broadly offset by rising investment income in the medium term, but long-term costs may be less certain
Reduce level of borrowing	Saving on debt interest is likely to exceed lost investment income	Reduced investment balance leading to a lower impact in the event of a default; however long-term interest costs may be less certain

### Arlingclose Economic & Interest Rate Forecast November 2017

#### Underlying assumptions:

- In a 7-2 vote, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) increased Bank Rate in line with market expectations to 0.5%. Dovish accompanying rhetoric prompted investors to lower the expected future path for interest rates. The minutes re-emphasised that any prospective increases in Bank Rate would be expected to be at a gradual pace and to a limited extent.
- Further potential movement in Bank Rate is reliant on economic data and the likely outcome of the EU negotiations. Policymakers have downwardly assessed the supply capacity of the UK economy, suggesting inflationary growth is more likely. However, the MPC will be wary of raising rates much further amid low business and household confidence.
- The UK economy faces a challenging outlook as the minority government continues to negotiate the country's exit from the European Union. While recent economic data has improved, it has done so from a low base: UK Q3 2017 GDP growth was 0.4%, after a 0.3% expansion in Q2.
- Household consumption growth, the driver of recent UK GDP growth, has softened following a contraction in real wages, despite both saving rates and consumer credit volumes indicating that some households continue to spend in the absence of wage growth. Policymakers have expressed concern about the continued expansion of consumer credit; any action taken will further dampen household spending.
- Some data has held up better than expected, with unemployment continuing to decline and house prices remaining relatively resilient. However, both of these factors can also be seen in a negative light, displaying the structural lack of investment in the UK economy post financial crisis. Weaker long term growth may prompt deterioration in the UK's fiscal position.
- The depreciation in sterling may assist the economy to rebalance away from spending. Export volumes will increase, helped by a stronger Eurozone economic expansion.
- Near-term global growth prospects have continued to improve and broaden, and expectations of inflation are subdued. Central banks are moving to reduce the level of monetary stimulus.

- Geo-political risks remains elevated and helps to anchor safe-haven flows into the UK government bond (gilt) market.

**Forecast:**

- The MPC has increased Bank Rate, largely to meet expectations they themselves created. Future expectations for higher short term interest rates are subdued. On-going decisions remain data dependant and negotiations on exiting the EU cast a shadow over monetary policy decisions.
- Our central case for Bank Rate is 0.5% over the medium term. The risks to the forecast are broadly balanced on both sides.
- The Arlingclose central case is for gilt yields to remain broadly stable across the medium term. Upward movement will be limited, although the UK government's seemingly deteriorating fiscal stance is an upside risk.

	Dec-17	Mar-18	Jun-18	Sep-18	Dec-18	Mar-19	Jun-19	Sep-19	Dec-19	Mar-20	Jun-20	Sep-20	Dec-20	Average
<b>Official Bank Rate</b>														
Upside risk	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.19
Arlingclose Central Case	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
Downside risk	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.15
<b>3-month LIBID rate</b>														
Upside risk	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.22
Arlingclose Central Case	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
Downside risk	-0.10	-0.10	-0.15	-0.15	-0.15	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.20
<b>1-yr LIBID rate</b>														
Upside risk	0.15	0.15	0.20	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.27
Arlingclose Central Case	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.77
Downside risk	-0.15	-0.20	-0.30	-0.30	-0.30	-0.30	-0.30	-0.30	-0.30	-0.30	-0.30	-0.15	-0.15	-0.26
<b>5-yr gilt yield</b>														
Upside risk	0.20	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.30	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.40	0.32
Arlingclose Central Case	0.75	0.75	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.85	0.90	0.90	0.95	0.95	1.00	1.05	1.10	0.89
Downside risk	-0.20	-0.20	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.35	-0.40	-0.40	-0.40	-0.40	-0.40	-0.40	-0.40	-0.33
<b>10-yr gilt yield</b>														
Upside risk	0.20	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.30	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.40	0.32
Arlingclose Central Case	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.30	1.30	1.35	1.40	1.45	1.50	1.55	1.55	1.36
Downside risk	-0.20	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.30	-0.35	-0.40	-0.40	-0.40	-0.40	-0.40	-0.40	-0.33
<b>20-yr gilt yield</b>														
Upside risk	0.20	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.30	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.40	0.32
Arlingclose Central Case	1.85	1.85	1.85	1.85	1.85	1.90	1.90	1.95	1.95	2.00	2.05	2.05	2.05	1.93
Downside risk	-0.20	-0.30	-0.25	-0.25	-0.30	-0.35	-0.40	-0.45	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.38
<b>50-yr gilt yield</b>														
Upside risk	0.20	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.30	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.40	0.32
Arlingclose Central Case	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.75	1.80	1.85	1.90	1.95	1.95	1.95	1.95	1.82
Downside risk	-0.30	-0.30	-0.25	-0.25	-0.30	-0.35	-0.40	-0.45	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.39

## Existing Investment &amp; Debt Portfolio Position

	31/12/2017 Actual Portfolio £000	31/12/2017 Average Rate %
<b>External borrowing:</b>		
PWLB – Fixed Rate	81,500	3.48
PWLB – Variable Rate	5,000	0.45
LOBO Fixed Rate Loans	3,000	4.25
<b>Total External Borrowing</b>	<b>89,500</b>	<b>3.20</b>
<b>Treasury investments:</b>		
Short Term	42,504	0.68
Long Term	7,191	3.13
<b>Total treasury Investments</b>	<b>49,695</b>	<b>1.02</b>
<b>Net Debt</b>	<b>39,805</b>	

## Prudential Indicators 2018/19

The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Council to have regard to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities* (the Prudential Code) when determining how much money it can afford to borrow. The objectives of the Prudential Code are to ensure, within a clear framework, that the capital investment plans of local authorities are affordable, prudent and sustainable, and that treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with good professional practice. To demonstrate that the Council has fulfilled these objectives, the Prudential Code sets out the following indicators that must be set and monitored each year.

**Estimates of Capital Expenditure:** The Council's planned capital expenditure and financing may be summarised as follows:

<b>Capital Expenditure and Financing</b>	<b>2017/18 Revised £000</b>	<b>2018/19 Estimate £000</b>	<b>2019/20 Estimate £000</b>	<b>2020/21 Estimate £000</b>
General Fund	36,172	<b>3,622</b>	4,945	4,985
HRA	18,759	<b>8,973</b>	9,616	9,748
<b>Total Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>54,931</b>	<b>12,595</b>	<b>14,561</b>	<b>14,733</b>
Capital Receipts	(3,036)	(859)		
Capital Grants	(2,531)	(935)		
Revenue Contributions	(1,818)	(217)	(6,115)	(6,185)
Borrowing	(22,549)			
Growth Reserve	(5,777)	(2,470)		
Capital Financing Reserve	(1,265)			
Social Housing Development Fund	(1,185)	(1,170)	(1,170)	(1,200)
Major Repairs Reserve	(16,770)	(6,944)	(7,276)	(7,348)
<b>Total Capital Financing</b>	<b>(54,931)</b>	<b>(12,595)</b>	<b>14,561</b>	<b>14,733</b>



**Estimates of Capital Financing Requirement:** The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) measures the Council's underlying need to borrow for a capital purpose.

<b>Capital Financing Requirement</b>	<b>31.03.18 Revised £000</b>	<b>31.03.19 Estimate £000</b>	<b>31.03.20 Estimate £000</b>	<b>31.03.21 Estimate £000</b>
General Fund	7,048	18,277	17,858	17,458
HRA	102,550	100,729	98,908	97,087
<b>Total CFR</b>	<b>109,598</b>	<b>119,006</b>	<b>116,766</b>	<b>114,545</b>

The CFR is forecast to increase over the next two years as capital expenditure financed by debt outweighs resources put aside for debt repayment.

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

<b>Debt</b>	<b>31.03.18 Revised £000</b>	<b>31.03.19 Estimate £000</b>	<b>31.03.20 Estimate £000</b>	<b>31.03.21 Estimate £000</b>
Borrowing	85,500	82,500	79,000	75,500
<b>Total Debt</b>	<b>85,500</b>	<b>82,500</b>	<b>79,000</b>	<b>75,500</b>

Total debt is expected to remain below the CFR during the forecast period.

**Operational Boundary for External Debt:** The operational boundary is based on the Council's estimate of most likely (i.e. prudent but not worst case) scenario for external debt. It links directly to the Council's estimates of capital expenditure, the capital financing requirement and cash flow requirements, and is a key management tool for in-year monitoring. Other long-term liabilities comprise finance lease, Private Finance Initiative and other liabilities that are not borrowing but form part of the Council's debt.

<b>Operational Boundary</b>	<b>2017/18 Revised £000</b>	<b>2018/19 Estimate £000</b>	<b>2019/20 Estimate £000</b>	<b>2020/21 Estimate £000</b>
Borrowing	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
<b>Total Debt</b>	<b>200,000</b>	<b>200,000</b>	<b>200,000</b>	<b>200,000</b>

**Authorised Limit for External Debt:** The authorised limit is the affordable borrowing limit determined in compliance with the Local Government Act 2003. It is the maximum amount of debt that the Council can legally owe. The authorised limit provides headroom over and above the operational boundary for unusual cash movements.

<b>Authorised Limit</b>	<b>2017/18 Limit £000</b>	<b>2018/19 Limit £000</b>	<b>2019/20 Limit £000</b>	<b>2020/21 Limit £000</b>
Borrowing	220,000	<b>220,000</b>	220,000	220,000
<b>Total Debt</b>	<b>220,000</b>	<b>220,000</b>	<b>220,000</b>	<b>220,000</b>

**Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream:** This is an indicator of affordability and highlights the revenue implications of existing and proposed capital expenditure by identifying the proportion of the revenue budget required to meet financing costs, net of investment income.

<b>Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream</b>	<b>2017/18 Revised %</b>	<b>2018/19 Estimate %</b>	<b>2019/20 Estimate %</b>	<b>2020/21 Estimate %</b>
General Fund	-0.98	-0.35	-0.39	-0.55
HRA	10.02%	9.94%	11.38%	10.92%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.04%</b>	<b>9.59%</b>	<b>10.99%</b>	<b>10.37%</b>

**Incremental Impact of Capital Investment Decisions:** This is an indicator of affordability that shows the impact of capital investment decisions on Council Tax and Housing Rent levels. The incremental impact is the difference between the total revenue budget requirement of the current approved capital programme and the revenue budget requirement arising from the capital programme proposed.

<b>Incremental Impact of Capital Investment Decisions</b>	<b>2018/19 Estimate £</b>	<b>2019/20 Estimate £</b>	<b>2020/21 Estimate £</b>
General Fund - increase in annual band D Council Tax	4.44	4.39	5.29
HRA - increase in average weekly rents	-0.82	1.17	1.00

**Adoption of the CIPFA Treasury Management Code:** The Council adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2011 Edition* in February 2011. It fully complies with the Codes recommendations.

### Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2018/19

Where the Council finances capital expenditure by debt, it must put aside resources to repay that debt in later years. The amount charged to the revenue budget for the repayment of debt is known as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), although there has been no statutory minimum since 2008. The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Council to have regard to the Department for Communities and Local Government's *Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision* (the CLG Guidance) most recently issued in 2012.

The broad aim of the CLG Guidance is to ensure that debt is repaid over a period that is either reasonably commensurate with that over which the capital expenditure provides benefits, or, in the case of borrowing supported by Government Revenue Support Grant, reasonably commensurate with the period implicit in the determination of that grant.

The CLG Guidance requires the Council to approve an Annual MRP Statement each year, and recommends a number of options for calculating a prudent amount of MRP.

The MRP methodology was reviewed in 2016/17 to ensure that our approach was appropriate for our financial stability and was robust and prudent for future capital expenditure.

The weighted average useful life approach was deemed to be the most prudent approach and took into consideration the materiality of each asset and its recorded remaining useful life. The weighted average was then applied to the class of asset then applied across the whole fixed asset base. That gave a robust basis to support the asset life applied to MRP calculations and be appropriate for audit scrutiny.

This base calculation will stay the same but any additional CFR is calculated separately and added to the MRP as a distinct calculation thus protecting the original calculation and adding to it where appropriate.

For capital expenditure loans to third parties that are repaid in annual or more frequent instalments of principal, the Council will make nil MRP, but will instead apply the capital receipts arising from principal repayments to reduce the capital financing requirement instead. In years where there is no principal repayment, MRP will be charged in accordance with the MRP policy for the assets funded by the loan.

A voluntary MRP will be charged in respect of assets held within the Housing Revenue Account.

Capital expenditure incurred during 2018/19 will not be subject to a MRP charge until 2019/20.

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Full Council – 22 February 2018

### General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Estimates 2018/2019

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

Report Author: Andrew Stark, Interim Financial Services Manager

#### 1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with the information required for Full Council to approve the proposed revenue budget and capital programme for 2018/19, and to approve its proposed Council Tax rate for 2018/19.
- 1.2 Details of the Provisional “Settlement Funding Assessment” for 2018/19 was announced by the Department of Communities and Local Government in late December 2017 and it was reported to Executive that the Final “Settlement Funding Assessment” was announced on 6 February 2018. The settlement included details regarding general revenue grant funding, New Homes Bonus, and business rates retention baseline and tariff. Overall the funding available to deliver services has reduced significantly in 2018/19:
  - a) General funding, Revenue Support has reduced by £365,013 (57%) whilst Rural Services Delivery Grant has increased by £5,483.
  - b) New Home Bonus funding has reduced by £470,176 (12%) but this is after a reduction of 0.4% of the growth figure and the reduction to legacy grant of 4 years (6 years in 2016/17, then 5 years in 2017/18).
  - c) Retained business rates estimates have increased by £554,259 (18.2%).

#### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is **recommended** that the General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for 2018/09 be agreed and that Full Council:-
  - (a) Notes the forecast Medium Term Financial Plan and Reserves position, and notes the Section 151 Officer’s Robustness Statement as set out in Appendix A of the report considered by the Executive;
  - (b) Approve the General Fund Net Revenue Budget 2018/19;
  - (c) Approve a Council Tax increase of 3.34%, increasing the Band D tax rate by £5 (on the non-SRA element) to £154.62 per year. This comprises £152.88 for services and £1.74 on behalf of the Somerset Rivers Authority;

- (d) Approve an increase to the Special Expenses Precept of 0.7% increasing the Band D rate from £3.00 to £3.02 for the unparished area of Taunton;
- (e) Approve that the minimum level of general reserves be increased to £1,700,000.
- (e) Approve the new capital schemes of the General Fund Capital Programme Budget of £3,796,711 for 2018/19.
- (f) Authority be delegated to the Section 151 Officer to approve adjustments to the 2018/19 Disabled Facilities Grant Capital Budget to reflect the final grant funding received from the Better Care Fund.

### 3 Risk Assessment

#### Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
Risk: The Council is unable to set a balanced budget	Slight (2)	Major (4)	Medium (8)
<i>Mitigation: Members approve options to balance the budget</i>	<i>Rare (1)</i>	<i>Major (4)</i>	<i>Low (4)</i>

#### Risk Scoring Matrix

<b>Likelihood</b>	5	Very Likely	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	Feasible	Low (3)	Low (6)	Medium (9)	Medium (12)	High (15)
	2	Slight	Low (2)	Low (4)	Low (6)	Medium (8)	Medium (10)
	1	Very Unlikely	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 Information

- 4.1 The General Fund Revenue Account is the Council's main fund and shows the income and expenditure relating to the provision of services which

residents, visitors and businesses all have access to including planning, environmental services, car parks, certain housing functions, community services and corporate services.

- 4.2 The Council directly charges individual consumers for some of its services through fees and charges. The expenditure that remains is mainly funded through a combination of local taxation (including council tax and a proportion of business rates) and through grant funding from Central Government (including Revenue Support Grant, New Homes Bonus and other non-ringfenced and specific grants/subsidy).
- 4.3 Each year the Council sets an annual budget which details the resources needed to meet operational requirements. The annual budget is prepared within the context of priorities identified by Members which are embedded in the Council's current Corporate Plan.
- 4.4 It has been well reported that the Council faces ongoing financial challenges, with a continuation of the annual reductions in Government funding for local council services as the Government seeks to reduce the national deficit.
- 4.5 Members have previously considered a range of important reports that provide background on the Council's financial position and the budget strategy for 2018/19.

## **5 Finance Settlement 2018/19**

- 5.1 The Final Settlement was confirmed on 6 February 2018, and is reflected in the content of this report and the proposed budget.

## **6 Fair Funding Review**

- 6.1 Alongside the local government finance settlement, the Government confirmed that it is looking to implement the Fair Funding Review in April 2020 and published the consultation: Fair funding review: a review of relative needs and resources.
- 6.2 This consultation focuses specifically on potential approaches that have been identified to measure the relative needs of local authorities.
- 6.3 In particular, it:
  - presents the idea of using a simple foundation formula to measure the relative needs of local authorities, based on a small number of common cost driver;
  - considers a number of service areas where in addition, a more sophisticated approach to measuring relative needs may potentially be required;
  - outlines the statistical techniques that could be used to construct relative needs.
- 6.4 The consultation does not cover the relative resources adjustment, transition or other technical matters, which will be subject to a later series of

consultation.

## 7 General Grant Funding

7.1 The grant funding from Government is in line with the confirmed multi-year settlement (2016/17 to 2019/20), with the expected reduction in 2018/19 of RSG but with an unexpected small increase in RSDG included in the Final Settlement. Overall a 55% reduction in general revenue grant funding:

7.2

Table 1 – General Government Grant

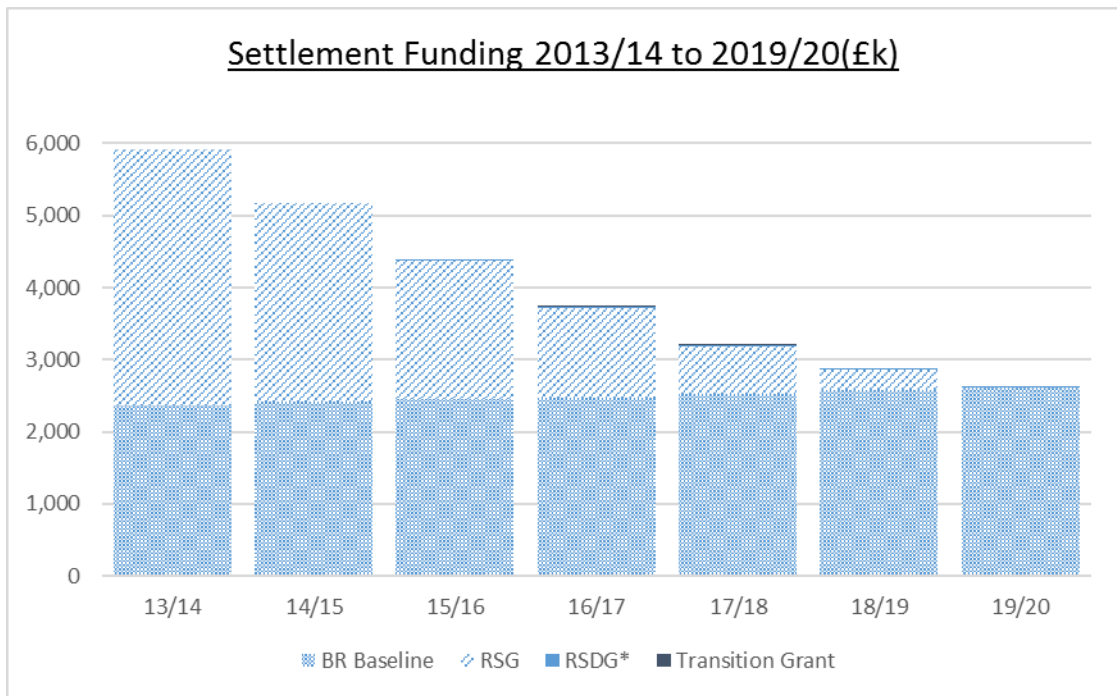
	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	Change £	
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	644,801	279,788	-365,013	-48%
Rural Services Delivery Grant (RSDG)	22,271	27,754	5,483	+25%
Transition Grant	16,864	0	-16,864	-100%
<b>Total General Revenue Grant Funding</b>	<b>683,936</b>	<b>307,542</b>	<b>-376,394</b>	<b>-55%</b>

7.3 The multi-year settlement includes further reductions in subsequent years. The following table summarises how these grants are projected to reduce since 2013/14, followed by a graph that clearly demonstrates the downward trend in the Council's Settlement Funding Assessment. During this period the Settlement reduces by 55% in cash terms (estimated 61% in real terms).

Table 2 – Settlement Funding

	13/14 £k	14/15 £k	15/16 £k	16/17 £k	17/18 £k	18/19 £k	19/20 £k
RSG	3,556	2,766	1,911	1,235	645	280	0
RSDG*	0*	0*	5	28	22	28	22
Transition Grant	0	0	0	17	17	0	0
BR Baseline	2,366	2,412	2,458	2,478	2,529	2,605	2,665
<b>Govt Settlement</b>	<b>5,922</b>	<b>5,178</b>	<b>4,374</b>	<b>3,758</b>	<b>3,213</b>	<b>2,913</b>	<b>2,687</b>

\*Incorporated within RSG prior to 2015/16, with amount not separately identified within Settlement information.



## 8 Business Rates Retention and 100% Business Rates Pilot Bid

- 8.1 Following an invitation from Central Government on 1 September for local authorities to bid to become a 100% Business Rates Retention Pilot, we submitted a bid with the County Council and our other Somerset district partners. There were 27 bids to become new pilot areas. The Government has selected 10 in total for 2018/19 which unfortunately did not include the Somerset bid.
- 8.2 Despite not being selected as a pilot for 100% retention, the Government have approved the formation of a new Somerset Business Rates Pool under the current 50% retention scheme. This provides potential benefits which accrue from the mixture of tariff and top-up authorities from the lower and upper tiers, resulting in a lower levy rate for the Pool.
- 8.3 From initial estimates the potential gain is forecast in the region of £100k to £200k. We are confident that the potential gains far outweigh the risk of being in a pool, but prudently we have not factored any gain into budget at this stage and will monitor carefully during the year.
- 8.4 The Final Settlement has confirmed the baseline and tariffs for 2018/19 (and the adjusted tariff for 2017/18).
- 8.5 The final estimates for Business Rates Collection Fund Net Rates Income is summarised in the table below.



Table 3a Collection Fund Rating Income Estimate 2018/19

	£k
Net Rates Payable (after reliefs)	42,247
Transitional Protection Payments	-1,175
Less: Allowance for bad debts	-400
Less: Allowance for appeals	-2,280
<b>Collectible Rates</b>	<b>38,392</b>
Less: Costs of Collection	-173
Less: Disregarded amounts: Renewable Energy	-171
<b>Non-Domestic Rating Income</b>	<b>38,048</b>
<b>TDBC 40% Share of NDR Income</b>	<b>15,219</b>

8.6 A summary of the new Retained Funding figure is shown in the table below:

Table 3b – Business Rates Retention Estimates

<b>Business Rates Retention Funding Estimates</b>	<b>2017/18 Budget £</b>	<b>2018/19 Estimate £</b>	<b>2019/20 Estimate £</b>
40% Standard Share of Business Rates Yield	14,817,804	15,219,065	15,567,120
Rates yield from renewable energy schemes	152,400	170,686	174,589
Tariff to Government	-12,262,201	-12,780,393	-13,073,180
Tariff Adjustment – Negative RSG			-127,940
Levy Payment	-345,337	-374,614	-383,186
Safety Net Income	0	0	0
S31 Grant funding for Reliefs	675,620	1,358,301	1,306,572
<b>Net Retained Business Rates Funding</b>	<b>3,038,286</b>	<b>3,592,545</b>	<b>3,463,975</b>
Net Retained B Rates Funding as % of yield	8.2%	9.4%	8.9%

## 9 New Homes Bonus

9.1 The New Homes Bonus (NHB) Grant system has been in place since 2011/12. It is funding allocated by Government, separate to Revenue Support Grant and Business Rates, which incentivises and rewards housing growth. The NHB grant is non-ringfenced which means the Council is free to decide how to use it. The original scheme design set out that each year's Grant allocation would be payable for six years. We only use £392k of our NHB allocations each year towards the revenue budget for services. The remaining grant is allocated to our Growth Earmarked Reserve.

9.2 The confirmed NHB Grant for 2018/19 is £3,564,556, which is £470,176 or 12% less than 2017/18. Whilst this is a reduction, it is above our initial budget estimates which is good news for our growth aspirations.

Table 4 – New Homes Bonus 2018/19

	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	Change £	
New Homes Bonus Grant	4,034,732	3,564,556	-470,176	-12%

9.3 The Government has not revised the changes to the New Homes Bonus

methodology that was announced in 2017/18. The growth baseline remains at 0.4%, which sees a “top-slice” for growth which does not attract any NHB grant. In addition to the top-slice the Government has confirmed that the legacy amounts included in the annual grant allocation has reduced to 4 years from 2018/19 (was 6 years in 2016/17, then 5 years in 2017/18).

- 9.4 The impact of this growth baseline is significant. The actual growth in Band D equivalents in 2017 was 762 or 1.55%. The impact is summarised within the following breakdown of the grant allocation related to 2018/19:

Table 5 – New Homes Bonus 2018/19 Calculation

Net Additions (October 2016 to October 2017)	730
Net decrease in empty homes	68
Net housing growth	798
Net housing growth weighted as Band D equivalents (=1.55%)	762
0.4% of October 2016 stock base – Band D equivalents	-196.7
Rewarded units =1.15% growth – Band D equivalents	565.3
NHB Grant for growth (£1,590.55* x 80%** x 565.3)	£719,305
Affordable housing units growth (April 2016 to March 2017)	285
NHB Grant for affordable housing growth (£350 x 80%** x 285)	£79,800
<b>Total NHB Grant allocation related to 2018/19</b>	<b>£799,105</b>

\*£1,590.55 = the national average Band D council tax for 2017/18

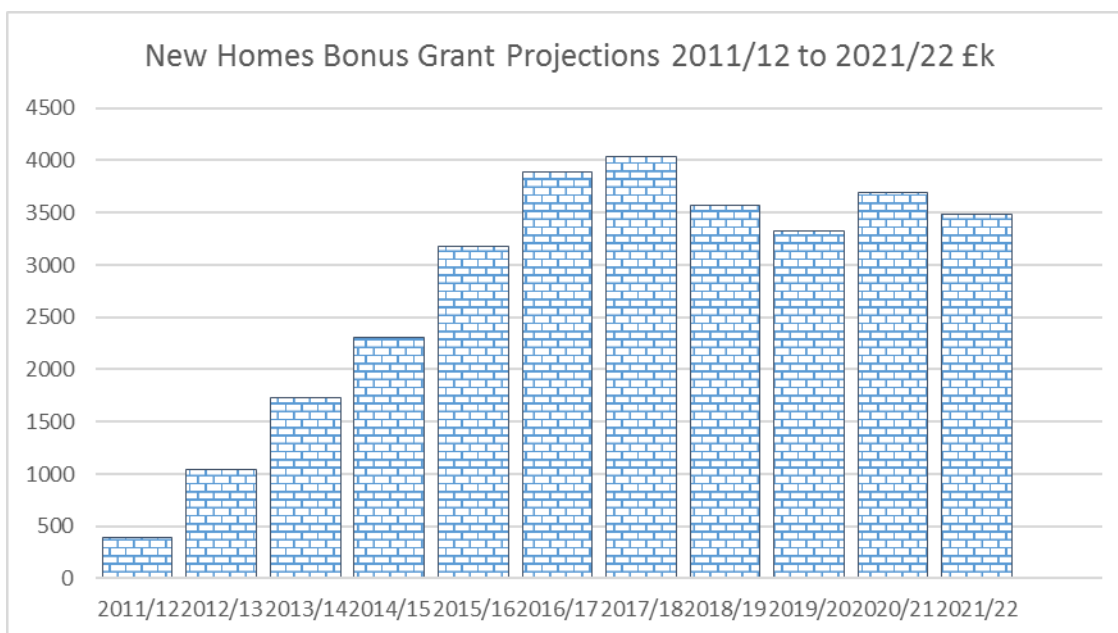
\*\*growth is rewarded 80% to lower tier (District), 20% to upper tier (County)

- 9.5 As this shows, housing growth (net of new housing, demolitions and increase/decrease in empty homes) of 196.7 Band D equivalents has not been rewarded in 2018/19. This has resulted in a loss of funding of approximately **£250,289** as a result of the top-slice for 0.4% growth.
- 9.6 The following table and graph summarises the historic allocations of NHB and the MTFP forecast up to 2021/22. The indicative trend indicates this grant peaked in 2017/18, however indicative growth forecasts suggest that the level is fairly static in future years, assuming the terms of the scheme are not changed.

Table 6 – New Homes Bonus Grant Forecast

	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	Totals
	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k
2011/12	392	392	392	392	392	392						2,352
2012/13		648	648	648	648	648						3,240
2013/14			687	687	687	687	687					3,435
2014/15				576	576	576	576					2,304
2015/16					876	876	876	876				3,504
2016/17						705	699	699	699			2,802
2017/18							1,197	1,191	1,191	1,191		4,770
2018/19								799	799	799	799	3,196
2019/20									640	640	640	1,920
2020/21										1,064	1,064	2,128
2021/22											976	976
<b>Total</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>1,040</b>	<b>1,727</b>	<b>2,303</b>	<b>3,179</b>	<b>3,884</b>	<b>4,035</b>	<b>3,565</b>	<b>3,329</b>	<b>3,694</b>	<b>3,479</b>	<b>30,627</b>

9.7 Despite the reduction in the level of “reward” for housing growth, the growth trajectory indicates that funding through NHB should remain considerable.



## 10 Council Tax

- 10.1 The Secretary of State has confirmed within the Provisional Settlement that Shire Districts are able to increase council tax by the greater of 2.99% or £5 (on a Band D) in 2018/19 without the need for a referendum.
- 10.2 The 2017/18 annual basic tax rate towards the cost of Taunton Deane Borough Council services, for the average Band D property, is £147.88, and the Council also included £1.74 in respect of the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA), making the total Band D charge £149.62 on the face of Band D tax bills in 2017/18.

- 10.3 The Executive has recommended the option to increase Council Tax by 3.34% which equates to the £5 limit on a Band D property, and this is reflected in the proposed budget for 2018/19. For an average Band D property this will set the tax rate at £154.62 or £2.97 per week (comprising £152.88 for Taunton Deane services and £1.74 for the SRA). Any increase above this amount would require a referendum of local tax payers.
- 10.4 The approved Tax Base for 2018/19 is 41,486.3 Band D Equivalents, an increase of 643.1 (1.6%) compared to 2017/18. The budget estimates for Council Tax income for TDBC is therefore 41,486.3 x £152.88 = £6,342,426. This represents a total increase of £302,539 compared to the previous year. The budget estimates are calculated as follows.

	£
Council Tax Income Budget 2017/18	6,039,887
Increase due to change in Tax Base (Band D equivalents)	105,705
Increase due to proposed 3.34% increase in Tax Rate	<u>196,834</u>
Council Tax Income Estimate 2018/19	<u>6,342,426</u>

## 11 Special Expenses/Unparished Area Budget

- 11.1 The Executive proposes to increase the Special Expenses (Unparished Area) precept by 2p on a Band D property, increasing the Band D special expenses rate to £3.02 per year, and raising an additional £302 per year in tax income. An increase of up to 2p does not affect the £5 Band D referendum trigger level for the area as a whole, but an increase of more than 2p in Special Expenses would require the £5 basic tax increase to be reduced.
- 11.2 Full Council on 15 December 2015 agreed to phase out the CTS grant funding provided to towns and parishes by 2018/19.
- 11.3 The proposed budget for 2018/19 is therefore £45,534, entirely funded through Special Expenses levied within the unparished area.
- 11.4 The Unparished Area Fund currently holds an unallocated balance of £5,914 which will be allocated to schemes agreed in future by the Grants Panel/Portfolio Holder.

## 12 Somerset Rivers Authority

- 12.1 The Somerset Rivers Authority is currently unable to raise their own precept and it is therefore proposed and supported by the Board members to follow the same arrangements as 2016/17 and 2017/18 and raise a precept for the same Band D value, i.e. £1.74 per year. This will raise £72,186 in funding for the SRA from TDBC in 2018/19. Keeping the precept at this level will make it easier to “unravel it” from our Council Tax computations when the Rivers Authority has precepting power.

## 13 2018/19 Draft Budget Summary

- 13.1 The following tables provides a summary of the Budget position for 2018/19.

	<b>Revised Budget 2017/18 £</b>	<b>Estimates 2018/19 £</b>
Total Spending on TDBC Services	11,786,444	10,150,489
Somerset Rivers Authority Contribution	71,067	72,186
Revenue Contribution to Capital	401,500	401,500
Capital Debt Repayment Provision (MRP)	235,060	400,010
Interest Costs	0	170,420
Interest Income	-380,875	-614,000
Parish Precepts	766,134	766,134
Grants to Parishes for CTS	12,990	0
Special Expenses	44,901	45,534
Grants to Unparished Area	2,010	0
Transfers to/from Earmarked Reserves	1,868,242	2,425,878
Transfer to/from General Reserves	0	0
<b>AUTHORITY EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>14,807,473</b>	<b>13,818,151</b>
Retained Business Rates	-3,038,286	-3,592,545
Revenue Support Grant	-644,801	-279,788
Rural Services Delivery Grant	-22,271	-27,754
Transition	-16,864	0
New Homes Bonus	-4,034,730	-3,564,560
Surplus(-)/Deficit on Collection Fund – Council Tax	-166,957	-64,664
Surplus(-)/Deficit on Collection Fund – Business Rates	38,425	937,440
Demand on Collection Fund – Parishes and SER	-811,035	-811,668
<b>Total Council Tax Raised by TDBC</b>	<b>6,110,954</b>	<b>6,414,612</b>
Divided by Council Tax Base	40,843.2	41,486.3
<b>Council Tax Band D – Taunton Deane Services</b>	<b>147.88</b>	<b>152.88</b>
<b>Council Tax Band D – Somerset Rivers Authority</b>	<b>1.74</b>	<b>1.74</b>
<b>Council Tax Band D – TDBC including SRA</b>	<b>149.62</b>	<b>154.62</b>
<b>Cost per week per Band D equivalent</b>	<b>2.87</b>	<b>2.97</b>

	<b>£k</b>	<b>£k</b>
<b>Net Expenditure Base Budget 2017/18</b>		<b>14,807</b>
Inflation costs	422	
SRA Contribution tax base increase	1	
Annual pension deficit payment increase	31	
Assets – Void Pressure	46	
SHAPE Contract	89	
DLO Trading	51	
Assets – Void Pressure	40	
Other Service Changes	261	
Transformation savings	-152	
Increase fees and charges	-250	
Other Service savings	-295	
Remove 17/18 one-off Deane House project and maintenance costs	-1,893	
Financing Costs (net interest income and repayment of borrowing)	102	
<b>Subtotal costs</b>		<b>-1,547</b>

Transfer from Business Rates Smoothing Reserve	-665	
Reduction in NHB contribution to reserves	-470	
Remove previous year transfers to reserves	50	
Remove 17/18 one-off transfer from Capital Financing Reserve for Deane House project	1,643	
<b>Subtotal Reserve movement</b>		<b>558</b>
<b>Net Expenditure Base Budget 2018/19</b>		<b>13,818</b>

	<b>£k</b>	<b>£k</b>
<b>Total Funding 2017/18</b>		<b>-14,807</b>
Reduction in RSG	365	
RSDG	-6	
Increased Retained Business Rates	-554	
Transition Grant	17	
Reduction in NHB	470	
Increased funding from Council Tax	-303	
SRA tax base	-1	
Collection Fund Deficit	1,001	
<b>Subtotal - change in funding</b>		<b>989</b>
<b>Total Funding 2017/18</b>		<b>-13,818</b>

#### 14 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Summary

14.1 The current MTFP forecast is summarised below, reflecting the proposed budget for 2018/19 and the updates described in this report.

##### MTFP Summary as at 8 February 2018

	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	2021/22 £	2022/23 £
Services Costs	11,786,444	10,150,489	9,671,585	10,067,896	10,266,292	10,773,017
Net Financing Costs	255,685	357,930	351,040	327,275	306,010	304,120
SRA Contribution	71,067	72,186	0	0	0	0
Special Expenses	44,901	45,534	45,534	45,534	45,534	45,534
CTRS Grants	15,000	0	0	0	0	0
Earmarked Reserves-Growth	3,642,752	3,172,576	2,937,042	3,302,435	3,087,062	2,987,957
Earmarked Reserves-Other	-1,774,510	-746,698	302,718	302,725	302,718	302,723
General Reserves	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>14,041,339</b>	<b>13,052,017</b>	<b>13,307,919</b>	<b>14,045,865</b>	<b>14,007,616</b>	<b>14,413,351</b>
Retained Business Rates	-3,038,286	-3,592,545	-3,463,975	-3,531,314	-3,595,008	-3,655,133
Business Rates prior year surplus/deficit	38,425	937,440	0	0	0	0
Revenue Support Grant	-644,801	-279,788	0	0	0	0
Rural Services Delivery Grant	-22,271	-27,754	-22,271	-22,271	-22,271	-22,271
Transitional Grant	-16,864	0	0	0	0	0

	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	2021/22 £	2022/23 £
New Homes Bonus	-4,034,730	-3,564,560	-3,329,020	-3,694,420	-3,479,040	-3,379,940
Council Tax–TDBC	-6,039,887	-6,342,426	-6,533,235	-6,729,758	-6,932,125	-7,140,450
Council Tax–SRA	-71,067	-72,186	0	0	0	0
Council Tax–Special Expenses	-44,901	-45,534	-45,534	-45,534	-45,534	-45,534
Council Tax prior year surplus/deficit	-166,957	-64,664	0	0	0	0
<b>Net Funding</b>	<b>14,041,339</b>	<b>13,052,017</b>	<b>13,394,035</b>	<b>14,023,297</b>	<b>14,073,978</b>	<b>14,243,328</b>
<b>Budget Gap</b>	0	0	-86,116	22,568	-66,362	170,023
Budget Gap Increase	0	0	-86,116	108,684	-88,930	236,385

### Transformation of Services

- 14.2 The MTFP position above already includes the projected savings arising through the implementation of the Transformation Business Case, as summarised below. Without these savings the forecast budget gap would be a deficit of **£1.729m per year** by 2022/23. The savings from transformation included in the MTFP above are:

Table 7 – Transformation Savings

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k
Total annual savings	164	316	1,465	1,479	1,493

- 14.3 The transformation savings forecast for 2018/19 includes a prudent contingency for the phasing of implementation and transitional costs. We anticipate that the savings will be delivered in full in 2019/20.
- 14.4 These figures do not include the further savings that are identified in the Business Case that would be delivered through creating a new Council (Option 2).

### Medium Term Forecast

- 14.5 The forecasts for the medium term reflect the position for Taunton Deane Borough Council on its own. It is clear that there is still a challenge in terms of finding additional savings and/or income to close the budget gap in the longer term, and to provide further resilience to funding changes as well as additional funding for investment in services.
- 14.6 As outlined in the MTFP Strategy reported to Scrutiny in June 2017, we have sought to close the Budget Gap in 2018/19 by challenging existing budgets and underspends and have avoided having to ask Budget Holders to put forward service savings proposals. This was considered the most appropriate course of action in the short-term pending delivery of savings through transformation.

## 15 DLO Trading Account

- 15.1 It has previously been decided to move the Building Maintenance section of the DLO to the Housing and Communities Directorate to align it with its main client – the Housing Revenue Account. This should provide greater transparency between the services. This came into effect from 1 April 2017 and the budget duly reflects this.
- 15.2 The General Fund budget includes the trading surplus of £50k providing a contribution to the net income for the Council. Any additional surplus will be transferred to the DLO Trading Reserve.

<b>DLO Trading Account 2018/19</b>	<b>Costs</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Net</b>
	£k	£k	£k
Grounds	3,373	(3,423)	(50)
Nursery	127	(127)	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3,500</b>	<b>(3,550)</b>	<b>(50)</b>

- 15.3 The forecast reserves position for 2018/19 remains positive, and provides some resilience to volatility in trading performance and future investment needs.

<b>DLO Trading Account Reserves</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
	£k	£k
Estimated Balance Brought Forward	121	121
Forecast Outturn	0	0
<b>Estimated Balance Carried Forward</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>121</b>

## 16 Deane Helpline Trading Account

- 16.1 The budget has assumed no increase in fees to private customers which is currently £5.86 per week and no increase in the charge to the HRA for TDBC Tenants which is currently £4.86 per week. This was approved by Full Council in December.
- 16.2 The income budget shown below is based on a prudent projection of income due in the year, and makes an allowance for income collection risks.
- 16.3 The nature of the service means that staff costs are susceptible to increase in order to maintain services through unplanned staffing absences. Some provision has been included within the expenditure budget to provide for essential cover arrangements, although the service manager has reviewed staffing rota arrangements to minimise costs in this area.
- 16.4 The summary trading account is as follows. There are no uncommitted reserves brought forward on this account.

<b>Deane Helpline Trading Unit Estimates</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
	£k	£k
Direct operating Costs	964	1,088
Recharges and Capital Charges	228	144



Income	(1,051)	(1,097)
<b>Estimated Deficit</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>135</b>

## 17 General Reserves

- 17.1 The current reserves position is shown below. The forecast Outturn for the 2017/18 budget is currently being reviewed but recent projections predict a net underspend of £318,000. The table below therefore gives a provisional forecast of the reserves position at the start of the next financial year.

Table 8 – General Reserves Balance

	£
Balance Brought Forward 1 April 2017	2,186,155
<b>Current Budgeted Balance</b>	<b>2,186,155</b>
2017/18 Projected Outturn Variance	318,000
2017/18 Earmarked Reserves returned to general balances	91,649
<b>Projected Balance 31 March 2018</b>	<b>2,595,804</b>
Recommended Minimum Balance	1,700,000
Projected Balance above recommended minimum	895,804

- 17.2 A review of the level of General Reserves has recently been undertaken as per the attached Appendix B. Following this review it is recommended that the minimum balance of general reserves is increased from £1.6m to £1.7m. Given the future funding risks it is strongly advised to maintain reserves above the minimum.

## 18 2018/19 General Fund Capital Programme

- 18.1 The current capital strategy includes the following basis for prioritising schemes:

- 1) Business Continuity (corporate/organisational/health and safety)
- 2) Statutory Service Investment
- 3) Growth / Transformation
- 4) Invest to Save
- 5) Other

- 18.2 The recommended General Fund Capital Programme for 2018/19 totals £3.797m. Table 9 details bids submitted for General Fund Schemes. The tables summarise the bids that have been presented by services for consideration.

- 18.3 The current General Fund Capital Programme in 2017/18 includes approved projects totalling £33.320m.

**Table 9 - 2018/19 Capital Programme**

Scheme	Cost £	Priority	Proposed Funding				Total Funding £
			RCCO £	Grants/ S106 £	Growth Reserve £	Borrowing £	
<b>DLO Schemes:</b>							
Vehicle Replacement	152,000	2	152,000				152,000
Plant and Equipment	23,000	2	23,000				23,000
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>175,000</b>		<b>175,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>175,000</b>
<b>General Schemes:</b>							
Lifeline Equipment	28,000	1	28,000				28,000
DFGs	720,000	2	0	720,000			720,000
Leisure Grants to Clubs and Parishes	15,000	5	15,000				15,000
TDBC Replacement Play Equipment	84,711	2	20,000	64,711			84,711
Desktop Hardware Refresh	50,000	1	50,000				50,000
New/Replacement Waste Containers	100,000	2	100,000				100,000
Members IT Equipment Replacement	4,000	2	4,000				4,000
Grants to RSLs	150,000	2		150,000			150,000
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>1,151,711</b>		<b>217,000</b>	<b>934,711</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,151,711</b>
<b>Growth Schemes:</b>							
Major transport schemes	550,000	3			550,000		550,000
Town Centre regeneration	965,000	3			965,000		965,000
Employment site enabling and innovation to promote Growth	855,000	3			855,000		855,000
Marketing Promotion and Inward Investment	100,000				100,000		100,000
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>2,470,000</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,470,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,470,000</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3,796,711</b>		<b>392,000</b>	<b>934,711</b>	<b>2,470,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,796,711</b>

### Capital Schemes Explained

- 18.4 **DLO Vehicle Replacement £152k:** This provides the DLO with a budget for the cost of the rolling programme of vehicle replacement. This is funded from a yearly RCCO which is recovered from the DLO through capital charges.
- 18.5 **DLO Plant £23k:** This provides the DLO with a budget of £23k per year to replace small capital items of plant and equipment. This is funded from a yearly RCCO which is recovered from the DLO through capital charges.
- 18.6 **Deane Helpline £28k:** The service has just under 1800 Lifeline units installed in customer's homes. These units have a warranty of three years and on average a useful life of around 7 years before they require replacement. Some units do last longer but the average unit should be expected to remain in use for seven years. Each year we therefore need to replace 1/7th of our

stock at an estimated cost of £25,000. Deane Helpline has also experienced significant growth over the last six months and additional units will be needed to maintain this growth therefore an additional £3,000 is included to fund yearly increase of 30 customers per year.

- 18.7 **Disabled Facility Grants (Private Sector) £720k:** The Council has a statutory duty to provide grants to enable the adaptation of homes to help meet the needs of disabled residents. The grants are means-tested and following confirmation of the grant to be received from Somerset County Council's Better Care Fund, the Council will receive £720k, providing the necessary funding to make this scheme affordable.
- 18.8 **Leisure Grants to Clubs and Parishes £15k:** Annual capital grant scheme for awards to voluntary village halls, community centres and sports clubs.
- 18.9 **Play Equipment Replacement £84k:** Annual capital scheme to replace play equipment within the Council's 104 children's playgrounds.
- 18.10 **Desktop Hardware £50k:** Annual PC refresh budget which plans for the entire desktop estate to be replaced on a rolling five year basis. The Windows 7 upgrade project replaced a large number of the oldest PCs.
- 18.11 **Waste Containers £100k:** This provides an annual budget of £100k to purchase new and replacement waste and recycling containers (bins and boxes) as part of the ongoing costs of the Somerset Waste Partnership.
- 18.12 **Members IT Equipment £4k:** This is an annual budget for replacement of IT equipment for members. £4k is included within the RCCO budget estimates for 2017/18 for this scheme.
- 18.13 **Grants to Registered Social Landlords £150k:** This scheme is ring fenced for the use of provision of new affordable housing. The funds consist of funding secured through the planning obligation process, capital receipts ring fenced for affordable housing and other capital receipts collected from developments in lieu of affordable housing on site.
- 18.14 **Growth Schemes:** See Section 20 below.

## 19 Funding the General Fund Capital Programme

- 19.1 Funding of capital investment by the Council can come from a variety of sources:
- Capital Receipts
  - Grant Funding
  - Capital Contributions (e.g. from another Local Authority / s.106 Funding)
  - Revenue budgets/reserves (often referred as RCCO – Revenue Contributions to Capital Outlay)
  - Borrowing
- 19.2 Table 9 above summarises the proposed funding of the Capital Programme

for 2018/19 and shows that the proposed Capital Programme for 2018/19 is fully funded through a combination of revenue contributions (DLO and General), capital reserves plus grant funding provided via SCC.

### **Funding Sources Explained**

- 19.3 **Capital Receipts General:** These come from the sale of the Council's assets. The Council also receives regular receipts from the sale of Council Houses (Right to Buys), and a proportion is retained by the General Fund.
- 19.4 **Capital Receipts Housing (non-HRA):** These are capital receipts received which are ring-fenced to be spent on affordable housing initiatives. The principle has been supported by Full Council that any future external funding received for affordable housing should be allocated to affordable housing projects and automatically added to the Capital Programme.
- 19.5 **Grant Funding:** The Council receives capital grant for Disabled Facilities Grant. The confirmed grant for 2017/18 is £660k. This funding is now rolled into the Better Care Fund (BCF) and it is the responsibility of the commissioners of the fund – the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Somerset County Council – to decide how the money is allocated. TDBC has representation on various groups to try and ensure our interests are protected.
- 19.6 **Capital Contributions:** This could take the form of capital contributions from other authorities or developers in the form of s.106 funding.
- 19.7 **Revenue Funding (RCCO):** The Council's draft budget includes an annual sum of £401k to fund capital expenditure from General Fund revenue budgets. For 2018/19 RCCO bids total £392k, which if supported through the approval of the 2018/19 Programme would be affordable.
- 19.8 **Borrowing:** This would be in the form of taking out a loan either from the markets or through the PWLB which would incur interest costs chargeable to the revenue budget. There is also "internal borrowing" which is treated the same as external borrowing for funding purposes, but uses cash balances rather than taking out a physical loan.
- 19.9 **Capital Reserve:** The Council has an earmarked Capital Reserve holding revenue resources previously set aside to fund capital spending. We currently hold no unallocated capital reserves.

## **20 Capital Programme for Growth and Regeneration 2018/19**

- 20.1 Full Council, 15 December 2015 approved the allocation £16.6m of New Homes Bonus (NHB) funding over the five year period 2016/17 to 2020/21, to support its priorities relating to growth and regeneration. A number of spend categories were approved, as follows:

- Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation
- Major Transport Schemes
- Town Centre Regeneration

- Employment site enabling and promoting enterprise and innovation
- Marketing, promotion and inward investment
- Supporting urban extension delivery
- Preparation of Local Development Orders

20.2 Full details of this allocation and the associated principles of spending were provided in the report to the Executive dated 3 December 2015. This highlighted the fact that the profile of spending over the five year period was indicative and would be refreshed annually, to ensure that spending plans remained aligned with an evolving picture of external funding secured, opportunities for new funding and new growth priorities.

20.3 The Growth and Regeneration Capital Budget approved to date totals £3.9m. If approved, this further £2.470m will bring the total approved Growth and Regeneration Capital Budget to £6.370m.

20.4 Having now carried out the above mentioned annual review, a refreshed annual profile of spending on growth is proposed in the table below.

**Table 10 - Indicative Growth and Regeneration Spend Profile**

Nov 2017 Revised Spending profile	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Totals
	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k	£k
<i>Capital Schemes:</i>						
Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation				1,000	4,000	<b>5,000</b>
Major transport schemes	400	50	1,500	2,000	0	<b>3,950</b>
Town Centre regeneration	200	1,215	1,050	400	185	<b>3,050</b>
Employment site enabling and innovation to promote Growth		55	1,700	1,245	500	<b>3,500</b>
New Garden Communities		0	100	200	200	<b>500</b>
<i>Revenue Costs:</i>						
Marketing Promotion and Inward Investment	100	100	100	100	100	<b>500</b>
Preparation of LDO's	50	50				<b>100</b>
<b>Total expected investment</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>1,470</b>	<b>4,450</b>	<b>4,945</b>	<b>4,985</b>	<b>16,600</b>

20.5 Members will note from the above table that the spending categories remain as originally approved with an element now separately identified reflecting Taunton's Garden Town status. No change is proposed to the overall allocation of £16.6m over the period 2016/17 to 2020/21, which is forecast to be fully funded by New Homes Bonus / Growth Reserve.

20.6 Within the overall £16.6m allocation, members will note that changes to the original profile) are now proposed in some categories, namely:

- **Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation** - The allocation towards the Flood Alleviation project has been increased in line with the Council's commitment to flood relief, by reallocation from the Urban Extension project.
- **Major Transport Schemes** – overall allocation increased from £3.5m to £3.9m mainly due to the Access & Signage project to provide the Variable Messaging System and Pay on Foot system.

- **Town Centre Regeneration** - overall allocation increased from £2.5m to £3.5m to enable the delivery of major Town Centre schemes, such as Firepool and Coal Orchard.
- **Employment sites, enterprise and innovation** – reduction to overall allocation to £3.5m due to a reduction in the J25 Nexus allocation.
- **Supporting Urban Extension delivery** – overall allocation reduced from £2m to £0m due to reallocation to the Strategic Flood Alleviation project in 2020/21.

20.7 Subject to business case, the Council could also consider the use of prudential borrowing to provide additional capital resources.

## **21 Robustness of the Budget Process**

21.1 The Local Government Act 2003 requires a report on the adequacy of the Council's financial reserves and for the S151 Officer to report on the robustness of the budget plans. As in previous years a number of factors have been considered in this assessment, the details of which are in Appendix A to this report.

### **S151 Officer Conclusion of the Robustness of the Budget and Adequacy of Reserves**

21.2 Based on the evidence I have reviewed I am able to confirm that I believe the Council's draft budget proposals for 2018/19 to be sufficiently robust, and the Council's reserves to be adequate.

21.3 The budget for 2018/19 is balanced without the need to draw on general reserves. Looking ahead, the MTFP shows a budget gap rising to an estimated £170,000 by 2022/23. Key to this is achieving the planned transformation savings in full by 2019/20.

21.4 Whilst the forecast funding position beyond 2019/20 is uncertain, estimates are considered prudent at this stage. Key influences will be: the Government's next Spending Review and future funding settlements, the Fair Funding Review, the reset of the business rates baseline and tariff, and any further changes to the New Homes Bonus regime. A prudent contingency is included in the MTFP from 2019/20 onwards to cushion potential adverse of funding changes.

21.5 In forming my opinion I have considered the important decision taken by both West Somerset and Taunton Deane councils over the summer of 2016 to progress the creation of a new transformed council, and the "minded to" statement from the Secretary of State regarding the proposal to create a new council. The MTFP forecasts assume the overall annual savings target from the Transformation business case will be partly achieved during 2018/19 and achieved in full by 2019/20.

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

22.1 It is important that Councillors recognise the financial position, challenges and

risks faced by the Council and fully engage in the corporate and financial planning processes in order to determine an affordable and sustainable set of corporate aims and priorities. This should lead to the Council approving a sustainable final budget and MTFP in February 2018.

## **23 Finance / Resource Implications**

23.1 Included throughout the report.

## **24 Legal Implications**

24.1 The Council is required by law to set a balanced budget and failure to do so would result in serious financial and service implications and lead to Government intervention.

## **25 Environmental Impact Implications**

25.1 None for the purposes of this report. There have been no proposed policy changes or reductions in service budgets in order to balance the budget in 2018/19, in line with the Council's agreed financial strategy.

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

26.1 None for the purposes of this report.

## **27 Equality and Diversity Implications**

27.1 None for the purposes of this report.

## **28 Social Value Implications**

28.1 None for the purposes of this report.

## **29 Partnership Implications**

29.1 None for the purposes of this report. The Council budget incorporates costs and income related to the various partnership arrangements, and any changes in relevant forecasts and proposals will be reported for consideration as these emerge.

## **30 Health and Wellbeing Implications**

30.1 None for the purposes of this report. Any relevant information and decisions with regard to health and wellbeing will be reported as these emerge through the financial planning process.

## **31 Asset Management Implications**

31.1 None directly for the purposes of this report. The financial implications associated with asset management will be reflected in due course.

## 32 Consultation Implications

32.1 None for the purposes of this report.

### Democratic Path:

- Corporate Scrutiny Committee – 25 January 2018
- Executive – 8 February 2018
- Full Council – 22 February 2018

Reporting Frequency: Annual

### Contact Officers

Name	Andrew Stark	Name	Paul Fitzgerald
Direct Dial	01823 219490	Direct Dial	01823 257557
Email	<a href="mailto:a.stark@tauntondeane.gov.uk">a.stark@tauntondeane.gov.uk</a>	Email	<a href="mailto:p.fitzgerald@tauntondeane.gov.uk">p.fitzgerald@tauntondeane.gov.uk</a>



# APPENDIX A

## Robustness of Budget Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves 2018/19 – Taunton Deane Borough Council

### Statement by the S151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer) – Paul Fitzgerald, Assistant Director Strategic Finance

#### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this appendix is to outline and meet the statutory requirements contained in the Local Government Finance Act 2003 which requires the Council's Section 151 Officer to report to Members on:
- The robustness of budget estimates; and
  - The adequacy of proposed reserves.
- 1.2 This appendix provides evidence to support my assessment. The conclusion of my review, and formal statement, is set out in the main body of the report and repeated at the end of this appendix.

#### 2 Background

- 2.1 Taunton Deane Borough Council has a good financial track record and is recognised for being of sound financial standing. Our external auditors have continued to assess the Council's current arrangements for achieving financial resilience as sound – "...the Council has demonstrated sufficient arrangements to secure the medium term financial position of the Council." (*Annual Audit Letter, October 2017*)
- 2.2 The Council has, like many Districts, a tough financial challenge ahead. The Council has prioritised "Growth" and directs the majority of New Homes Bonus funding to this aim rather than supporting day to day service delivery. This means the Council has to address its budget gap.
- 2.3 Transforming the way council services are delivered and forming a new, single council will deliver significant savings to the combined community. Savings through joint transformation have been built into the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), and potential further savings through forming the new Council are identified within the Business Case. This was never envisaged to be the "entire" solution but was a significant step towards viable service delivery for the community.
- 2.4 For TDBC the initial MTFP presented to Members in the summer 2017 showed the Budget Gap by 2022/23 of £1.118m, taking into account the planned savings from transformation of c£1.5m for General Fund services.
- 2.5 The 2017 Revaluation of Rateable Values for businesses, effective from April 2017, represents a budget risk. However the impact of this together with changes including an increase in small business rates entitlement, for we are reimbursed through S31 grant, has led to an increase in our retained business rates forecasts. However, we know from past experience that business rates

funding can be volatile and have included prudent provisions and contingencies to mitigate this risk.

- 2.6 The Council has accepted the four year settlement which sets out Revenue Support Grant, Rural Services Delivery Grant and Transitional Grant up to 2019/20. This has been reflected in budget plans since 2016/17.
- 2.7 From my perspective as your S151 Officer, the budget proposal shared by Executive is based on the most accurate information available and therefore presents an accurate reflection of the Council's financial position.
- 2.8 There are key areas of uncertainty beyond 2019/20, and other potential risks in the shorter term that I have considered in commenting on the proposed budget. These are explained in further detail below and include:
- The budget and MTFP assumes relative stability in business rates funding, which is known to be volatile – a large cost of appeals or other reductions could conceivably reduce funding to the Baseline or Safety Net
  - The budget relies on significant savings through transformation being delivered
  - There is significant future uncertainty in terms of Government funding beyond 2018/19 with the unknown impacts of the next Spending Review, the Fair Funding Review, business rates baseline and tariff resets, and New Homes Bonus changes
- 2.9 Other key issues to be aware of are:
- The revenue, capital, and treasury forecasts are aligned and transparent
  - The Council is exposed to financial risk in its business rates funding estimates before any Safety Net income is due, however this is mitigated in the short term through the Smoothing Reserve to provide time for plans to be developed and implemented if the reduction is ongoing.
  - Looking ahead the Council needs to develop plans to address the residual gap in the updated MTFP, and build resilience to future reductions in funding that may create additional challenges. The creation of a new Council will provide further savings to those already reflected, assisting towards the ongoing financial position.
  - The assessment of minimum level of reserves has been updated and it is recommended this balance is increased to £1.7m. Should the budget be approved, the General Fund Reserves are forecast to be £2.6m, leaving some headroom for unforeseen events during the coming financial year. This headroom provides resilience with the implementation of key programmes such as transformation and Deane House accommodation.

### **3 Robustness of Budget Estimates**

- 3.1 The proposed budget for 2018/19 (and the forecast position for future years) is the financial interpretation of the Council's priorities and, as such, has implications for every citizen of Taunton Deane together with all other stakeholders. A range of factors have been considered in assessing the robustness of estimates as explained in the remainder of this document.

### **4 Government Funding**

- 4.1 The Council, along with the majority of authorities in the country, accepted the four year settlement plan from Government. This provides confidence in our estimates of revenue support funding up to 2019/20. As explained in the main report, RSG is as expected and RSDG included an unexpected slight increase. The final settlement confirmation is due in February 2018.
- 4.2 The Government continue to develop their policy on local government finance. In this year's settlement the Secretary of State indicated he plans for local government (as a whole) to retain 75% of business rates by 2020, and the move to 100% retention of business rates continues to be explored with further pilots agreed during 2018/19. The detail on how the new scheme will work, and what funding levels will be like for councils is not yet available and leaves significant uncertainty for all moving forward.
- 4.3 The Fair Funding Review also remains on the Government's agenda, which could see the settlement funding change due to updated assessments of "need". The timing and impact remain uncertain and at present the MTFP assumes a neutral impact.
- 4.4 New Homes Bonus has significantly reduced following the changes to the grant methodology introduced in 2017/18 and 2018/19.

### **5 Council Tax**

- 5.1 On council tax, the Government have once again set the upper limit at a £5 annual increase for district councils on a Band D property, and have not imposed an upper limit on town/parish council precept increases. The Council is proposing a tax increase at the maximum level of £5 – a sound financial policy in light of the financial challenges ahead. The charge introduced in 2016/17 to support the Somerset Rivers Authority will continue at the same level in 2018/19.

### **6 Capital Programme Funding**

- 6.1 The Executive's draft budget proposals for the capital programme are set out in a separate report alongside the revenue budget. To support the spending plans, councils are required to publish and monitor a set of Prudential Indicators. These are listed in full in the Treasury Management Strategy Statement which is also shared separately for approval.

- 6.2 The Executive's draft capital programmes for the General Fund and HRA follow the principles of the Prudential Code, and I am satisfied that the treasury implications are clear and within affordable limits.
- 6.3 The Council embraced the new Government policy introduced in 2016/17 which allows authorities the flexibility to use capital receipts received during a fixed time period to fund revenue spending that is transformational (i.e. brings revenue savings!). This flexibility has been extended from three years to six, up to 2021/22. In September 2016, Full Council agreed to direct future capital receipts of £1,314,000 (General Fund) to part fund the programme of transformation.

## **7 Inflation and Other Key Budget Assumptions**

- 7.1 I have reviewed the budget proposals and assumptions and comment as follows:
- a) Inflation: inflation assumptions appear reasonable with general inflation projected at 2% in line with longer term government targets. An appropriate level of inflation allowance has also been reflected in the budget estimates for pay, pensions and core service contracts. Services will be required to absorb variations in costs compared to budget, and significant issues highlighted through budget monitoring reports.
  - b) Staff Costs: the estimates reflect an appropriate cost of each post within the One Team shared management and staff structure, in line with the JMASS cost sharing agreement.
  - c) Service Income: income projections are based on realistic assumptions on usage, and the most recent Government guidance on fee levels when appropriate. They also take into account historic trends and current year variations against budget.
  - d) Growth in service requirements: the MTFP identifies service growth areas such as waste collection and recycling. Detailed estimates are firmed up by discussions with managers during the budget process.
  - e) Savings: the Council has a strong track record of delivering savings plans, and where initiatives are sufficiently well developed and approved by Council they are included in budget plans.
  - f) Volatility in budget estimates: the high risk / high value budgets are rigorously examined and only prudent increases incorporated. Forecasts take into account past and current trends as well as effective management control plans.
  - g) Revenue Implications of Capital: the MTFP identifies and incorporates changes to the base budget as a result of the capital programme.
  - h) Economic assumptions: investment interest assumptions are based on independent economic forecasts and include the impact of treasury management decisions made in earlier years, as well as projected

benefits from recent changes in the range of investments used for cash balances.

- i) Council Tax: growth assumptions in the council tax base have been forecast at 1.6% in 2018/19 then 1.0% per year thereafter on a prudent estimate of the net effect of local growth, council tax support and other discounts. Council tax collection rates remain strong, providing confidence the income will be received as planned.
- j) Member engagement in budget development: the budget approach has been reviewed by Scrutiny and agreed by the Executive. Scrutiny has been updated on the MTFP position during the budget setting process. All councillors have had the opportunity to be briefed on the proposals during their Group Meetings in January 2018.
- k) Changes in legislation: legislative changes are analysed by officers and their effect built into the MTFP and budget.
- l) Sustainability: the proposed budget takes into account the future financial pressures faced by the Council. The Council can set a balanced budget for 2018/19 and the medium term challenge is deliverable.
- m) Sensitivity analysis: The financial planning model allows the Council to predict the likely outcomes of changes to key data i.e. inflation, council tax, Government funding etc. This is helpful in sharing “what if...” scenarios with management, members and partners. Committee budget reports also provide data on tax choices – showing the impact on the Council of this important decision.

## **8 Delivery of Savings**

- 8.1 The budget approach for 2018/19 has sought to avoid the need for service savings plans. The key savings in the MTFP will be delivered through transformation. The proposed budget includes a prudent allowance for the timing of savings being later than previously assumed in the Business Case, but I am confident that the programme remains on track to achieve the financial benefits in full by 2019/20. Should there be any risk to the delivery of identified savings this will be reported to Members via the budget monitoring regime.
- 8.2 The MTFP for Taunton Deane does not incorporate any notional share of savings from the creation of a new council, but the Business Case identifies that at least £550,000 of savings would be delivered if this goes ahead as proposed. This would make a positive contribution to the financial challenge in the longer term.

## **9 Partnership Risks & Opportunities**

- 9.1 The Council has agreed to progress the creation of a new transformed council. The Secretary of State issued his “minded to” decision in December

2017, with a period of representation closing on 19 January 2018. At the time of writing this report we await the final decision.

- 9.2 The Council has several other key partnership arrangements in place to support ambitions and deliver key services, supported by contractual arrangements. The most significant is our Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) which is monitored via the Somerset Waste Board and supporting officer monitoring groups.
- 9.3 The Waste Partnership has recently reported that the existing contractor arrangement will end in March 2020, and the Partnership is embarking on a procurement process for a new delivery partner from April 2020. It is unknown whether the new contract price will be within budget, however it is assumed this will be achievable and will deliver some budget savings by 2021.

## 10 Financial Standing of the Council

- 10.1 The Council fully complies with the Prudential Code, has an up to date Treasury Management Policy and Strategy in place, and is operating within the agreed parameters. The Council's Treasury Management Practices are prudent and robust, ensuring the Council is not exposed to unnecessary risk in terms of its investment policies. We continue to work with our treasury advisors (Arlingclose) to optimise investment return whilst preserving capital.
- 10.2 The Council currently has £92.198m of outstanding external debt, which is within our maximum borrowing level of £220m. This is entirely attributable to the HRA, and there are prudent repayment plans in place through the HRA Business Plan. There is also £85.5m of internal borrowing.
- 10.3 The Council currently has £51.4m of cash flow investments (26/01/2018). All treasury activity is placed in the markets in accordance with our policies. The levels of investment will fluctuate during the year and we continue to monitor our cash-flows carefully.

## 11 Track Record in Budget Management

- 11.1 The Council has a good track record in budget management. The most recent years have resulted in the following end of year positions:

Year	Variance of Approved Net Budget	
2013/14	-£0.964m	-6.7%
2014/15	-£0.222m	-1.7%
2015/16	-£0.280m	-2.1%
2016/17	-£0.101m	-0.7%
2017/18 Forecast	-£0.318m	-3.2%

(Negative = underspend against budget)

- 11.2 In the context of gross expenditure of over £91m, the above variances are reasonable.

- 11.3 Members are currently provided with regular in-year updates on key budget variances (Corporate Scrutiny and Executive). There has been a one-off deferral from Q2 to Q3 in 2017/18 as resources were prioritised to focus on system and reporting changes.

## **12 Virement & Control Procedures**

- 12.1 The Financial Regulations contain formal rules governing financial processes and approvals (virements are simply transfers of budget between departments). The Financial Regulations and Financial Procedure Notes will be reviewed during the next period to align to the ambitions set out in the transformation business case.

## **13 Risk Management**

- 13.1 I am satisfied that the Council has adequate insurance arrangements in place, and that the cover is structured appropriately to protect the Council.
- 13.2 The Council has a Risk Management Policy in place which defines how risk is managed at different levels in the organisation. It defines roles, responsibilities, processes and procedures to ensure we are managing risk effectively.
- 13.3 Equalities Impact Assessments (EIA) Reviews – where appropriate – are included for Members to review.
- 13.4 Financial risks are managed through budget setting and by our level of reserves. We mitigate as many risks as possible by following good practice, and by monitoring key financial risks on a regular basis.

## **14 Key Risk Issues In 2018/19 Budget**

- 14.1 The figures in the proposed budget for 2018/19 are based on our best estimates. These will require careful monitoring throughout the year, and swift corrective action taken should they vary from budget. The issues I need to bring to Members' attention where there is financial risk are:
- 14.2 Business Rates Retention: I am satisfied that the Council has put in place sound arrangements to monitor the flow of business rates income and valuation changes throughout the year. The information coming from our Revenues team is robust and forecasts are regularly reviewed to ensure they are as accurate as possible. We will continue to engage services across the Council to ensure all chargeable premises are notified and billed. The key risks associated with Business Rates Retention for Taunton Deane Borough Council include the impact of:
- a) Appeals and refunds
  - b) Collection rates and bad debts
  - c) Entitlement to Mandatory and Discretionary Reliefs (e.g. for charities)
  - d) Levy costs for growth in rates income above the Baseline
  - e) Accounting arrangements – with balances skewed between financial years

f) Maintaining an adequate balance in the Smoothing Reserve

- 14.3 The biggest risk relates to exposure to appeals/refunds, and the financial strategy includes a sensible approach to providing resilience through provisions and the Smoothing Reserve.
- 14.4 Business Rates Pool: A new Somerset Business Rates Pool has been formed from April 2018, comprising the county and five district councils. Risks and opportunities through pooling have been reported to Council in 2017. From a budget perspective, no potential gain from pooling has been included, and the pool performance will be monitored carefully during the year.
- 14.5 Council Tax Reduction Scheme: Members have recently approved the scheme for 2018/19. We will continue to monitor the financial impact on the Council. The key risk on this item remain as last year – on the level of take-up. To date we are managing this within approved budgets, but it is something that we monitor closely.
- 14.6 Housing Benefits / Subsidy: The administration funding has once again reduced in 2018/19. It is possible the responsibility for this funding could shift to local authorities in future years (linked to the 100% retention of business rates), and we will monitor any consultations on this closely.
- 14.7 Subsidy budgets are very difficult to estimate due to the fluctuating volume of claims received and the different levels of subsidy payable of types of claimant error. The total benefit subsidy budget is approximately £26m – and therefore small fluctuations in this budget can have a big impact on the budget of the Council. Systems are in place to ensure this is monitored on a monthly basis. In addition, assumptions on the level of subsidy payable on local authority overpayments are at a prudent level.
- 14.8 The impact of the introduction of the Universal Credit (UC) full service for new claimants has led to a reduction in HB caseload. Resources will still be required to maintain assessment work that informs the Council Tax Rebate scheme, and are also planned to be deployed to provide support for personal budgeting advice and assistance to claimants with more complex claims that exceed the support provided by the DWP. Whilst not yet known, we anticipate the migration of all existing HB cases to UC will take place within the next 1-3 years.
- 14.9 Impact of Economic Changes: the Council's budgets reflect our best estimates of the impact of current economic conditions. This is an issue we need to monitor continually through the budget monitoring process – particularly on income streams from car parking, land charges, building control and development control, and expenditure on issues such as homelessness.
- 14.10 Asset Management: the Council has agreed a new Asset Strategy, which has provided greater intelligence regarding the assets estate to inform investment, disposal and maintenance decisions. If all existing assets are retained maintenance works completed over the next five years will add pressure to



existing budgets. The strategy provides a framework to enable the Council to consider plans for each asset, with the potential to avoid costs and mitigate this potential budget pressure.

- 14.11 New Homes Bonus (NHB) Forecasts and Growth Ambitions: the current housing trajectory indicates the level of NHB grant remains 'good' for the medium term, despite reductions in the reward due for growth that is delivered. The Growth Programme is currently projected to be fully funded through NHB but this will continue to be carefully monitored and spending plans reviewed each year in line with resources available.
- 14.12 Transformation: the budget has been prepared based on the financial implications of the transformation business case approved in 2016. Prudent provision has been included in 2018/19 to reflect the latest timetable for implementation of the new operating model.
- 14.13 Overall Funding and Capacity Risk: Government funding has continued to reduce year on year and this will continue to at least 2019/20. The Council has made significant savings in recent years and as the Council reduces in size this brings risk in terms of capacity (to deliver new savings ideas and to deliver significant service change). Delivering increased efficiency through transformation, and the potential for further efficiency through the creation of a new council, will be key to helping mitigate this risk. However, it is important the Council continues to prioritise resources to meet agreed priorities and objectives – particularly to activities that will support the ongoing viability of service provision.
- 14.14 Finally, the Council must continue to monitor the continuing impact of the Welfare Reform agenda on our community and the resultant demand for service and support, particularly now Universal Credit is live in our area.

## **15 Adequacy of Reserves**

- 15.1 With the existing statutory and regulatory framework, it is my responsibility as S151 Officer to advise the Council about the adequacy of the Council's reserves position.
- 15.2 All reserves are reviewed at least annually and my formal opinion updated during the budget setting process each year. The minimum level of reserves has been revised to £1.7m following an updated assessment in January 2018.
- 15.3 A review of earmarked reserves was carried out during the budget setting process and I am satisfied that all remaining reserves are there for a specific purpose and are needed. This will be reviewed again at the closedown of the current financial year.
- 15.4 The Executive's draft budget for 2018/19 does not rely on the use reserves to support ongoing spending – which is a positive position.

- 15.5 My opinion is given in the knowledge that known risks (strategic, operational and financial) are managed and mitigated appropriately in line with the Council's policies and strategies.

## **16 General Fund Reserve**

- 16.1 The predicted General Fund Reserve position is set out in the main report, and remains above the minimum acceptable level. The level of reserve is therefore adequate.
- 16.2 As the Council progresses through significant organisational change it is appropriate to plan to maintain reserves above this minimum to provide flexibility and resilience.

## **17 Housing Revenue Account Reserve**

- 17.1 The HRA working balance reserve is forecast to be £3.4m after budget approval for 2018/19. The minimum level of reserve remains at the current level of £300 per property – approximately £1.8m. The balance remains in line with business plan expectations.

## **18 Earmarked Reserves**

- 18.1 At the end of 2017/18, the Council expects to have in the region of £17.0m in specific earmarked reserves. The largest earmarked reserve balances are:

### General Fund

- Business Rates Smoothing Reserve £1.0m
- Transformation Reserve £1.4m
- Growth Reserve £6.0m

### HRA

- Social Housing Development Fund £1.3m

## **19 Conclusions – Statement of the S151 Officer**

- 19.1 Based on the evidence I have reviewed I am able to confirm that I believe the Council's draft budget proposals for 2018/19 to be sufficiently robust, and the Council's reserves to be adequate.
- 19.2 The budget for 2018/19 is balanced without the need to draw on general reserves. Looking ahead, the MTFP shows a budget gap rising to an estimated £170,000 by 2022/23. Key to this is achieving the planned transformation savings in full by 2019/20.
- 19.3 Whilst the forecast funding position beyond 2019/20 is uncertain estimates are considered prudent at this stage. Key influences will be: the Government's next Spending Review and future funding settlements, the Fair Funding Review, the reset of the business rates baseline and tariff, and any further changes to the New Homes Bonus regime. A prudent contingency is included in the MTFP from 2019/20 onwards to cushion potential adverse of funding changes.

19.4 In forming my opinion I have considered the important decision taken by both West Somerset and Taunton Deane councils over the summer of 2016 to progress the creation of a new transformed council, and the “minded to” statement from the Secretary of State regarding the proposal to create a new council. The MTFP forecasts assume the overall annual savings target from the Transformation business case will be partly achieved during 2018/19 and achieved in full by 2019/20.

**Paul Fitzgerald**  
**Assistant Director Strategic Finance and S151 Officer**  
**30 January 2018**

## Appendix B

### Minimum Level of General Reserves

#### 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 1.1 It is particularly pertinent when there are significant challenges to councils' budgets and when Central Government funding is falling at an exceptional rate, to consider how this risk is being mitigated and how exposed the Council is to unforeseen events, risks and pressures.
- 1.2 With this in mind, the s151 Officer has requested a review of reserves and for the minimum acceptable level of General Reserves to be challenged to establish whether it is appropriate and to benchmark against other councils to see how we compare and whether we are over exposed to risk.

#### 2. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 Reserves are reviewed by this Council on an annual basis to give assurance that they are appropriate and adequate. Due to the constraints on the Council's budget it is not possible to mitigate against every eventuality and it would be imprudent to set aside funds simply as a percentage of net expenditure or "just in case". With the challenges associated with setting a balanced budget, earmarking reserves is an important exercise and each year a review is done to challenge the levels and intended use of these reserves. In some cases, earmarked reserves are deemed to be no longer required/too high and are returned to general reserves.
- 2.2 In order to arrive at an appropriate level, various publications were reviewed and the Council has benchmarked against its nearest neighbours in terms of size, demography, NDR value per head etc\*:
  - LAAP Bulletin 99 Local Authority Reserves and Balances
  - CIPFA Stats Nearest Neighbours Model\*
  - Audit Commission "Striking a Balance" Questionnaire
  - CIPFA Delivering Good Governance in Local Government

#### 3. MITIGATING RISK – GENERAL RESERVES

- 3.1 The CIPFA LAAP Bulletin says "When reviewing their medium term financial plans and preparing their annual budgets, local authorities should consider the establishment and maintenance of reserves. These can be held for three main purposes":
  - A working balance to help cushion the impact of uneven cashflows and avoid unnecessary temporary borrowing – this forms part of general reserves

- A contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies – this forms part of general reserves
- A means of building up funds to meet known or predicted requirements – via earmarked reserves (legally part of the General Fund)

3.2 As part of the review of the adequacy of the general reserves balance it is prudent to consider the particular risks that the Council faces and how these are mitigated by earmarked reserves and other mechanisms.

3.3 There are a number of general risks which are relevant to all or most councils and for the most part are mitigated with a robust approach to budget setting in the MTFP. These include inflation and interest rates; the timing of capital receipts; demand led pressures; the delivery of efficiency savings; the availability of Government grants and general funding and the general financial climate. These risks are considered at every stage of the budget setting process and the experience of the s151 and senior finance officers will be fundamental in identifying and addressing the pressures relating to these risks.

3.4 An indicator of the risks particular to the Council is the Risk Register. This captures those risks which need to be managed and monitored as they can potentially have a very detrimental effect on the financial or reputational standing of the Council. We have therefore used the Council's risk register as the starting point for the risk matrix.

#### **4. QUANTIFYING THE FINANCIAL RISK**

4.1 The risk-based assessment gave a range of appropriate "minimum" general reserves levels as £1.5m to £2.1m. With consideration to the challenges the Council faces from continuing reductions of Central Government funding and a need to deliver its transformation savings it is prudent to recommend that the minimum reserve level be increased to £1.7m.

#### **5. STRIKING A BALANCE QUESTIONNAIRE**

5.1 The Audit Commission's questionnaire is a good aide memoire to highlight the areas a Council should consider when assessing the minimum level of reserves. It also draws on benchmarking to establish how other councils mitigate their risks.

#### **6. NEAREST NEIGHBOUR COMPARISON**

6.1 A benchmarking exercise with 15 other councils with similar attributes has been undertaken. The nearest neighbour comparison (based upon financial information as at 31 March 2017) indicates that Taunton Deane's general reserve was £2.186m which is equivalent to 21.5% of its net revenue

expenditure of £10.156m. By comparison, the nearest neighbour average is £4.235m (37.5%) on net revenue expenditure of £11.291m. However Taunton Deane's other earmarked reserves are £17.093m, equivalent to £168.3% of its net revenue expenditure. The nearest neighbour comparison is £11.721m which equates to only 103.8% of net revenue expenditure.

## **7. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS**

- 7.1 The risk assessment and Audit Commission questionnaire are useful tools in establishing Taunton Deane's minimum level of general reserves. This must be caveated with the assertion that if the Council relies on reserves to address a budget gap, and in particular for ongoing costs it will be immediately exposed to a heightened risk if it does not remain above the minimum level.
- 7.2 **With reference to the analysis that has been undertaken and with attention to the risks that the Council faces, a recommendation is made to increase the minimum level of reserves to £1.7m.**

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Full Council – 22 February 2018

### Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Estimates and Capital Programme 2018/2019

This matter is the responsibility of the Leader of the Council, Councillor John Williams and Portfolio Holder for Housing Services, Councillor Terry Beale

Report Author: Andrew Stark, Interim Financial Services Manager

#### 1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with the information required for Full Council to approve the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) revenue budget and capital programme for 2018/19.

#### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is **recommended** that the Housing Revenue Account Budget and Capital Programme for 2018/18 be agreed and that Full Council:-
- a) Approve the proposed rent decrease of 1%, with proposed average rents of £81.69 per week in 2018/19
  - b) Approve the Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2018/19
  - c) Approve the new capital schemes of the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme of £8.973m for 2018/19.

#### 3 Introduction and Background

- 3.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget proposals for 2018/19 and to set the average rent for housing tenants.
- 3.2 In 2012 Taunton Deane moved away from a national subsidy system, which meant an annual payment from the HRA to Central Government, to be 'self-financing'. As part of the self-financing agreement, a one-off payment of £85.12m was made to Government, in return for being able to retain all income locally to manage and maintain the housing stock. The total debt in the HRA at the start of self-financing was £99.7m.
- 3.3 In order to manage the freedoms gained by the HRA through self-financing, a

new 30 year Business Plan (2012-2042) was introduced. This set out the Council's overall aims and objectives for Housing Services, as well as laying out plans to manage the increased risks and opportunities. The HRA Business Plan has been reviewed and updated annually since 2012, but since 2015 there have been many changes in national policies and local aspiration and a full review of the Business Plan was undertaken in 2016. The draft estimates for 2018/19 reflect the amendments approved in the Business Plan. Further details of the financial impacts of the review are included in Section 4.

- 3.4 The HRA faces a number of risks and uncertainties, many of which could be significant but the actual financial impact is not yet known. These are listed in Section 11.
- 3.5 A summary of the overall Draft HRA Budget 2018/19 is included in Appendix A.

#### 4 Business Plan Review 2016

- 4.1 A full review of the HRA 30 Year Business Plan was approved by Council in July 2016.
- 4.2 This included a number of changes which affected the base budget for 2018/19. The key amendments are summarised below.

Table 1: 2018/19 Changes in Approved Business Plan

	£k
<b>Impact in 2018/19 of key changes within the Business Plan</b>	0.0
Starting position - balanced budget	-15.3
Social Housing Development Fund	-528.4
Repairs and Maintenance savings	-672.3
Management savings	396.8
Decrease in operating income	821.7
Reduction in movement in reserves	56.6
Depreciation	24.9
Other minor changes	<b>84.0</b>
<b>Position in Business Plan - approved by Council in July 2016 (budgeted transfer from HRA General Reserves)</b>	0.0

- 4.3 Further details of these changes are as follows:
  - a) The HRA Business Plan has previously included a fixed term increased provision for non-payment of rents because of Welfare Reform, and in particular the introduction of Universal Credit. Universal Credit was only fully introduced for new claimants in Taunton Deane in October 2016. As much of this previous provision was unused, £434k was put aside in an earmarked reserve in order to mitigate the loss of income. The Business Plan has included a new three year period of increased provision for bad debt, allowing for an increase in non-payment from 0.5% of rents to 2% for a new three year period. In 2018/19 this would be fully funded from the earmarked reserve.



- b) The introduction of the Development Strategy increased the revenue provision for social housing development. The Business Plan has previously included a significant ongoing revenue contribution of £1.0m per year, but the Development Strategy instead includes an average annual addition of 15 units, estimated at £1.9m per year. These are fully funded in the Business Plan, partly from revenue and partly from Right to Buy receipts. The revenue funding in 2018/19 is included at £1.2m, with the remaining funding from capital receipts.
- c) The Business Plan includes savings totalling £832k per year on repairs and maintenance. This is based on advice on savings that should be achievable for the stock held and is separate to savings identified as part of the corporate Transformation programme. This is due to be phased over five years, and the first annual saving of £166k is included from 2017/18. The ongoing savings are not fully identified in the Business Plan and this will need to be closely monitored by the Assistant Director – Operational Delivery.
- d) The reduction in the movement of reserves is largely due to in a £500k provision in 2017/18 which was made in the budget to fund transformation. This provision has now been reduced to £0 for 18/19.
- e) Additional provision of £140k has been included in the Business Plan in line with the new objective of Supporting the Vulnerable. This is allocated as follows:
- Mental Health Support, currently commissioned through Mind - £41k pa
  - Employment Support, currently commissioned through Inspired to Achieve - £46k pa
  - Money Matters Advice, currently commissioned through the Citizens Advice Bureau - £35k pa
  - Top up of Community Development budgets to £10k per area - £18k pa
- f) The Business Plan changed the policy for the repayment of debt, with provision being made over 60 years. This equates to an annual revenue provision of £1.8m, the same as the 2017/18 budget, an increase of £814k on the provision included in 2016/17.
- g) Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay (RCCO) is reduced to £nil in 2018/19 as the capital programme can be fully funded from the Major Repairs Reserve which includes the transfer of depreciation.
- h) Transfers from earmarked reserves totalling £1.0m are included in the Business Plan for 2017/18. This is due to slippage in revenue maintenance programmes such as the pre-planned maintenance contract and the electrical servicing programme, also the funding for the increased provision for bad debt.

- i) Inflation of £407k is included in the Business Plan. This is the expected inflation across all expenditure including staffing costs, contracts and other expenditure.
- j) A review was undertaken to increase the grounds maintenance service charge to bring it in line with the average cost of other housing associations to be able to carry out a service as requested by Tenant Services Management Board (TSMB). The increase in the service charge is £539k resulting in an increase in the service charge from 81p per household to £1.84 per household. The greatest increases in cost are as follows:
- Weed killing service provision at £78k
  - Annual tree maintenance at £63k
  - Additional 2 cuts of grass at 62k

This is an on-going cost for the foreseeable future. This was approved by TSMB on 25 September 2017.

## **5 Dwelling Rents for 2018/19**

- 5.1 Dwelling rents for approximately 5,800 properties provides annual income of approximately £23.7m for the HRA.
- 5.2 The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 sets out a 1% reduction in social housing rents from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 for four years. For the first year, 2016/17, supported housing rents were exempt, but all social rents are to be included for the remaining three years.
- 5.3 Prior to this legislation Local Authorities had the power and duty to set their own rents. During the four year period rents must be set with at least a 1% reduction, but Members could choose to reduce rents by more than 1% if they wish. Each additional 0.5% decrease would reduce the average weekly rent for tenants by £0.42, or £21.84 per year, and decrease dwelling rent income to the HRA of £123k per year, therefore a 1% decrease equates to £246k per year.
- 5.4 In line with the national rent guidance it is proposed that the average weekly rent for dwellings for 2018/19 should be set at the guideline rent of £81.69, a decrease of 1.0%, or £0.83 per week (there is a small difference due to rounding each weekly rent to the nearest penny).
- 5.5 It was expected from the Housing and Planning Act that from April 2017 tenants with a household income of over £31,000 would need to pay additional rent (up to market rents, based on their income) under 'Pay to Stay'. It was announced in November 2016 that this policy is no longer being implemented and social housing providers (both local authorities and housing associations) will continue to have discretion – but are not mandated – to charge a higher rent on tenants with a household income of over £60,000.

- 5.6 Any additional income raised from the Pay to Stay policy (less administration expenses) would have been repaid to Government and so this wouldn't have directly affected the Business Plan, however it was expected that this policy would increase Right to Buys in the short term as the tenants who would have been affected by higher rents are likely to be those more able and willing to secure a mortgage. As this policy is no longer being implemented the assumption of Right to Buys (RTBs) has been reduced in the Business Plan from 60 per year, down to 40 for a three year period, reflecting the current level of RTBs. After this the provision for RTB returns to 30 per year. For 2018/19 this equates to expected additional income of £128k, although expected capital receipts from RTB will reduce.
- 5.7 Taunton Deane previously decided not to pursue increased rents for tenants earning over £60,000 per year, as the cost of administration was likely to be higher than the additional income and so no assumptions have been included in the budget.
- 5.8 Rent lost through void periods continue to be lower than the 2% allowed in the Business Plan. Future changes, such as the introduction of flexible tenancies, where new tenants are offered a fixed term tenancy which is renewed if appropriate may affect this in the future, but it is deemed appropriate to reduce the expected void rate to 1% for a two year period. This will be reviewed within future Business Plan reviews. This reduction in void rate from 2% to 1% increases the rental expectation in 2018/19 by £205k.
- 5.9 These changes give a total forecast dwelling rent income of £24.1m.
- 5.10 On 4 October 2017 the Department for Communities and Local Government announced that "increases to social housing rents will be limited to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1% for 5 years from 2020." Dwelling rents are forecast to increase by £237k over the current business plan to £24.3m from £24.1m.

## 6 Other Income

- 6.1 About 9.8% of HRA income, amounting to £2.6m in total, comes from non-dwelling rent (mainly garages, but also shops and land), charges for services and facilities, and contributions to HRA costs from leaseholders and others. The proposed changes to specific budget lines reflect changes recommended to Council in the Fees and Charges paper.
- 6.2 **Garage rents:** a 3.9% increase to £6.17, an increase of £0.23 per week for tenants, representing RPI inflation at September 2017 (last year 2.0%). An increase of 7%, or £0.66 per week, to £10.00 (including VAT) for private garage tenants and second Council tenant garages.
- 6.3 **Charges for services and facilities:** an increase of 2.0% (last year 0.8%). Budgets for service charges have been reset in line with the current stock, and budgets added for annual service charges to leaseholders and rechargeable

repairs for current and former tenants. Charges to leaseholders will continue to be based on actual costs incurred.

- 6.4 **Extra Care service charges:** As previously reported, Somerset County Council (SCC) has changed the way in which it procures Extra Care Housing. From April 2017 both the care and support elements were combined in one contract. Taunton Deane Borough Council has ceased to provide the Extra Care Support, although an element of Housing Related support is still being provided with the services charges amended accordingly. This represented an increase in the housing related support element (the part which Taunton Deane will retain), which is eligible for Housing Benefit and current self-funded tenants will be protected from the increase.
- 6.5 A review of the sheltered housing contract we have with SCC was always due to happen post October 2018 when our current contract expires. In large measure our sheltered housing service model was changed in 2016/17 so that it is funded through housing benefit. Our sheltered housing tenants pay a weekly charge for our Sheltered Housing Officers (SHO) to provide tenant empowerment, community development and additional housing management services. The funding we currently get from SCC largely pays for SHOs to deliver housing related support to those tenants with high or higher support needs.
- 6.6 **Contributions towards expenditure:** contributions from the General Fund to cover a share of costs in the HRA for works on estates where people have bought their homes under Right to Buy. There are approximately 4,700 privately owned homes on HRA estates compared to around 5,800 HRA stock. Those private households pay their share of HRA estate management costs, such as grounds maintenance, through their council tax and the General Fund.
- 6.7 **Supporting People funding:** Somerset County Council continues to purchase Supporting People services from TDBC for sheltered housing, but not for Extra Care Housing.

## 7 Expenditure 2018/19

- 7.1 Below are brief descriptions of the main areas of spending with explanations of any significant changes to the currently approved Business Plan.-
- 7.2 **Management expenses:** These include the costs of the teams administering tenancies, collecting rents and arranging or planning maintenance work as well as a share of the Council's other relevant costs. The Business Plan included standard inflation assumptions.
- 7.3 Key changes for 2018/19 are:
- a) Apprenticeship levy – the HRA share of Taunton Deane's Apprenticeship Levy is expected to be £20k.

- 7.4 **Maintenance:** The total cost of maintenance for 2018/19 is expected to decrease by £465k to £5.7m. This equates to spend of around £977 per property.
- 7.5 Key points for 2018/19 are:
- a) Electrical testing will now be carried out by an in-house team, which is now in place and cost neutral to the HRA Financial Business Plan. The testing will be programmed on an ongoing basis rather than over a three year external contract and the budget has been amended accordingly. In the short term this is funded from earmarked reserves (which has built up over the last two financial years) and so the decrease in funding needed has been reflected in a reduction in transfer from the earmarked reserve.
  - b) The gas servicing and maintenance team was brought in-house for the 2017/18 year and will remain in house for 2018/19.
- 7.6 **Transformation:** The Business Plan includes savings of approximately £832k over a five year period, which is higher than the savings included in the Corporate Transformation Business Case. It is expected that these savings will primarily come from the ongoing transformation of Repairs and Maintenance, although the whole service will be affected by the transformation programme. The first annual saving of £166k has been found within maintenance budgets through the reorganisation of the service and the expectation that more work will be done in-house.
- 7.7 **Special Services:** Special services includes spend on communal areas, such as grounds maintenance and cleaning costs. It also includes Sheltered Housing and Extra Care schemes.
- 7.8 **Provision for bad debts:** The Business Plan increased the provision for bad debt to 2% (from 0.5%) for a period of three years. This is to mitigate the expected reduction in recovery of income due to the implementation of Universal Credit. In 2018/19 this is to be covered by a transfer from the bad debt earmarked reserve.
- 7.9 **Depreciation:** Depreciation is transferred to the Major Repairs Reserve (MRR) and must be used to fund the capital programme and/or repay debt. From 2018/19 depreciation will need to be included within the HRA accounts on a component accounting basis. This means depreciation will need to be calculated on each of the major components of each house e.g. kitchen, bathroom, rather than being based on the Major Repairs Allowance (MRA), an estimation of the works needed to maintain the stock in good condition.
- 7.10 Pending full calculation of the depreciation charges and agreement of the policy with our external auditors, an amount equivalent to MRA is included. A decrease of £100k is expected against the Business Plan. If, after full calculation, the charge decreases further, an equal amount would be included as Revenue

Contribution to Capital Outlay (RCCO) in order to maintain the funding of the capital programme. Any increase in depreciation would need to come from general reserves in the immediate term and be factored into future revisions of the Business Plan.

- 7.11 **Debt Management Expenses:** bank charges and the costs of managing cash flow, borrowing and investments.
- 7.12 **Repayment of Borrowing and Interest:** interest and a contribution towards the repayment of the debt currently held in the HRA of £91.0m. The contribution towards the repayment of debt is £1.8m in 2018/19, in line with the Business Plan. In addition to this internal borrowing stands at £10.5m. This leaves £19.3m of borrowing headroom before the debt cap is reached.
- 7.13 **Interest receivable:** based on an estimated interest rate on investments.
- 7.14 **Social Housing Development Fund:** the revenue contribution made towards the development programme of £1.9m. In 2018/19 some of this funding will need to be replaced by capital receipts (non-Right to Buy), in order to fund the HRA's contribution towards Transformation costs as approved in the Business Case. This does not affect the funding available for development, or the revenue position of the HRA.

## **8 Appropriations**

- 8.1 **Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay (RCCO):** – RCCO pays for capital works costing more than the available funding in the Major Repairs Reserve (MRR), including the transfer from depreciation. The capital programme in 2018/19 can be fully funded from the forecasted balance in the MRR and so no budget is included for RCCO.

## **9 Summary of Movements in Draft 2018/19 HRA Estimates**

- 9.1 The following table provides a summary of the main changes to the budget estimates for the HRA Revenue Account since the approval of the HRA Business Plan.

Table 2: HRA Budget 2018/19 Changes

	Reference Paragraph	£k
<b>Position in Business Plan (transfer from HRA Reserves)</b>		<b>84.0</b>
<b>Changes for 2018/19 Budget:</b>		
Service charges	6.3/6.4	-352.2
Garages	6.2	-9.4
Leasehold Charges		-50.1
Repairs and maintenance savings	7.4	-626.4
Management savings		-185.5
Depreciation	7.9	-55.1
Increase in pension deficit contribution		45.9
Inflation costs excluding salaries		936.6
Staff 2% pay award and pay grade change		250.0
Other minor changes		-51.4
<b>Balanced budget for 2018/19 i.e. net transfer to reserves</b>		<b>-13.6</b>

## 10 HRA Reserves

- 10.1 As set out in the HRA Business Plan the recommended minimum unearmarked reserve balance for the HRA is £1.8m (approximately £300 per property). The reserve balance as at 1 April 2017 was £3.224m. There have not been any approved changes during the year from unearmarked reserves.
- 10.2 If the draft budget in this report is approved by Council, assuming no further changes, the balance would increase by £136k, to £3.4m. This is £1.6m over the minimum reserve balance, however this balance is expected to be used in 2018/19 and the reserve will be held at the minimum recommended balance of £1.8m.
- 10.3 Appendix A shows the forecasted position over the medium term based on this draft budget. This is subject to transfers to or from HRA general reserves in 2017/18, and any changes.

## 11 Risks and Uncertainties

- 11.1 The HRA faces a number of risks and uncertainties, both external to the Council and internal changes.
- 11.2 A number of legislative changes are being implemented, as reported in HRA Estimates 2016/17 and the HRA Business Plan Review.
- 11.3 Universal Credit – it is not known what impact the full roll out of Universal Credit will have on the HRA. The HRA has already taken steps to try and prevent loss of income where possible. Tenants are now able to pay through direct debits on any day of the month (rather than only three options previously) in order to allow them to make payments on the same day as their Universal Credit payment, salary, pension or other income. There are also currently additional officers working within the One Teams such as a Welfare Reform Officer and an

additional Debt and Benefit Advisor in order to support tenants affected by welfare changes. However, the impact on social housing landlords in areas where Universal Credit has already been fully implemented has been significant.

- 11.4 Higher Value Asset Sales (Housing and Planning Act 2016) – this is the sale of vacant social housing with the proceeds being returned to Government in order to fund the extension of Right to Buy in Housing Associations.

The regulations have not yet been published, but it is expected that an amount will be payable to Government based on the value of the housing held by Taunton Deane Borough Council. However, it is expected that it will be determined locally how this funding is raised, and therefore it will not necessarily be funded through the sale of higher value housing. The financial value is not yet known.

It has been confirmed that no payment will be due in 2018/19 (letter from Sajid Javid MP, Secretary of State for Department of Communities and Local Government), therefore it is currently expected that this will commence from April 2019.

- 11.5 Local Housing Allowance (LHA) Rates - tenants in social housing will in future only be able to claim Housing Benefit up to the LHA rate. This is determined by the Valuation Office Agency and is based on local rents. Currently the LHA rates are only applicable for Housing Benefit claims in private rented stock. From April 2019 it has been announced that this will also apply to tenants in social housing.

In Taunton Deane this may have an impact on some of our Supported Housing residents, as the LHA rate includes service charges which are higher in Supported Housing, and single claimants under 35, who will only be eligible for the shared accommodation rate (currently £64.14 per week). Officers will continue to consider what support can be provided to individuals affected. The majority of Taunton Deane housing is within the LHA rates for the area.

- 11.6 Fixed term tenancies (Housing and Planning Act 2016) – Councils will be required to review tenancies every five years rather than granting a lifetime tenancy, with extensions for tenants with a disability or school age children. This is expected to be in place for April 2018 and will impact on the way in which tenancies are managed.

- 11.7 The HRA also faces local risks including those within the Council.

- 11.8 Transformation – Savings from Transformation are included within the ongoing Business Plan (paragraph 7.6). If these savings aren't achieved the financial position of the Business Plan will be affected.

- 11.9 Extra Care Housing - as reported in paragraphs 6.4 and 6.5 the Extra Care



Housing service provision is being reviewed by SCC. SCC are due to award a new contract for both Care and Support. Taunton Deane will continue to provide the Support element throughout 2018/19 with the current contract with SCC expiring in October 2018.

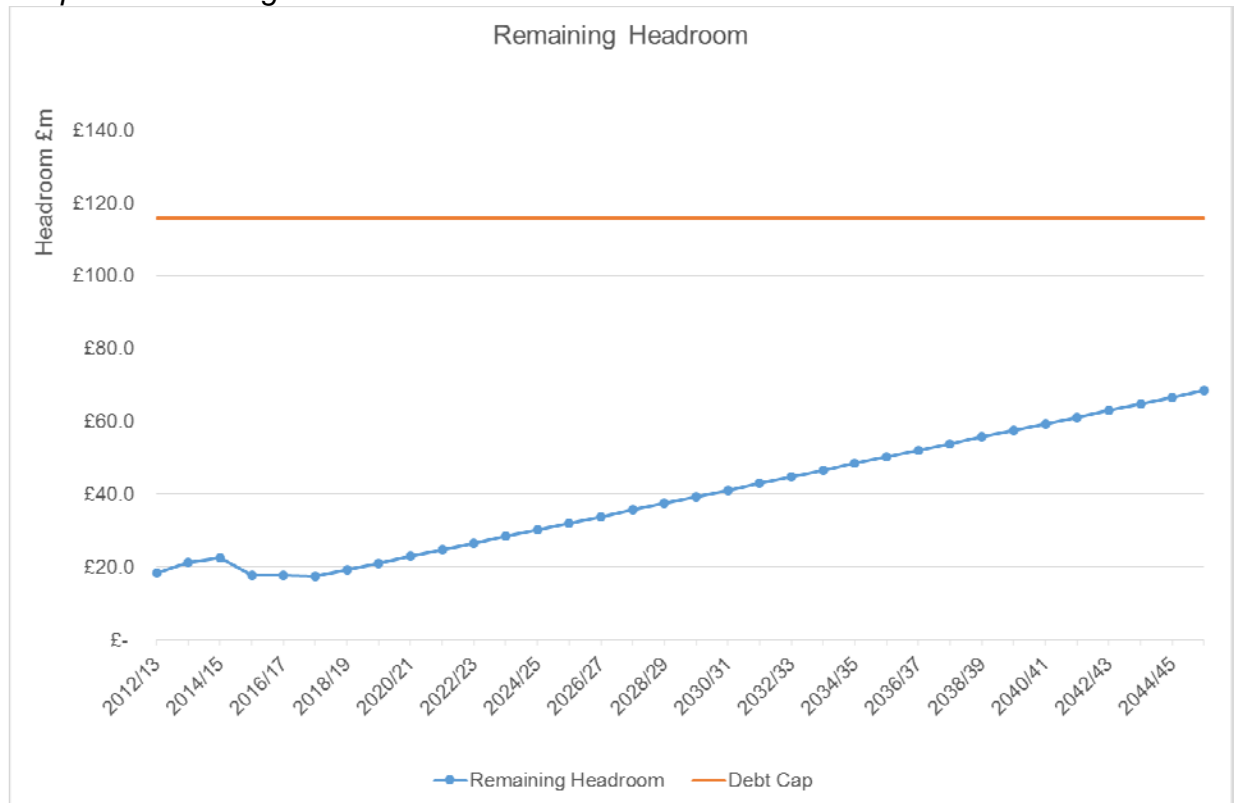
- 11.10 Asbestos – significant progress has been made in implementing processes and procedures to ensure the Council meets its duties under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012. Detailed analysis is nearing completion which will identify the Council's short, medium and long-term financial liabilities for asbestos. The outcome will be compared with budgetary provision within the HRA Financial Business Plan and relevant earmark reserves, so as to schedule an affordable asbestos management plan.

## 12 **HRA Borrowing**

- 12.1 In 2012 Taunton Deane took out additional borrowing of £85.2m as part of the self-financing settlement with the Government. This brought the total borrowing in the HRA up to £99.6m at the start of self-financing, including £5.5m internal borrowing from the General Fund.
- 12.2 The opening balance of external borrowing currently totals £91.0m with an additional £10.5m of internal borrowing within the HRA (for approved capital schemes such as Creechbarrow Road and the Phase 1 sites). This internal borrowing is currently funded from reserves held by the HRA, but external borrowing will be required in the short term. Repayment of £3.0m will be made during 2018/19.
- 12.3 An annual provision of £1.8m for repayment of debt is included in the Business Plan, and ongoing repayments of borrowing will be made, with refinancing of loans occurring where necessary (in line with the repayment of borrowing over 60 years as approved in the Business Plan).
- 12.4 The headroom – the amount available to borrow up to the Government set debt cap for Taunton Deane HRA – is due to increase annually, as no additional borrowing is included within the Business Plan. Therefore the headroom is available to be allocated as new borrowing to future development schemes ie those over and above the 15 units already included in the Business Plan.
- 12.5 The Headroom in 2018/19 is expected to be £19.3m, and will increase annually by £1.8m (the provision made in revenue for the repayment of debt), until further borrowing is agreed by Council. The intention is for this borrowing headroom to be available for the larger regeneration schemes that can't be funded from the ongoing Social Housing Development Fund budget.

The following graph shows the current forecast for headroom over the Business Plan, but this will change as borrowing is allocated to schemes.

*Graph 1: Borrowing Headroom forecast*



### 13 Right to Buy (RTB) Receipts

- 13.1 In 2012 the maximum discounts offered to tenants who exercise their Right to Buy increased significantly to £77k (which rises with inflation). Taunton Deane signed up to retain the additional receipts, and agreed that these receipts would be used to fund new affordable housing. The additional RTB receipts can only account for 30% of spend on new housing, with the remaining 70% coming from other funds such as revenue funding or borrowing. The RTB receipts can't be used in the same scheme as other Government funding such as Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) funding.
- 13.2 The full spend on new housing (the 30% RTB funding and 70% Council funding) should be spent within three years of the capital receipt, or the RTB receipt must be returned to Government with interest at 4% over base rate from the date of the receipt. Receipts can be returned in the quarter in which they are received with no interest payable.
- 13.3 The below table shows the capital receipts received under the new RTB discount scheme, along with how much of those receipts are deemed to be 'Additional

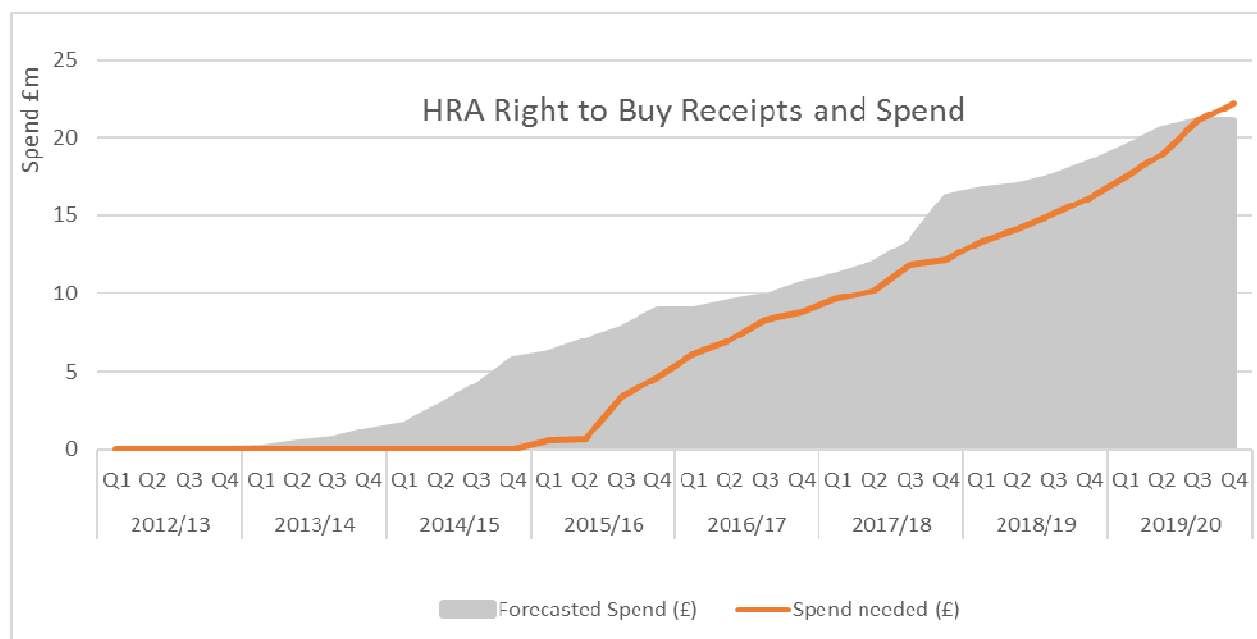
receipts', ie those which can be retained and used for new housing, and the total amount that would need to be spent in order to fully retain them.

Table 3: Right to Buy receipts

	Total 2012/13	Total 2013/14	Total 2014/15	Total 2015/16	Total 2016/17	2017/18		Total to date
						Q1	Q2	
<b>Sales</b>	37	47	35	38	44	10	13	224
<b>Total Receipts (£k)</b>	2,330.4	2,704.6	2,316.6	2,665.7	3,568.1	709.4	899.0	15,193.8
<b>1-4-1 Receipts (£k)</b>	1,233.7	1,230.5	1,004.9	1,192.7	1,816.7	308.8	408.6	7,195.9
<b>Spend Required (£k)</b>	4,112.4	4,101.5	3,349.6	3,975.6	6,055.8	1,029.2	1,362.2	23,986.2

13.4 The latest forecast shows that forecasted spend will be enough to meet the match funding requirements to quarter 3 of 2019/20. This is based only on currently approved budgets (including the ongoing provision of £1.9m), and doesn't include any additional schemes funded through borrowing. It is possible to borrow for additional schemes, within the borrowing headroom in Section 11, but many schemes may not be able to repay the capital and interest costs from the rental income. This would create a net revenue cost to the HRA which would impact the Business Plan.

Graph 2: Right to Buy Receipts and forecasted spend



13.5 It should be noted that the new housing doesn't need to be provided by the Council. The 30% RTB funding could also be used by Housing Associations in the area, providing they meet the same match funding requirements.

- 13.6 Further options for the 70% match funding of RTB receipts in excess of planned development expenditure.
- Increase spend through borrowing – limited to debt cap
  - Increase spend from revenue – would lead to reduced service provision as revenue is allocated within the Business Plan
  - Use other Council funding
  - Return funding to Government
- 13.9 The requirement for the funding to be spent within three years does mean that there is flexibility to allocate funding after the capital receipts are retained. However development schemes are likely to have large lead in times and so receipts should be allocated as soon as possible to reduce the risk of having to repay the capital receipt to Government with interest payments.

#### 14 2018/19 HRA Capital Programme

- 14.1 The proposed Draft HRA Capital Programme 2018/19 totals £8.97m. This is provided to deliver the prioritised capital investment requirements included in the current Business Plan for the next budget year. The current 5-Year HRA Capital Programme is shown below, which includes forecast capital expenditure requirements for the period 2018/19 to 2022/23, as identified in the Business Plan.
- 14.2 This report does not include schemes that have been previously approved where the spending is planned to be incurred in 2018/19.

**Table 4: Draft HRA Capital Programme 2018/19**

Project	Total Cost £k
Major Works	5,800
Improvements	150
Exceptional Extensive Works	492
Disabled Facilities Grants and Aids and Adaptations	381
Building Services Vehicles	121
Social Housing Development Fund	2,029
<b>Total Proposed HRA Capital Programme 2018/19</b>	<b>8,973</b>

- 14.3 Members are being asked to approve the Capital Maintenance and Improvement Works Programme budget for 2018/19 at £8.973m.
- 14.4 It is proposed that the HRA capital programme for 2018/19 shown above is funded from the Major Repairs Reserve (from depreciation), revenue contribution (RCCO) from the Social Housing Development Fund, and capital receipts (Right to Buy).

14.5 A summary of the estimated funding available before the funding of the 2017/18 capital programme is shown in the table below:

**Table 5: Funding Estimates**

<b>General Fund</b>	<b>2018/19 £k</b>
Major Repairs Reserve	6,944
Social Housing Development Fund (RCCO)	1,170
Capital Receipts	859
<b>TOTAL Funding</b>	<b>8,973</b>

### **Major Works**

14.6 This line in the capital programme covers a number of areas of spend. The Council is required to maintain decent homes standards ensuring items are replaced as and when needed.

14.7 The detail used to make up the budget is shown in the table below and this is what the budget line is expected to be spent on. This is subject to change depending on factors such as contractor availability, and any changes to the profile of spend will be agreed with the Director for the service.

**Table 6: Major Works**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Total Cost £</b>
Bathrooms	1,400
Heating Systems	1,400
Fire Safety Work	1,000
Fasciae and Soffits	1,200
Insulation	800
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,800</b>

14.8 Major Works includes the following:

- Bathrooms: This is for the replacement of bathrooms as and when required.
- Heating Systems: The replacement and upgrade of boilers and heating systems.
- Fasciae, Soffits and Rainwater Goods: This is for replacement where necessary.
- Fire Safety Works: This is to fund works identified on the TDBC action plan following the fire in a block of flats. The action plan was accepted by the Fire Service.
- Insulation: The upgrade of insulation, for example cavity wall and loft insulation in dwellings.

### **Improvements**

- 14.9 A budget of £150k for estate improvements is included in the HRA capital programme, as identified in the Business Plan.

### **Exceptional/Extensive Works**

- 14.10 This project is for works such as asbestos removal and subsidence works to the Council's non-traditional properties. A budget of £492k is included in the 2018/19 programme for asbestos removal.

### **Disabled Facilities and Aids and Adaptations**

- 14.11 This is an annual recurring budget for small and large scale home aids and adaptations in tenants' homes where there are mobility issues. This budget is demand led by requests from tenants or through recommendations by occupational therapists or other healthcare professionals. Applications are made through the Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership.
- 14.12 The demand for adaptations has been historically lower than budget and provision was made in the Business Plan for a phased reduction from £435k to £300k over a five year period. This will be done line with a number of steps being taken, such as moving towards more cost effective installations of wet floor shower rooms through a new fixed price contract; switching from concrete ramps to better value metal modular ramps; and a move toward stairlift loans and recycling, rather than purchases. These measures will ensure that the service stays within reduced budgets without impacting tenants.

### **Building Services Vehicles**

- 14.13 The transfer of Building Services from the DLO to the HRA means that the HRA will need to hold a budget for any new/replacement vehicles needed. This will be funded from depreciation within Building Services, which has previously been included within the hourly rate to the HRA, and so does not increase the net cost to the HRA.

### **Social Housing Development Fund**

- 14.14 The budget for the Social Housing Development Fund is for new development/redevelopment of housing. This budget represents an ongoing programme averaging 15 units a year. For 2018/19 this is increased to £2.03m.

### **HRA 5-Year Capital Programme**

- 14.15 The current 5-year capital programme is included for information and is shown in the table below.

**Table 7: Draft HRA 5-Year Capital Programme**

	2018/19 £m	2019/20 £m	2020/21 £m	2021/22 £m	2022/23 £m	5-Year Total £m
Capital Programme	8.973	9.616	9.748	7.665	7.769	43.771

**Contact Officers:**

Andrew Stark  
Interim Finance Manager  
Tel: 01823 219490  
Email: a.stark@tauntondeane.gov.uk

Christopher Mainstone  
Senior Accountant  
Tel: 01823 219487  
Email: c.mainstone@tauntondeane.gov.uk

**APPENDIX A  
HRA Draft Budget 2018/19 and MTFP**

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
	Target Budget	Draft Budget	Forecasted Budget	Forecasted Budget	Forecasted Budget	Forecasted Budget
<b>Income</b>						
Dwelling rents	(24,450)	(24,142)	(23,691)	(24,093)	(24,524)	(24,960)
Non dwelling rents	(617)	(628)	(641)	(653)	(666)	(678)
Service charges	(1,138)	(1,444)	(1,127)	(1,149)	(1,170)	(1,193)
Other income	(462)	(391)	(320)	(326)	(332)	(338)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(26,667)</b>	<b>(26,605)</b>	<b>(25,779)</b>	<b>(26,221)</b>	<b>(26,692)</b>	<b>(27,169)</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>						
Repairs and maintenance	6,193	6,134	5,662	5,365	5,109	5,140
Management	6,774	6,637	6,193	6,205	6,338	6,474
Rents and rates	373	385	386	414	429	445
Special management	1,288	1,321	1,197	1,169	1,194	1,221
Provision for bad debt	507	502	502	125	128	130
Debt Management Expenses	8	8	9	9	9	9
Depreciation	6,715	6,781	6,771	6,747	6,732	6,717
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>21,858</b>	<b>21,768</b>	<b>20,720</b>	<b>20,034</b>	<b>19,939</b>	<b>20,136</b>
<b>Other Expenditure</b>						
Contribution to CDC	225	229	234	238	243	248
Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay	-	-	-	477	677	605
Interest Payable	2,742	2,742	3,065	2,995	3,075	3,293
Investment Income	(70)	(132)	(60)	(60)	(60)	(60)
Social Housing Development Fund	1,185	1,170	1,170	1,200	1,220	1,351
Provision for repayment of debt	1,821	1,821	1,821	1,821	1,821	1,821
Transfers to/(from) earmarked reserves	(851)	(1,007)	(727)	(478)	(218)	(218)
Transfers to/(from) HRA general reserves	(243)	14	(444)	(6)	(5)	(7)
<b>Total Other</b>	<b>4,809</b>	<b>4,837</b>	<b>5,059</b>	<b>6,187</b>	<b>6,753</b>	<b>7,033</b>
<b>Balanced Budget</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>HRA General Reserves</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>
Opening Balance	3,224	2,981	2,995	2,551	2,545	2,540
Transfers to/from reserves	(243)	14	(444)	(6)	(5)	(7)
Closing Balance	2,981	2,995	2,551	2,545	2,540	2,533



# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Full Council – 22 February 2018

### Council Tax Setting 2018/2019

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

Report Author: Andrew Stark, Interim Financial Services Manager

#### 1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is for Full Council to approve the calculation and setting of the Council Tax for 2018/19.

#### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Council approve the formal Council Tax Resolution in Appendix A.
- 2.2 That Council notes that if the formal Council Tax Resolution at Appendix A is approved, the total Band D Council Tax will be:

	2017/18	2018/19	Increase
	£	£	%
Taunton Deane Borough Council	147.88	152.88	3.38
Taunton Deane Borough Council - SRA	1.74	1.74	0.00
Somerset County Council	1,069.52	1,103.15	2.99
Somerset County Council – Social Care	42.43	76.17	3.00
Somerset County Council – SRA	12.84	12.84	0.00
Police and Crime Commissioner	181.81	193.81	6.60
Devon & Somerset Fire Authority	81.57	84.01	2.99
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>1,537.79</b>	<b>1,624.60</b>	<b>5.65</b>
Town and Parish Council (average)	18.76	19.74	5.22
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,556.55</b>	<b>1,644.34</b>	<b>5.64</b>

### 3 Risk Assessment (if appropriate)

#### Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
The key risk is that the Council does not approve the council tax requirement in the correct format.	Possible (3)	Major (4)	Medium (12)
<i>The mitigation for this is that the Council uses the attached CIPFA format to approve the council tax requirement.</i>	Rare (1)	Major (4)	Low (4)

#### Risk Scoring Matrix

Likelihood	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 Under changes to the Local Government Finance Act 1992 introduced through the Localism Act 2011, billing authorities are required to calculate a Council Tax Requirement for the year.

## **Precept Levels**

### **Town and Parish Councils**

- 4.2 The 2018/19 Town and Parish Council Precepts are detailed in Appendix C and total £819,022.00. The increase in the average Band D Council Tax for Town and Parish Councils is 5.22% and results in an average Band D Council Tax figure of £19.74 (£18.76 for 2017/18).

### **Police and Crime Commissioner**

- 4.3 The Police and Crime Commissioner approved its council tax requirement on 1 February 2018. The precept will be £8,040,307.93 which results in a Band D Council Tax of £193.81, an increase of 6.60%. The Precept will be adjusted by a Collection Fund surplus of £69,821.00. Details of the Council Tax charge can be seen in Appendix B.

### **Somerset County Council**

- 4.4 The County Council approved its Council Tax requirement on 21 February 2018 and set its precept at £49,458,314.77 which will be adjusted by a Collection Fund surplus of £431,963. This is calculated as an increase on base of 2.99% for the general precept and 3.00% for Adult Social Care and results in a total Band D Council Tax of £1,192.16. This figure also includes a precept of £12.84 (1.25%) in respect of the Somerset Rivers Authority which is unchanged from the 2017/18 precept. Details of the Council Tax charge can be seen in Appendix B.

### **Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service**

- 4.5 The Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority approved its Council Tax requirement on 16 February 2018 and set its precept at £3,485,264.00; an increase of 2.99%, adjusted by a Collection Fund surplus of £31,326.00. This results in a Band D Council Tax of £84.01 and details can be found in Appendix B to this report.

### **Taunton Deane Borough Council**

- 4.6 Members are being asked to approve a total Council Tax requirement of £6,414,612 for TDBC for 2018/19, which equates to a Band D equivalent of £154.62; a total increase of £5.00 for 2018/19. This incorporates an increase of 3.38% in the Band D basic tax rate element and also includes £1.74 in respect of the Somerset Rivers Authority, which is unchanged from 2017/18.

### **Collection Fund Surpluses and Deficits**

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

4.8 The estimated balance on the Council Tax Collection Fund is a surplus of £597,774.00. Taunton Deane's share of this amounts to £64,664.00, and this is reflected in the General Fund revenue estimates.

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

5.1 None for the purposes of this report.

## **6 Finance / Resource Implications**

6.1 This is a finance report and there are no additional comments.

## **7 Legal Implications**

7.1 The requirement to set the annual determination is set out in the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended by the Localism Act 2011, and this report complies with those requirement.

## **8 Environmental Impact Implications**

8.1 None for the purposes of this report.

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

9.1 None for the purposes of this report.

## **10 Equality and Diversity Implications**

10.1 None for the purposes of this report.

## **11 Social Value Implications**

11.1 None for the purposes of this report.

## **12 Partnership Implications**

12.1 None for the purposes of this report.

## **13 Health and Wellbeing Implications**

13.1 None for the purposes of this report

## **14 Asset Management Implications**

14.1 None for the purposes of this report.

## **15 Consultation Implications**

15.1 None for the purposes of this report.

## 16 Scrutiny Comments / Recommendation(s)

16.1 None for the purposes of this report.

### Democratic Path:

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

Reporting Frequency: Annually

### List of Appendices (delete if not applicable)

Appendix A	Council Tax Calculation and Bandings 2018-19
Appendix B	Council Tax Schedule Per Valuation Band 2018-19
Appendix C	Town and Parish Precepts 2018-19

### Contact Officers

Name	Andrew Stark	Name	Steve Plenty
Direct Dial	01823 219490	Direct Dial	01984 600173
Email	<a href="mailto:a.stark@tauntonedeane.gov.uk">a.stark@tauntonedeane.gov.uk</a>	Email	<a href="mailto:sjplenty@westsomerset.gov.uk">sjplenty@westsomerset.gov.uk</a>

**The Council is recommended to resolve as follows:**

1. It be noted that the Council calculated the Council Tax Base 2018/19
  - (a) for the whole Council area as **41,486.30** [Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the Act)] (**the tax base for the whole district**); and
  - (b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept relates as in the attached Appendix C (**the tax base for each parish or town council area**).
  
2. Calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2018/19 (excluding Parish precepts) is £6,414,612.
  
3. That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2018/19 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:

(a)	£58,875,808	being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act; (expenditure, including all precepts issued to it by parish and town councils).
(b)	£51,642,174	being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act (income, including government grants, benefits subsidy and adjustments for surpluses on the Collection Fund).
(c)	£7,233,634	being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act; as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act); (expenditure less income).
(d)	£174.36	being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year; (this is an overall average amount of Council Tax, per Band D property including Parish precepts).
(e)	£819,022	being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as per the attached Appendix C).
(f)	£154.62	being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates (the District Council element of the tax for Band D dwellings).

4. To note that the County Council, the Police Authority and the Fire Authority have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated in the table below.
  
5. That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in the table below as the amounts of Council Tax for 2018/19 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings. The table

excludes parish and town precepts and special expenses.

**VALUATION BANDS**

**TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH  
COUNCIL**

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£103.08	£120.26	£137.44	£154.62	£188.98	£223.34	£257.70	£309.24

**SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL**

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£794.76	£927.24	£1,059.70	£1,192.16	£1,457.08	£1,722.01	£1,986.93	£2,384.32

**POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR AVON AND SOMERSET**

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£129.21	£150.74	£172.28	£193.81	£236.88	£279.95	£323.02	£387.62

**DEVON AND SOMERSET FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES**

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£56.01	£65.34	£74.68	£84.01	£102.68	£121.35	£140.02	£168.02

**AGGREGATE OF COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENTS**

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£1,083.06	£1,263.58	£1,444.10	£1,624.60	£1,985.62	£2,346.65	£2,707.67	£3,249.20

Valuation Bands									
Council Tax Schedule	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H	
2018/19	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Taunton Deane Borough Council	101.92	118.91	135.89	152.88	186.85	220.83	254.80	305.76	
Taunton Deane Borough Council (Somerset Rivers Authority)	1.16	1.35	1.55	1.74	2.13	2.51	2.90	3.48	
Somerset County Council	735.43	858.01	980.58	1,103.15	1,348.29	1,593.44	1,838.58	2,206.30	
Somerset County Council (Social Care)	50.78	59.24	67.71	76.17	93.10	110.02	126.95	152.34	
Somerset County Council (Somerset Rivers Authority)	8.55	9.99	11.41	12.84	15.69	18.55	21.40	25.68	
Police and Crime Commissioner	129.21	150.74	172.28	193.81	236.88	279.95	323.02	387.62	
Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority	56.01	65.34	74.68	84.01	102.68	121.35	140.02	168.02	
<b>Totals excluding Parish/Town Precepts</b>	<b>1,083.06</b>	<b>1,263.58</b>	<b>1,444.10</b>	<b>1,624.60</b>	<b>1,985.62</b>	<b>2,346.65</b>	<b>2,707.67</b>	<b>3,249.20</b>	
Average Parish / Town	13.16	15.35	17.54	19.74	24.13	28.52	32.90	39.48	
<b>Total including Average Parish/Town Precept</b>	<b>1,096.22</b>	<b>1,278.93</b>	<b>1,461.64</b>	<b>1,644.34</b>	<b>2,009.75</b>	<b>2,375.17</b>	<b>2,740.57</b>	<b>3,288.68</b>	
<b>Parish:</b>									
Ash Priors	1,083.06	1,263.58	1,444.10	1,624.60	1,985.62	2,346.65	2,707.67	3,249.20	
Ashbrittle	1,097.99	1,281.00	1,464.01	1,647.00	2,013.00	2,379.01	2,745.00	3,294.00	
Bathealton	1,086.87	1,268.02	1,449.18	1,630.31	1,992.60	2,354.90	2,717.19	3,260.63	
Bishops Hull	1,095.57	1,278.17	1,460.78	1,643.36	2,008.55	2,373.75	2,738.94	3,286.72	
Bishops Lydeard/Cothelstone	1,111.51	1,286.78	1,482.04	1,667.28	2,037.78	2,408.30	2,778.80	3,334.56	
Bradford on Tone	1,098.28	1,281.34	1,464.39	1,647.43	2,013.52	2,379.63	2,745.72	3,294.86	
Burrowbridge	1,103.01	1,286.85	1,470.70	1,654.52	2,022.19	2,389.87	2,757.54	3,309.04	
Cheddon Fitzpaine	1,103.01	1,286.86	1,470.70	1,654.53	2,022.20	2,389.88	2,757.55	3,309.06	
Chipstable	1,099.48	1,282.74	1,465.99	1,649.23	2,015.72	2,382.23	2,748.72	3,298.46	
Churchstanton	1,100.32	1,283.72	1,467.11	1,650.49	2,017.26	2,384.05	2,750.82	3,300.98	
Combe Florey	1,104.85	1,289.00	1,473.15	1,657.28	2,025.56	2,393.85	2,762.14	3,314.56	
Comeytrowe	1,090.96	1,272.80	1,454.63	1,636.45	2,000.10	2,363.77	2,727.42	3,272.90	
Corfe	1,097.89	1,280.88	1,463.87	1,646.84	2,012.80	2,378.77	2,744.74	3,293.68	
Cotford St Luke	1,102.99	1,286.84	1,470.68	1,654.50	2,022.16	2,389.84	2,757.50	3,309.00	
Creech St Michael	1,113.09	1,288.62	1,484.14	1,669.65	2,040.68	2,411.72	2,782.75	3,339.30	
Durston	1,098.22	1,281.27	1,464.31	1,647.34	2,013.41	2,379.50	2,745.57	3,294.68	
Fitzhead	1,109.84	1,294.82	1,479.81	1,664.77	2,034.72	2,404.67	2,774.62	3,329.54	
Halse	1,095.49	1,278.08	1,460.67	1,643.24	2,008.40	2,373.57	2,738.74	3,286.48	
Hatch Beauchamp	1,099.50	1,282.76	1,466.02	1,649.26	2,015.76	2,382.27	2,748.77	3,298.52	
Kingston St Mary	1,098.53	1,281.63	1,464.73	1,647.81	2,013.99	2,380.18	2,746.35	3,295.62	
Langford Budville	1,099.95	1,283.29	1,466.62	1,649.94	2,016.59	2,383.25	2,749.90	3,299.88	
Lydeard St Lawrence/Tolland	1,095.92	1,278.58	1,461.25	1,643.89	2,009.20	2,374.51	2,739.82	3,287.78	
Milverton	1,111.80	1,297.11	1,482.42	1,667.71	2,038.31	2,408.92	2,779.52	3,335.42	
Neroche	1,095.38	1,277.95	1,460.53	1,643.08	2,008.21	2,373.34	2,738.47	3,286.16	
North Curry	1,099.25	1,282.46	1,465.68	1,648.88	2,015.30	2,381.72	2,748.14	3,297.76	
Norton Fitzwarren	1,100.85	1,284.33	1,467.82	1,651.28	2,018.23	2,385.19	2,752.14	3,302.56	
Nynehead	1,096.13	1,278.83	1,461.53	1,644.21	2,009.59	2,374.98	2,740.35	3,288.42	
Oake	1,094.67	1,277.12	1,459.58	1,642.01	2,006.90	2,371.80	2,736.69	3,284.02	
Otterford	1,083.06	1,263.58	1,444.10	1,624.60	1,985.62	2,346.65	2,707.67	3,249.20	
Pitminster	1,094.65	1,277.10	1,459.55	1,641.98	2,006.86	2,371.75	2,736.64	3,283.96	
Ruishton/Thornfalcon	1,107.65	1,292.27	1,476.89	1,661.49	2,030.71	2,399.94	2,769.15	3,322.98	
Sampford Arundel	1,113.73	1,299.36	1,484.99	1,670.60	2,041.84	2,413.09	2,784.34	3,341.20	
Staplegrove	1,090.80	1,272.61	1,454.42	1,636.21	1,999.81	2,363.42	2,727.02	3,272.42	
Stawley	1,094.65	1,277.10	1,459.55	1,641.98	2,006.86	2,371.75	2,736.64	3,283.96	
Stoke St Gregory	1,110.43	1,295.51	1,480.59	1,665.65	2,035.79	2,405.94	2,776.09	3,331.30	
Stoke St Mary	1,093.29	1,275.52	1,457.74	1,639.95	2,004.38	2,368.82	2,733.25	3,279.90	
Taunton	1,085.07	1,265.93	1,446.78	1,627.62	1,989.31	2,351.01	2,712.70	3,255.24	
Trull	1,101.30	1,284.86	1,468.42	1,651.96	2,019.06	2,386.17	2,753.27	3,303.92	
Wellington	1,110.81	1,295.95	1,481.10	1,666.22	2,036.49	2,406.77	2,777.04	3,332.44	
Wellington Without	1,097.11	1,279.97	1,462.83	1,645.67	2,011.37	2,377.08	2,742.79	3,291.34	
West Bagborough	1,096.65	1,279.43	1,462.22	1,644.98	2,010.53	2,376.09	2,741.64	3,289.96	
West Buckland	1,094.95	1,277.46	1,459.96	1,642.44	2,007.42	2,372.42	2,737.40	3,284.88	
West Hatch	1,095.81	1,278.46	1,461.10	1,643.73	2,009.00	2,374.28	2,739.55	3,287.46	
West Monkton	1,102.22	1,285.93	1,469.65	1,653.34	2,020.75	2,388.16	2,755.57	3,306.68	
Wiveliscombe	1,106.82	1,291.30	1,475.78	1,660.24	2,029.18	2,398.13	2,767.07	3,320.48	



## APPENDIX C

## TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL PRECEPTS

Parish/Town Council	2017/18			2018/19			Council Tax Increase
	Tax Base	Precept Levied	Council Tax Band D	Tax Base	Precept Levied	Council Tax Band D	
		£	£		£	£	
Ash Priors	79.67	-	-	81.39	-	-	0.00%
Ashbrittle	94.01	2,053	21.84	92.84	2,080	22.40	2.59%
Bathealton	89.05	650	7.30	87.51	500	5.71	-21.72%
Bishops Hull	1,136.89	21,328	18.76	1,167.36	21,900	18.76	0.00%
Bishops Lydeard/Cothelstone	1,131.59	44,132	39.00	1,148.11	49,000	42.68	9.43%
Bradford on Tone	306.68	7,000	22.83	306.67	7,000	22.83	0.00%
Burrowbridge	201.47	5,500	27.30	200.53	6,000	29.92	9.60%
Cheddon Fitzpaine	633.46	18,929	29.88	648.13	19,401	29.93	0.17%
Chipstable	131.97	3,156	23.92	131.32	3,235	24.63	3.00%
Churchstanton	363.47	9,410	25.89	366.53	9,489	25.89	0.00%
Combe Florey	122.69	4,000	32.60	122.41	4,000	32.68	0.23%
Comeytrove	2,019.81	23,915	11.84	2,017.29	23,896	11.85	0.05%
Corfe	133.32	2,750	20.63	134.92	3,000	22.24	7.80%
Cotford St Luke	780.75	20,300	26.00	789.35	23,600	29.90	14.99%
Creech St Michael	1,091.37	46,165	42.30	1,104.06	49,738	45.05	6.50%
Durston	55.39	600	10.83	57.17	1,300	22.74	109.92%
Fitzhead	118.66	3,600	30.34	117.15	4,706	40.17	32.41%
Halse	140.42	2,600	18.52	139.50	2,600	18.64	0.66%
Hatch Beauchamp	262.82	6,500	24.73	263.63	6,500	24.66	-0.31%
Kingston St Mary	461.36	8,061	17.47	442.68	10,274	23.21	32.83%
Langford Budville	235.31	6,840	29.07	236.78	6,000	25.34	-12.83%
Lydeard St Lawrence/Tolland	210.12	4,053	19.29	212.72	4,103	19.29	-0.02%
Milverton	584.24	20,000	34.23	579.97	25,000	43.11	25.92%
Neroche	247.67	4,446	17.95	247.79	4,580	18.48	2.96%
North Curry	722.57	17,312	23.96	741.42	18,000	24.28	1.33%
Norton Fitzwarren	1,139.35	30,400	26.68	1,193.69	31,850	26.68	0.00%
Nynehead	165.00	3,300	20.00	173.38	3,400	19.61	-1.95%
Oake	317.06	5,300	16.72	321.69	5,600	17.41	4.14%
Otterford	186.45	-	-	190.57	-	-	0.00%
Pitminster	479.45	7,973	16.63	489.03	8,500	17.38	4.52%
Ruishton/Thornfalcon	584.09	21,210	36.31	592.28	21,852	36.89	1.60%
Sampford Arundel	128.38	6,000	46.74	130.43	6,000	46.00	-1.57%
Staplegrove	806.61	8,500	10.54	809.47	9,400	11.61	10.20%
Stawley	139.45	2,400	17.21	138.08	2,400	17.38	0.99%
Stoke St Gregory	367.69	10,500	28.56	369.85	15,181	41.05	43.74%
Stoke St Mary	208.98	3,236	15.48	210.79	3,236	15.35	-0.86%
Taunton	14,966.85	44,901	3.00	15,077.37	45,534	3.02	0.67%
Trull	1,068.96	29,000	27.13	1,060.12	29,000	27.36	0.83%
Wellington	5,012.27	200,490	40.00	5,132.95	213,633	41.62	4.05%
Wellington Without	307.12	6,150	20.02	306.12	6,450	21.07	5.22%
West Bagborough	166.05	3,500	21.08	171.75	3,500	20.38	-3.32%
West Buckland	432.70	7,720	17.84	438.05	7,815	17.84	-0.01%
West Hatch	135.06	2,330	17.25	133.96	2,563	19.13	10.90%
West Monkton	1,757.15	49,923	28.41	1,973.12	56,707	28.74	1.16%
Wiveliscombe	1,119.72	40,000	35.72	1,136.37	40,500	35.64	-0.23%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>40,843.15</b>	<b>766,134</b>	<b>18.76</b>	<b>41,486.31</b>	<b>819,022</b>	<b>19.74</b>	<b>5.22%</b>

## APPENDIX C

## TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL PRECEPTS

Parish/Town Council	2017/18			2018/19			Council Tax Increase
	Tax Base	Precept Levied	Council Tax Band D	Tax Base	Precept Levied	Council Tax Band D	
		£	£		£	£	
Ash Priors	79.67	-	-	81.39	-	-	0.00%
Ashbrittle	94.01	2,053	21.84	92.84	2,080	22.40	2.59%
Bathealton	89.05	650	7.30	87.51	500	5.71	-21.72%
Bishops Hull	1,136.89	21,328	18.76	1,167.36	21,900	18.76	0.00%
Bishops Lydeard/Cothelstone	1,131.59	44,132	39.00	1,148.11	49,000	42.68	9.43%
Bradford on Tone	306.68	7,000	22.83	306.67	7,000	22.83	0.00%
Burrowbridge	201.47	5,500	27.30	200.53	6,000	29.92	9.60%
Cheddon Fitzpaine	633.46	18,929	29.88	648.13	19,401	29.93	0.17%
Chipstable	131.97	3,156	23.92	131.32	3,235	24.63	3.00%
Churchstanton	363.47	9,410	25.89	366.53	9,489	25.89	0.00%
Combe Florey	122.69	4,000	32.60	122.41	4,000	32.68	0.23%
Comeytrove	2,019.81	23,915	11.84	2,017.29	23,896	11.85	0.05%
Corfe	133.32	2,750	20.63	134.92	3,000	22.24	7.80%
Cotford St Luke	780.75	20,300	26.00	789.35	23,600	29.90	14.99%
Creech St Michael	1,091.37	46,165	42.30	1,104.06	49,738	45.05	6.50%
Durston	55.39	600	10.83	57.17	1,300	22.74	109.92%
Fitzhead	118.66	3,600	30.34	117.15	4,706	40.17	32.41%
Halse	140.42	2,600	18.52	139.50	2,600	18.64	0.66%
Hatch Beauchamp	262.82	6,500	24.73	263.63	6,500	24.66	-0.31%
Kingston St Mary	461.36	8,061	17.47	442.68	10,274	23.21	32.83%
Langford Budville	235.31	6,840	29.07	236.78	6,000	25.34	-12.83%
Lydeard St Lawrence/Tolland	210.12	4,053	19.29	212.72	4,103	19.29	-0.02%
Milverton	584.24	20,000	34.23	579.97	25,000	43.11	25.92%
Neroche	247.67	4,446	17.95	247.79	4,580	18.48	2.96%
North Curry	722.57	17,312	23.96	741.42	18,000	24.28	1.33%
Norton Fitzwarren	1,139.35	30,400	26.68	1,193.69	31,850	26.68	0.00%
Nynehead	165.00	3,300	20.00	173.38	3,400	19.61	-1.95%
Oake	317.06	5,300	16.72	321.69	5,600	17.41	4.14%
Otterford	186.45	-	-	190.57	-	-	0.00%
Pitminster	479.45	7,973	16.63	489.03	8,500	17.38	4.52%
Ruishton/Thornfalcon	584.09	21,210	36.31	592.28	21,852	36.89	1.60%
Sampford Arundel	128.38	6,000	46.74	130.43	6,000	46.00	-1.57%
Staplegrove	806.61	8,500	10.54	809.47	9,400	11.61	10.20%
Stawley	139.45	2,400	17.21	138.08	2,400	17.38	0.99%
Stoke St Gregory	367.69	10,500	28.56	369.85	15,181	41.05	43.74%
Stoke St Mary	208.98	3,236	15.48	210.79	3,236	15.35	-0.86%
Taunton	14,966.85	44,901	3.00	15,077.37	45,534	3.02	0.67%
Trull	1,068.96	29,000	27.13	1,060.12	29,000	27.36	0.83%
Wellington	5,012.27	200,490	40.00	5,132.95	213,633	41.62	4.05%
Wellington Without	307.12	6,150	20.02	306.12	6,450	21.07	5.22%
West Bagborough	166.05	3,500	21.08	171.75	3,500	20.38	-3.32%
West Buckland	432.70	7,720	17.84	438.05	7,815	17.84	-0.01%
West Hatch	135.06	2,330	17.25	133.96	2,563	19.13	10.90%
West Monkton	1,757.15	49,923	28.41	1,973.12	56,707	28.74	1.16%
Wiveliscombe	1,119.72	40,000	35.72	1,136.37	40,500	35.64	-0.23%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>40,843.15</b>	<b>766,134</b>	<b>18.76</b>	<b>41,486.31</b>	<b>819,022</b>	<b>19.74</b>	<b>5.22%</b>

## APPENDIX C

## TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL PRECEPTS

Parish/Town Council	2017/18			2018/19			Council Tax Increase
	Tax Base	Precept Levied	Council Tax Band D	Tax Base	Precept Levied	Council Tax Band D	
		£	£		£	£	
Ash Priors	79.67	-	-	81.39	-	-	0.00%
Ashbrittle	94.01	2,053	21.84	92.84	2,080	22.40	2.59%
Bathealton	89.05	650	7.30	87.51	500	5.71	-21.72%
Bishops Hull	1,136.89	21,328	18.76	1,167.36	21,900	18.76	0.00%
Bishops Lydeard/Cothelstone	1,131.59	44,132	39.00	1,148.11	49,000	42.68	9.43%
Bradford on Tone	306.68	7,000	22.83	306.67	7,000	22.83	0.00%
Burrowbridge	201.47	5,500	27.30	200.53	6,000	29.92	9.60%
Cheddon Fitzpaine	633.46	18,929	29.88	648.13	19,401	29.93	0.17%
Chipstable	131.97	3,156	23.92	131.32	3,235	24.63	3.00%
Churchstanton	363.47	9,410	25.89	366.53	9,489	25.89	0.00%
Combe Florey	122.69	4,000	32.60	122.41	4,000	32.68	0.23%
Comeytrove	2,019.81	23,915	11.84	2,017.29	23,896	11.85	0.05%
Corfe	133.32	2,750	20.63	134.92	3,000	22.24	7.80%
Cotford St Luke	780.75	20,300	26.00	789.35	23,600	29.90	14.99%
Creech St Michael	1,091.37	46,165	42.30	1,104.06	49,738	45.05	6.50%
Durston	55.39	600	10.83	57.17	1,300	22.74	109.92%
Fitzhead	118.66	3,600	30.34	117.15	4,706	40.17	32.41%
Halse	140.42	2,600	18.52	139.50	2,600	18.64	0.66%
Hatch Beauchamp	262.82	6,500	24.73	263.63	6,500	24.66	-0.31%
Kingston St Mary	461.36	8,061	17.47	442.68	10,274	23.21	32.83%
Langford Budville	235.31	6,840	29.07	236.78	6,000	25.34	-12.83%
Lydeard St Lawrence/Tolland	210.12	4,053	19.29	212.72	4,103	19.29	-0.02%
Milverton	584.24	20,000	34.23	579.97	25,000	43.11	25.92%
Neroche	247.67	4,446	17.95	247.79	4,580	18.48	2.96%
North Curry	722.57	17,312	23.96	741.42	18,000	24.28	1.33%
Norton Fitzwarren	1,139.35	30,400	26.68	1,193.69	31,850	26.68	0.00%
Nynehead	165.00	3,300	20.00	173.38	3,400	19.61	-1.95%
Oake	317.06	5,300	16.72	321.69	5,600	17.41	4.14%
Otterford	186.45	-	-	190.57	-	-	0.00%
Pitminster	479.45	7,973	16.63	489.03	8,500	17.38	4.52%
Ruishton/Thornfalcon	584.09	21,210	36.31	592.28	21,852	36.89	1.60%
Sampford Arundel	128.38	6,000	46.74	130.43	6,000	46.00	-1.57%
Staplegrove	806.61	8,500	10.54	809.47	9,400	11.61	10.20%
Stawley	139.45	2,400	17.21	138.08	2,400	17.38	0.99%
Stoke St Gregory	367.69	10,500	28.56	369.85	15,181	41.05	43.74%
Stoke St Mary	208.98	3,236	15.48	210.79	3,236	15.35	-0.86%
Taunton	14,966.85	44,901	3.00	15,077.37	45,534	3.02	0.67%
Trull	1,068.96	29,000	27.13	1,060.12	29,000	27.36	0.83%
Wellington	5,012.27	200,490	40.00	5,132.95	213,633	41.62	4.05%
Wellington Without	307.12	6,150	20.02	306.12	6,450	21.07	5.22%
West Bagborough	166.05	3,500	21.08	171.75	3,500	20.38	-3.32%
West Buckland	432.70	7,720	17.84	438.05	7,815	17.84	-0.01%
West Hatch	135.06	2,330	17.25	133.96	2,563	19.13	10.90%
West Monkton	1,757.15	49,923	28.41	1,973.12	56,707	28.74	1.16%
Wiveliscombe	1,119.72	40,000	35.72	1,136.37	40,500	35.64	-0.23%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>40,843.15</b>	<b>766,134</b>	<b>18.76</b>	<b>41,486.31</b>	<b>819,022</b>	<b>19.74</b>	<b>5.22%</b>

# **Council Meeting – 22 February 2018**

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

### **1. Formation of a Single Council**

- 1.1 As members will recall, the Secretary of State announced his 'minded to' decision on 29 November, 2017 in regard to the creation of a new Council.
- 1.2 This triggered a period to enable representations to be submitted to the Secretary of State in relation to the proposal. The representation period finished on 19 January, 2018 and the next stage is for the Secretary of State to confirm, or not, his original 'minded to' decision.
- 1.3 Discussions are continuing with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government to ensure that prompt action can be taken once a decision is made.

### **2. Budget Setting 2018/2019**

- 2.1 The all-important annual budget setting process is now nearing conclusion and will be considered by Members at this Full Council, hopefully now approved.
- 2.2 Can I thank all officers and Members for their hard work and commitment in delivering a sound balanced budget which I am proud to say has been achieved without the use of reserves and without any reductions in the frontline services so valued by our community.
- 2.3 We have made it clear that we want to see Taunton Deane grow, prosper and develop a thriving and resilient economy, providing the jobs and essential infrastructure that is needed such as transport improvements, schools and employment land that go hand-in-hand with new housing.
- 2.4 Taunton is one of the fastest growing towns in the South West and our Garden Town status is testament to our growth plans, bringing welcome additional funding to support the plans and bring our ambitions to life.
- 2.5 We are continuing to invest in our £16,600,000 Growth Programme which is delivering crucial investment in major growth and regeneration schemes, funded through the New Homes Bonus (NHB) that follows our delivery of new housing. This is supporting schemes such as the Coal Orchard Regeneration and improvements to Junction 25 of the M5. We know we cannot fund these major schemes on our own but by providing funding from NHB we can attract match-funding and pump-prime projects to achieve our ambitions.
- 2.6 The Government has confirmed the Final Settlement and this is reflected in the budget proposed at this meeting. This confirmed the opportunity for districts to increase Council Tax by £5 instead of being limited at 2.99%. We

have accepted this as we believe it is the right thing to do for our financial sustainability and to protect services. As a result our Council Tax for a Band D property will increase to £154.62 per year – which includes £1.74 collected on behalf of the Somerset Rivers Authority. This means the Band D tax payer will receive all Borough Council services for £2.97 per week.

### **3. Housing Infrastructure Funding - Successful Bid**

- 3.1 The Government announcement last month to award the £7,200,000 for the Staplegrove Spine Road is a great vote of confidence in our ability to deliver the key infrastructure needed to deliver the growth ambitions.
- 3.2 The money will help towards the early delivery of the £8,000,000 “spine road” to connect the A358 Staplegrove Road and Kingston Road, enabling over 1600 homes, more affordable housing and the delivery of a much needed new primary school.
- 3.3 We are discussing the arrangements for delivery of the road with Somerset County Council and the developers and will confirm details as soon as possible.

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

- 4.1 Following the rejection of previous plans for the Firepool site, our development partner St Modwen has been working closely with planners on an alternative design for the scheme, whilst also resolving a number of detailed technical matters that have been raised in relation to traffic impact. The final proposals for this key Town Centre site are scheduled to come to Planning Committee in March.

### **5. Lisieux Way Business Park, Taunton**

- 5.1 Following the approval of Full Council in October 2017, discussions are nearing completion for the Council to consolidate its ownerships of land at Lisieux Way Business Park in Taunton. Bringing the site entirely under the Council's ownership will enable the retention and growth of important hi-tech employers in Taunton, with opportunities for wider uses on other areas of the site.

### **6. The Deane House Accommodation Project**

- 6.1 Midas are on site and are progressing well with their programme. The works are to be carried out in three phases with the Police area being handed over at the end of Phase 2.
- 6.2 Other available space within The Deane House will be marketed in due course.

### **7. Nexus 25**

- 7.1 The Local Development Order for Nexus 25 Strategic Employment Site was approved by Council in December 2017, subject to the approval by Somerset County Council of plans to improve the capacity of Junction 25 of the M5.
- 7.2 The County Council Regulation Committee will consider the planning application for Junction 25 in the very near future, which will pave the way to the creation of over 3000 jobs in Taunton, in a high quality environment and superbly connected regional location.

Councillor John Williams

# Council Meeting – 22 February 2018

## Report of Councillor Patrick Berry – Environmental Services

### 1. Environmental Health

#### Dog Warden Services

- 1.1 This service has recorded significant reductions in the number of stray dogs having to be collected and dealt with.

Dog Warden Services- Records for dogs collected by the Warden

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18 to date
To kennels	143	110	67
Collected by Owner	95	67	52
Put up for Adoption	48	43	13
Returned directly to owner by warden	44	47	33

- 1.2 It is considered that the reason for the reductions could be the requirement for compulsory micro-chipping of all dogs from April 2016.

#### Public Health Funerals

- 1.3 Since 1 December 2017 the Environmental Health Team has already taken referrals for 14 public health funerals where a person has died in the district with no next of kin available or willing to make the arrangements for the funeral.
- 1.4 So far during 2017/2018 the team have dealt with 27 cases. In previous years this number has been 34 for 2016/2017 and 30 cases in 2015/2016. This work involves liaison with the Bereavement Office at Musgrove Park Hospital, the Coroner's Office, Crematorium, funeral director, other family members and solicitors where a will has been found. This is an extremely complex and delicate area of work and officers take every care to ensure that each funeral is carried out in accordance to any wishes that the deceased may have had.

#### Food - New Registrations

- 1.5 The total number of new food registrations received so far this financial year for Taunton Deane is 127. A food business is legally required to register when they open for the first time or when a change of ownership takes place. A new registration will trigger a food hygiene inspection being carried out, ideally within 28 days of the local authority receiving the registration. In 2016/2017 we received 170 new registrations and the number for 2015/2016 was 160.

#### Tattoo Safety

- 1.6 During 2017/2018 the Environmental Health Team has undertaken a project to provide advice to Tattoo premises in Taunton Deane and West Somerset. The team wrote to all registered premises in order to ensure our database was accurate. A questionnaire was then issued and the team is now arranging follow-up advisory visits to a range of premises to provide general hygiene advice. Information regarding the detection and reporting of Child Sexual Exploitation was also provided.

## **2. Licensing**

### **Staffing**

- 2.1 The Licensing Manager, John Rendell, has returned from supporting the Accommodation Team and a period of paternity leave, bringing to an end the temporary management arrangements. Now he is back, John is looking to press on and complete some large projects within the service, such as reviewing the Council's Licensing Act 2003 statement of licensing policy and introduce a practical driving test for taxi and private hire vehicle drivers.

### **Performance**

- 2.2 98% of all applications received between the 1 October and 31 December 2017 were completed within a 14 day timescale, meaning the service achieved its performance target.

### **HM Revenues and Customs (HMRC)**

- 2.3 HMRC is consulting on proposals to introduce new legislation which would introduce tax checks into licence processes, including taxis and street traders. Taunton Deane Licensing has been working with HMRC to shape these proposals and there are plans to help them 'test' how data collection and verification might work.

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

- 3.1 The cleansing contract continues to be monitored carefully with regular street inspections being undertaken by the Manager of Idverde and the Open Spaces Manager. Where standards have not been met, quick remedial action has been applied to bring this back up to the level we stipulate in the contract. Fly tipping has taken a slight upturn with 131 incidents reported between October and December 2017.
- 3.2 Our team has been hard at work over the winter getting Taunton Deane in shape for the coming growing season and has cleared all the streams that are under our responsibility to improve flow and reduce the risks of flooding a wet winter or spring can bring. The tree surgeons have been busy with several mature trees coming down in recent storms in addition to their normal workload and the Grounds Team has replaced a number of litter and dog bins on our ongoing programme of replacement and checked and maintained the various pumps and drainage culverts across the Borough.

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



## **New Resource Recovery Centre**

- 4.1 Somerset's waste services system took another big step forward this month with the formal launch of construction of a new £252,000,000 Resource Recovery Centre (RRC) in Avonmouth.
- 4.2 Once complete in 2020, the RRC will take all of Somerset's household rubbish and convert it into energy for thousands of homes through the national grid.
- 4.3 As well as switching tens of thousands of tonnes of rubbish from costly, wasteful and polluting landfill, Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) is launching a new collections contract in 2020 with extra materials – including a range of plastic packaging – taken every week at the kerbside using a brand new fleet of vehicles.
- 4.4 SWP Managing Director Mickey Green welcomed the construction launch as signalling the opportunity to give waste a new life as a valuable resource.

He added: "SWP manages the waste from more than 250,000 Somerset homes, with one of the highest recycling rates in the country and recycling in the UK 94% of what we collect.

The Avonmouth RRC forms the cornerstone of our ambitions to help Somerset residents to waste less, recycle even more and – for whatever is left over – switch from a reliance on landfill to resource recovery from 2020."

## **Food Waste**

- 4.5 One of our major areas of recycle is the collection and recycling of food waste. 15% by weight of all household waste in Somerset is food waste. Most of this waste occurs through cooking and preparing too much or not using food in time. People are getting more food wise, but there is still more that we can do to make better use of food and save money too. We throw away more food from our homes than packaging in the UK every year. If we all stop wasting food that could have been eaten, the benefit to the planet would be the equivalent of taking 1 in 4 cars off the road.
- 4.6 The UK throws away 2.5 billion single-use coffee cups a year, while less than 1% of coffee cups are recycled. These cups and cartons are a complex construction of layered plastic and paper, which are difficult to recycle and are dealt with at a specialist facility in Halifax.
- 4.7 Plastic-lined paper cups for hot drinks can now be recycled at 12 Somerset recycling sites including Priorswood, Taunton and Poole, Wellington. These sites already have skips for Tetra Pak-style food and drink cartons. Cups and cartons are not yet taken in Somerset kerbside collections but this will change when the new Recycle More service is rolled out from 2020.
- 4.8 The cup initiative is the result of a collaboration between industry body the Alliance for Beverage Cartons and the Environment – which pays for the skips at recycling sites – and High Street firms, including Cafe Nero, Costa, Greggs, McDonald's, Nestlé, Pret A Manger and Starbucks.

4.9 It should be made clear that while single-use cups can be recycled at the dozen Somerset sites, plastic items, such as straws, cup lids and stirrers cannot, so these should be added to residents' rubbish, but Recycle More will enable residents to recycle much more plastic waste at the kerbside.

## **5. Cemetery and Crematorium:**

5.1 The Cemetery and Crematorium have been busy this winter. It is a period when the staff have been fully engaged with cremation, burial and plot allocation. The last six weeks have been exceptionally busy with the flu like bug that has been about.

5.2 Our previously approved projects are now beginning to take shape:-

- The Children's Garden project has now started in earnest but poor weather has hampered this slightly. The new memorials for this area will be ready for delivery in June. The hard landscaping should be complete in time for their installation.
- The Natural Area Boardwalk is 80% finished. The next step will be installation of the wheel stops to the edges of the boardwalk for pram and wheelchair users.
- Since the information regarding the proposed enlargement of the Waiting Room became public knowledge, the feedback we have received regarding these proposals has been welcomed and positive remarks received from both the public and funeral directors alike. Subject to Full Council approval, we are looking forward to starting this project.

5.3 The New Grave Spaces at St Mary's, Taunton and Wellington will be ready for interments at the start of summer 2018 due to ground settlement and mapping.

5.4 About six months ago, our service switched from plastic urns to a more environmentally friendly cardboard based products.

Councillor Patrick Berry

# **Council Meeting – 22 February 2018**

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

### **Section 1 : Communications**

- 1.1 Communications continues to seek to improve use of social media and the number of followers/likes is growing.
- 1.2 We are looking to improve skills through training being made available with partners in neighbouring authorities which provides the benefit of networking plus a reduced cost to the Council.
- 1.3 At this time of year, the focus is on the budget-setting process with help being provided to the media to understand how the increasingly complex system works. Considerable time is also spent on responses and information to the media on a wide range of issues from open spaces to housing.
- 1.4 Looking back, we worked closely with colleagues involved in the Christmas festivities, with partners on Nexus 25 and on Broadband provision among many other projects.
- 1.5 Currently we are working closely with the Growth and Development Team on managing communications around a variety of high profile key projects.
- 1.6 Looking forward, we will continue to work with colleagues across the authority to promote the Council and to protect its reputation through improving how and when we undertake communications activities - and evaluating outcomes.

### **Section 2 : Business Development**

#### **Productivity Strategy**

- 2.1 The Heart of the South West (HotSW) Area Productivity Strategy is now ready for adoption by the Joint Committee which has now been established and will meet regularly over the coming year. As a reminder the Productivity Strategy is a response to the Government's industrial strategy and lays out how at a strategic level what we intend to target. The strategy is a collaboration between all local authorities across Devon and Somerset in conjunction with the LEP, Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks and the Clinical Commissioning Groups.

#### **Taunton Deane Business Awards**

- 2.2 This year`s Taunton Deane Business Awards have been launched and I would urge all businesses to enter. The Council is one of the key sponsors and this shows a commitment to supporting and celebrating excellence in our business community. Closing date for entries is 30 March 2018 so please encourage any businesses you are aware of too apply.

## **Section 3 : Events, Place, Retail Marketing and Visitor Centre**

### **Events**

- 3.1 2018 is starting to shape up to be a great year for events. The Marketing and Visitor Centre Team continue to work with and assist event organisers to bring their ideas to reality and promote these (when confirmed) through our promotional channels. Training continues to be provided to organisers on the event booking portal. New events coming to the area include: the Elderberry Fair at Wellsprings Leisure Centre, Taunton Gin Festival at the Museum of Somerset and a Family Fun Day at Moorfields in March; The Glitter Run at the Racecourse in June; A 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary Guide Dog Gala Day in Castle Green and an inflatable theme park at Moorfields in July.
- 3.2 It has also been encouraging to see plans develop for Eat Taunton in May and Eat Wellington in September, Somerfest in June and Taunton Live through the month of July.
- 3.3 I was also delighted to see the return of Live in Somerset – three nights of live music taking place in Vivary Park, Taunton in July. The nights are headlined by Paloma Faith, Billy Ocean and the Kaiser Chiefs; another night of live music will take place in September when The Pretenders, Simple Minds and KT Tunstall come to the Racecourse.
- 3.4 Discussions have also begun with the English Cricket Board on the Cricket World Cup in 2019 when Taunton will be among 11 host venues, I will update Members as these plans develop.

### **Place and Retail Marketing**

- 3.5 Taunton Town Centre continues to perform positively compared to other town centres in the region. Vacancy rates in the primary shopping part of the town are currently 2.55%.
- 3.6 The team continues to work with town centre businesses and the Chamber of Commerce on the promotion of the town. A meeting was recently held with the large retailers attended by Ojay McDonald (Acting Chief Executive) of the Association of Town and City Management who gave an informative presentation on Business Improvement Districts.
- 3.7 Taunton, Wellington and Wiveliscombe continue to be promoted through open Wi-Fi, the destination website and social media platforms:-

Destination website ([www.visitsomerset.co.uk/taunton](http://www.visitsomerset.co.uk/taunton)) –  
48,974 unique users in November to January period

Visit Taunton has - Facebook: 9,400 likes  
Instagram: 1,500 followers  
Twitter: 6,750 followers

Visit Wellington – Facebook: 1,000 likes

Visit Wivey – Facebook: 700 likes

### 3.8 New literature produced:-

- The Deano (providing ideas for the half term holidays in February); and
- The new Visitors guide for 2018 will be launched in March

## Visitor Centre

3.9 The Visitor Centre Team continue to actively support all marketing activities this includes providing content for all digital platforms in addition to the day-to-day job of welcoming many visitors to the office.

3.10 The team organised another very successful Advent competition on the Visit Taunton Facebook platform with 24 days of individual competitions, culminating in a hamper competition between Christmas and New Year. All prizes were sourced from local businesses and the hamper was presented to the lucky winner by the Mayor.

3.11 Online booking forms have been created for booking advertising space on our banners, pennants or rotundas around the town and promotional spaces in Fore Street and High Street using the new events portal. An agreement has also been made with Taunton PubWatch that the Visitor Centre Team will now maintain their rotunda unit outside of Vodaphone as an in-kind support for the night-time economy.

3.12 Throughput in to the Market House office continues to remain healthy with customers coming in to buy tickets and collect new 2018 literature.

## Section 4 : Growth Strategy and Specific Projects

### Coal Orchard Redevelopment, Taunton

4.1 We are now moving this project at pace and have signed off RIBA Stages 2 known as the concept design phase. This means that we are now working on RIBA 3 which will bring us to a final design and lead to the submission of the reserved matters planning application.

4.2 Our marketing partner is working on branding and the strategy to sell the site. We do expect to engage local specialists for the residential market and have a target list of restaurants and retailers for the ground floor units. We will also begin the process of contracting with a builder in the next few months.

- 4.3 We are progressing The Brewhouse Theatre element of this redevelopment scoping out further detail on timescales and funding approach. I would expect to share details of timescales and budgets with Members in early summer. The Taunton Deane Team has been working with the Taunton Theatre Association to establish more detailed design briefs which will enable us to engage advisors for the net phases of this work. This is similar to the process we followed on the Coal Orchard.

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

- 4.4 As Members will be aware, the Council agreed the purchase of this site to consolidate ownerships of the land at Lisieux Way Business Park in Taunton. We are now working on the exchange of contracts with Thales which as previously reported will support economic growth, by retaining local jobs, securing new employment opportunities and attracting new businesses to this strategic employment site. This is an ongoing negotiation and we hope to be in a position to exchange shortly.

### **Crown Industrial Estate**

- 4.5 I was glad to hear that a speculative development of a vacant plot of land at this estate is occurring. This will create around 30,000 sq. feet of Industrial Warehouse units.

### **Taunton Vale (Throup's Site)**

- 4.6 A planning permission for B1 uses has been granted on one of the allocated employment sites associated with the Monkton Heathfield Garden Town Community. This will commence work on this site providing new space for business growth.

### **Wiveliscombe**

- 4.7 Permission has been granted to enable conversion of the old Karro slaughterhouse to B1, B2 and B8 uses. We expect this to provide much needed space for expansion of local businesses. This will also complement the enterprise centre which is adjacent to the site and is expected to be constructed through 2018.

### **Asset Management Service Update – February 2018**

- 4.8 In December 2017 approval was given to implement Open Assets alongside the roll-out of the Council's new Universal Transaction Portal (UTP). A Project Delivery Group is now in place and progressing this work stream.
- 4.9 This is a key milestone as this project had been on-hold for the past few years pending corporate transformation and selection of the new UTP. Selection of this Open Assets software will enable integration with the existing Assets Open Suite, elements of which are already embedded into the Housing

Revenue Account in terms of repairs and for which there are already some of those necessary interfaces in place.

- 4.10 Over the course of the past 12-18 months significant asset data has been gathered relating to stock condition of all General Fund assets, cost profiles for all assets and asset performance profiles of those key assets. In addition, the Council now holds updated Fire Risk Assessments and Asbestos Surveys and all this data along with other existing data will be held within Open Assets as the new repository and will enable much 'smarter' working moving forward through management reporting, benchmarking and availability of data. This is expected to take 18 months to be rolled out.
- 4.11 A new Asset Strategy for the period 2018-2020 was adopted by Full Council in December 2017. This, alongside a new Decision Making Framework will enable assets to be managed more proactively, disposing of poorly performing assets, acquiring new assets where supported by a strong business case, managing the let portfolio more commercially through maximising incomes and recovery of costs, along with ensuring more informed and proactive investment decisions. This new strategy is predicated on the data now available and moving forward Open Assets will make using that data and ensuring it is current, more straightforward.
- 4.12 An example of how we are already applying this new commercial approach is with Blackdown Business Park. In April 2017, the Council had three vacant units and a very limited amount of interest being received from our former agents, with many units having sat empty for an extended time. However since instructing our new agents Lambert Smith Hampton to do our marketing, the Council has seen a threefold increase in enquiries and now have all but one unit Under Offer.
- 4.13 On completion, these two leases will result in a total of £17,000 per annum of additional rental income and £1,000 per annum towards the service charge, to help maintain the buildings structure and its common parts. Having these occupied will also relieve current rates liabilities. A new grounds maintenance regime has now been approved and instructed, which in turn should help to improve the look of the Estate and help maintain ongoing relationships with our tenants and make new lettings easier.
- 4.14 With the Council's Asset Manager leaving in early February, his interim replacement Monique Clarke took up post in December 2017 enabling a comprehensive handover. At the time of writing Tim Child was just leaving us and I want to take this opportunity to thank him for all his hard work in particular driving through the Asset Strategy to its conclusion and to welcome Monique.

Councillor Mark Edwards

# **Council Meeting – 22 February 2018**

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

### **1. Planning Policy**

- 1.1 Work is now well underway on compiling the evidence base to inform a future review of local planning documents for Taunton Deane. This is particularly important as the Government places an increased emphasis on ensuring plans are reviewed every five years, something which will be enshrined in changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which will be consulted upon next month.
- 1.2 Several key studies have been completed or are in the advanced stages of publication; these include the Green Infrastructure Strategy published last month and a new joint Retail, Leisure and Employment Study. We will shortly go out to tender on a new Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.
- 1.3 It is anticipated that a new updated Local Development Scheme (project plan for the production of the local plan) will be presented to Members in late Spring/early Summer.

### **2. Garden Town Strategy and Plan**

- 2.1 Members will recall that the Policy Team has been co-ordinating the work on a Garden Town Plan for Taunton. This document will set a long-term vision for the town and guiding principles to inform planning and much of the Council's future activity in Taunton. A visioning event with key stakeholders will be held towards the end of March. The findings of which will be shared with Members in due course and prior to the document going out to wider public consultation.
- 2.2 The Plan will also need to identify the key activities, priorities and proposals for Taunton in a living, dynamic action plan. Our intent is to host the plan on a web platform providing up to the minute information on things like projects and progress towards delivery.
- 2.3 Much of the background work to inform the Garden Town Plan is common to the Local Plan. As part of this work Atkins have been commissioned to prepare a River Tone Strategy. Members will recall Atkins prepared the award-winning Bath Waterspace Strategy, which was shared in autumn of last year. There will be opportunities for Members to engage with this important project in the months to come.
- 2.4 A Members' Briefing regarding the Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy was held in October 2017. The Green Infrastructure Strategy



has subsequently been signed off. Work has been commissioned to take forward and develop more detailed project plans for each of the Strategy's priority projects. The first of the priority project plans will be taken through Full Council very soon to deliver the Green Country Park.

### **3. Nexus 25**

- 3.1 The formal consultation on the Local Development Order (LDO) for the Strategic Employment Site took place in July / August 2017. The responses and comments were reported to Community Scrutiny and Full Council subsequently approved the LDO in December 2017.
- 3.2 This development will deliver significant employment opportunities for Taunton Deane in line with Council policy meeting the aspirations of our community.
- 3.3 The final making of the LDO is dependent on planning permission for the M5 Junction 25 Improvement Scheme being in place.

### **4. Junction 25 (J25) Upgrade – Somerset County Council Highways Authority**

- 4.1 The proposed upgrade involves full signalisation and widening of the carriageway at J25, including widening the eastern exit from the junction, improving pedestrian and cycling facilities and updating signage. This scheme aims to improve journey times, ease congestion, improve Park and Ride journey time reliability and create a more attractive gateway from the M5 to Taunton, Yeovil and the A303. The improvements will also unlock access into the proposed strategic employment site at J25.
- 4.2 SCC as the Highways Authority is seeking further feedback on elements of the scheme, which potentially sets the timescale back three to four months.

### **5. Highways England Consultation - Taunton to Southfields Dualling Scheme.**

- 5.1 Highways England (HE) is consulting on their new revised proposals to dual the A358. The previous consultation on a single route was not received well in our community. Following concerted efforts by Parish, Borough and County representatives working with our MP, discussions were held with appropriate Ministers and a rethink took place.
- 5.2 Many Councillors at Parish Borough and County have engaged with this HE consultation. If you have not yet been along to the consultation there is a final opportunity on the 21 February 2018 at Stoke St Mary Village Hall and Ruishton Village Hall. Details can be found on the HE

website [www.highways.gov.uk/Taunton-to-Southfields](http://www.highways.gov.uk/Taunton-to-Southfields). There are also public information points regarding the scheme in County Hall and in Taunton Library.

- 5.3 The Taunton Deane formal response awaits more technical data from HE relating particularly to projected traffic flows for all three routes (Blue Orange and Pink). The additional data that TDBC and County colleagues seek will enhance our understanding of the benefits and disbenefits of the proposals.
- 5.4 The Public Consultation ends on 27 February 2018. HE will then analyse the feedback and make a decision on the choice of the preferred route. As the scheme is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under the Planning Act 2008 HE are required to make an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to gain authorisation to construct the scheme.
- 5.5 HE have committed to another round of consultation on their preferred route before the DCO is submitted. The Planning Inspectorate will then hold a public examination before making a recommendation to the Secretary of State who will decide whether or not the scheme will be built.

## **6. Taunton Urban Realm**

- 6.1 The consultation has been undertaken, the scheme is being developed and taken forward with County colleagues the Highways Authority. Implementation dates have yet to be confirmed and are dependent on County confirmation of the necessary traffic orders, traffic light amendments and signage being in place. Discussions are on going with County colleagues and WSP to finalise the scheme details.

## **7. Car Park Pay on Foot (POF) and Variable Message Signage (VMS)**

- 7.1 The contracts have now been let to the VMS sign manufacturer and to the POF supplier. Members are aware that a delay was encountered as the POF civil elements of the project had to be retendered. Elements of the civil ground works will commence shortly. The completion date for the project is now planned for June 2018. The delay is regrettable.
- 7.2 There is a necessity to amend elements of the charging structures as a result of POF. A cost neutral option has been developed for Council consideration.

## **8. Neighbourhood Plans**

- 8.1 As a reminder, the Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone and the Trull and

Staplehay Neighbourhood plans are made.

- 8.2 Ann Skippers Bsc MRTPI recently completed her examination of the West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Development Plan. The report has been agreed and accepted. The planned date for the referendum is the end of April.
- 8.3 The Council continues to support the Creech St. Michael and Ruishton and Thornfalcon Neighbourhood Plans.
- 8.4 The plan area for Oake Parish Council has been designated. The Parish Council is continuing with its work of the plan.
- 8.5 Wiveliscombe and Wellington have both had their Neighbourhood Plan areas designated. Both Councils have their plans under review.

## **9. Major Planning**

### **Staplegrave**

- 9.1 Members are aware that the planning applications were passed at Planning Committee. As detailed at the Committee an Infrastructure Grant application had been made.
- 9.2 Following a considerable amount of work in conjunction with SCC colleagues, our MP and Government Ministers the £7,200,000 Spine Road Funding has been granted. This is a significant success for the Council providing a superior outcome for the community. The drop down road will now no longer be required and the affordable housing quota now returns to 25%. The promoting agents are in discussion with the developers.

### **Firepool, Taunton**

- 9.3 Our officers continue to work with all stakeholders to bring forward a Planning Application for this important strategic development site.
- 9.4 The majority of technical issues relating to the development have now been satisfactorily resolved. An application will be made and brought to the Planning Committee in the very near future.

### **Tonedale Mill, Wellington**

- 9.5 Members will be aware that a confidential item was presented to the Executive on 8 February 2018. The item is also before us on pink confidential papers at this evening's Full Council.
- 9.6 I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Dr Joanne O'Hara, Wellington Heritage at Risk Project Manager for the work she has done to date. In short order clear and demonstrable progress is being made.

- 9.7 This site is of national significance and this Council continues to collaborate in order to protect it.
- 9.8 We are working hard, firstly to protect the building and secondly with our consultants, Ingham Pinnock, on a larger regeneration strategy for the area. At this stage there are a number of legal and financial issues relating to the site which remain confidential.
- 9.9 We will release information relating to the sites in Tonedale as soon as we are able and without prejudice to our ongoing efforts to secure the future for these very important buildings.

Councillor Roger Habgood

# **Council Meeting - 22 February 2018**

## **Report of Councillor Mrs Vivienne Stock-Williams - Sports, Parks and Leisure**

### **1. Community Leisure**

#### **Play and Recreation**

1.1 Improvements have been made to the Council's play areas and playing fields with Section 106 Agreement funding. The following works have taken place:-

- Lyngford Park, Taunton – a table tennis table and gym trail;
- French Weir Park, Taunton – cableway and replacement Hip Hop seesaw;
- Dobree Park, Wellington – table tennis table and outdoor gym equipment;
- Wellington Recreation Ground – basketball hoop and outdoor gym equipment;
- Hamilton Gault Park, Taunton – Mission Glide cableway;
- Wellington Playing Field – goal posts and drainage works;
- Victoria Park, Taunton – American Football goals; and
- Hawthorne Road, Taunton – outdoor gym equipment has been installed with Section 106 funding and a grant from the Unparished Fund.

1.2 The tender process has been completed for works to provide additional play facilities at Cotford St Luke Recreation Ground which are due to start during February.

1.3 The tender process has also been completed to provide new skate facilities at Hudson Way, Taunton. The old half-pipe has been removed and the base works ordered ready for the arrival of the new equipment towards the end of February / beginning of March 2018.

1.4 From 1 April 2014, when the Council adopted the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) off-site, Section 106 contributions have only been applicable for children's play. The amount of Section 106 contributions available for outdoor recreation, allotments and community halls are historic and therefore reducing annually.

1.5 Works have also taken place to replace equipment with Taunton Deane funding at:-

- Bacon Drive, Taunton – See Saw;
- Corner Close, Wellington - Springer and rotor; and

- Priorswood Park, Taunton – new swings.
- 1.6 There are further works planned for Westford Play Area, Wellington and Comeytrove Park.

### **Summer Sunday Bandstand Concerts**

- 1.7 A successful Summer Sunday Bandstand Concert season took place in both Vivary and Wellington Parks. Works are currently underway to provide this year's concerts.

### **Council's Capital Grant Scheme for Voluntary Village Halls, Sports Clubs and Allotments**

- 1.8 Grants have been made under this scheme to the following:-
- Ash Priors Village Hall – replacement timber beams to support the floor;
  - The Trident – new kitchen and toilet replacement; and
  - Galmington Allotments – ride on mower.
- 1.9 Halls are continuing to come forward requesting to apply for funding in the next financial year.

### **Parish Play Area Grant Scheme**

- 1.10 Under this scheme, awards were made to Trull Parish Council towards a youth shelter and Corfe Parish Council towards a Rotor Bounce.
- 1.11 Applications are currently being accepted for the 2018 round of capital grants which closes on 30 June 2018.

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

### **Community Sport and Health**

#### **2.1 North Newton Primary School**

Key Stage 1 children from North Newton Primary School enjoyed an energetic morning at Blackbrook Leisure Centre and Spa recently, taking part in short tennis, gymnastics, curling and a circuits class. For many pupils, this was the first time that they had experienced these sports and it was a great introduction. Feedback from the children and staff proved the event was a real success. Further sessions have been confirmed for 2018.

#### **2.2 Tennis Festival**

Adults from Learning Disability groups across Taunton enthusiastically enjoyed participating in the Annual Christmas Tennis Festival held in

the Main Tennis Sports Hall at Blackbrook on 13 December 2017. Favourite tennis practices and games were played involving everyone - players, staff and coaches - with plenty of fun, laughter plus various 'miss hits'. The Festival was led by GLL Blackbrook coach, Wendy, ably assisted by coaches Andrew and Ivor together with Learning Disability staff.

### **2.3 Winter Wildlife Walk**

This walk took place on 5 December 2017, with 11 people attending. The group met with Olivia Dullaghan from Somerset Wildlife Trust and enjoyed a sunny stroll along the banks of the River Tone. Participants spotted a variety of wildlife, as well as learning more about the local area. The next Wildlife Walk is planned for March 2018.

### **2.4 Walk Leader Training**

Seven new volunteers participated in the health walk training on 12 December 2017. Four of these volunteers will be supporting the launch of a new programme at Kingston St. Mary, whilst the others will support the Taunton and Creech St. Michael healthy walks.

The Kingston St. Mary short walks group held their first walk on 10 January 2018. This group have produced a series of short 20-30 minute walks and are hoping to encourage local residents to become more active in their area.

### **2.5 GLL Sports Foundation 2018**

The GLL Sport Foundation funding window opened for a two month period on 20 December 2017. The GLL Sport Foundation is an athlete-focused support programme providing athletes across the United Kingdom with tangible support to aid their sports performance. Support can include access to facilities, access to physiotherapy and injury rehabilitation support. Financial awards can be up to the value of £1,250. Since its inception, the Foundation has provided over 13,000 athlete award bursaries, totalling over £7,600,00 of support.

21 top level athletes who train in the Taunton Deane area benefited from financial awards in 2017, with an additional nine receiving training memberships. GLL would like to support even more athletes in the area in 2018.

## **Facilities**

### **2.6 Taunton Swimming Pool**

New pre-school swimming classes have been launched at Station Road swimming pool on Thursday mornings. Adult and Toddler sessions are also being introduced into GLL's 'Learn to Swim' programme.

2.7 Taunton Deane Water Polo Club has increased bookings on a Sunday evening to four hours per week and the pool has now been the host site for a number of club matches.

2.8 Likewise, the Synchro Club will be holding competitions at the pool, starting in the next couple of months.

### 2.9 **Wellington Sports Centre**

Wellington Sports Centre took part in the Christmas Sparkle event, which is a project run by the community for the community. Christmas presents were given to children aged 0-18 years who are living in difficult circumstances in the Taunton and Wellington community.

### 2.10 **Blackbrook Leisure Centre and Spa**

The gym facility at Blackbrook had an end-of-year makeover. New equipment, new flooring, wall protection, new mirrors and decoration throughout have made very positive improvements, so that the gym is now ready for the 2018 post-festive newcomers. The feedback from GLL's regular customers has identified that the investment has been very well received.

### 2.11 **Vivary Golf Course**

Unfortunately, due to a very wet month, Vivary Golf Course has been closed for the majority of January. The ground has been saturated, which has resulted in the course being left unplayable. The staff at Vivary have been successfully re-deployed into other roles across the partnership which has helped mitigate costs.

## **3. Parks and Open Spaces**

### **Grass Cutting**

3.1 It has been a busy year for Open Spaces with the weather creating a very long growing season. The team has, however, managed to maintain the areas under our care to a high standard and we are now in preparation for the new season.

### **Streams**

3.2 In recent weeks, all streams owned by the Council have been cleared.

### **Vivary Park**

3.3 Work to de-silt the lake in Vivary Park is due to begin this month and may continue until the end of March. Thus, before the bird nesting season starts, scrub on the central island will be cut back and laid down to form a protective bund around the perimeter. Once removed,



the silt will be deposited in the centre of the island, which will help enhance the quality of the soil. This operation will act both as a flooding precaution and will vastly improve the water quality and appearance of the lake. We should see the popular model boat club back in operation this summer.

- 3.4 The pavilion near the train tracks is undergoing work in preparation for the opening of a new 'Station Café' this spring, which is expected to become a significant attraction in the park.

### **Wellington Park**

- 3.5 Wellington Park has historically been plagued by vandalism but, under the auspices of the Wellington One Team, the Open Spaces Team has been working closely with the local Police and carried out a number of initiatives to challenge this anti-social behaviour.
- 3.6 Contact has been made with the parents of children caught damaging the park and seven youths have subsequently been banned from entry to the park: six for 6 months and one for 12 months. In three cases, bills for the damage caused have been issued. This has had the desired effect and vandalism in the park has dropped to virtually nothing during the past few weeks.

## **4. Property**

### **Wilton Lands**

- 4.1 An order has been placed for work to be carried out this Spring to renovate the well-used bridge at Wilton Lands. A temporary scaffolding bridge will be erected alongside so that replacement seasoned oak balustrades and decking can be installed.

## **5. Transition Town Wellington (TTW)**

### **Working in Partnership**

- 5.1 The Transition Town group in Wellington has been working on community fruit and vegetable projects for almost 10 years. Their aim is to make the town more sustainable in the food we eat, increase our food security and lower our carbon footprint. They also want to improve the beauty of the town and help build cooperation and friendships in our communities.
- 5.2 The group has summarised some of the lessons they have learnt from their experiences to help the process run smoothly for other interested communities. These are:-  
.

- 5.3 *Always speak to the local Council.* Projects struggled before TTW built a relationship with local Councillors, who have proven to be extremely helpful and supportive. Swains Lane Nature Reserve is a superb example of long-term partnership working between Deane DLO and a local community working group.
- 5.4 *Seek permission first.* Once you have your idea, before undertaking detailed project planning, first try to get permission - find out who the land belongs to and any guidance available from the authorities.
- 5.5 *Involve the local residents.* It is really helpful to make sure the residents and groups locally are supportive of the project.
- 5.6 *Work with other groups.* It is really good to find out who is doing similar projects in your area, so you can work more effectively together.
- 5.7 *Have a group of people behind you.* A project like this is often carried by one very keen person. It is, however, helpful to have a team of people involved, partly as moral support and practical help, but also to ensure the project is sustainable into the future.
- 5.8 *Speak to people face to face, rather than over the telephone.* This saves time in the long run, and helps build better relationships.
- 5.9 *Know a bit about gardening.* It may be obvious, but having some knowledge of what plants are suitable for different soil, their height and different species is essential when doing some "public" gardening.
- 5.10 *Have a plan of ongoing maintenance.* Obviously, when planting on a public site it needs to be maintained. This is where having a group of people in a team, working with other groups and the local residents is invaluable, or one person will end up doing all the work!
- 5.11 TTW hopes these tips help to inspire others to start their own community projects. Members are passionate about including edibles in their planting schemes and have just produced a foraging map for Wellington. This guide shows where each fruit patch is and what varieties there are for anyone to pick and enjoy.
- 5.12 We look forward to seeing the trees grow and sitting under a mature Cherry Tree in about 20 years, admiring the blossom, and knowing that tree, and others, are there because local, knowledgeable enthusiasts played a part in planting them.

Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams

# **Council Meeting – 22 February 2018**

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

### **1. Revenues and Benefits**

- 1.1 We are taking action to try to increase payments in the run up to the end of the financial year for Council Tax and Business Rates and are confident we will meet our annual targets by 31 March 2017.
- 1.2 As advised in my last report, we are reviewing entitlement to Single Person Discounts for Taunton Deane residents. Letters have been sent to 2,929 people currently receiving a discount on their Council Tax bill based on their sole occupancy of the property.
- 1.3 In accordance with the decision taken by Full Council we will soon contact every customer who will receive reduced assistance under our Council Tax Support Scheme for 2018/2019. We are inviting those people with protected characteristics to submit a claim for extra help through our discretionary scheme. Hope is that in contacting customers in advance of annual billing, we can assist them in preparing for the change to come, as well as helping us to manage the expected annual spike in enquiries as people receive their annual Council Tax bills.
- 1.4 So far we have distributed £139,000 in Discretionary Housing Payments to residents requiring extra help towards their housing costs. This leaves a balance of £58,000 from the funding provided by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to use before 31 March 2018.
- 1.5 The combined average speed in working out new claims and changes in circumstances for Housing Benefit recipients remains at less than 9 days from the start of the financial year to 31 January 2018. We rely on receiving information from the DWP on Universal Credit entitlement for our working age Council Tax Support recipients, so the combined time in processing new claims and changes in circumstances for these customers is greater, with an average time of 12 days.

### **2. Corporate Services**

- 2.1 The key priority is around maintaining staff engagement and morale as we start to go through the transformation restructure. In practice this means regular team meetings, one to ones and ad hoc discussions with staff.
- 2.2 Linked to this is an increased focus on priorities and on managing resource.

Key priorities have been identified for each area of Corporate Services which have previously been advised to all Councillors by email.

### **3. Corporate Performance - GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations)**

- 3.1 A detailed GDPR Compliance Action Plan has been produced which will be reviewed by the Corporate Governance Committee on 19 March 2018. Officers are currently identifying the resourcing and technology requirements for delivering the Action Plan. We will also be delivering training for officers and Members on associated regulatory changes.
- 3.2 Corporate Risk Management – We are maintaining a regular review and updating of the risk register during a period of significant change.

### **4. Customer Services**

- 4.1 Councillors will be aware that the Council's Customer Services Team returned from Somerset County Council on 1 December 2017. The service return has worked well with no impact on service delivery to customers.
- 4.2 Officers are currently progressing service improvements that can be made now to help support the delivery of Transformation. We are also looking at improving the performance data we collect to help feed into the future development of service delivery.
- 4.3 I have commenced a regular series of meetings with Ruth James to assist where required with the development of this service. Councillor Richard Lees has been invited to attend these meetings in his capacity of Shadow Portfolio Holder.
- 4.4 We are also looking at improving the performance data we collect to help feed into the future development strategy of the service delivery.

### **5. Facilities Management**

- 5.1 The Team continue to work closely with the Accommodation Project Team to support The Deane House refurbishment. Members will be aware that this is a time-consuming task and I congratulate both teams for their efforts and success in enabling the services of the Council to run.
- 5.2 They have undertaken a lot of work to ensure we have adequate fire procedures in place during the refurbishment – these procedures have recently been tested to ensure effectiveness.
- 5.3 Refurbishment works continue throughout The Deane House and it is

anticipated that the Reception Area works will be completed in June 2018.

## **6. ICT/Technology**

- 6.1 Resource management is a key focus now to ensure we have enough resource to both deliver business as usual and the Transformation Technology projects.
- 6.2 We are currently identifying the technology requirements to deliver GDPR compliance and to align with our broader information management requirements for Transformation. The outcome will be a matter for a future report.
- 6.3 The Allpay system implementation is planned for 31 March 2018 to support the removal of the cash machines from The Deane House and the Wellington Community Office.

## **7. Members Case Management**

- 7.1 A temporary Members Case Manager is now in post and I welcome Dianne Blackmore. The purpose of the role is to:-
  - (a) Provide additional resource for supporting officers and Members during the implementation of the Transformation Programme;
  - (b) Provide a single point of contact for Member enquiries;
  - (c) Allow us to trial a case management approach and collect data about Member enquiries in order to inform future service delivery design; and
  - (d) We are currently working with Members to help develop the role before we formally go live.

## **8. HR and Organisational Development**

- 8.1 Payroll : We continue to embed the new payroll systems. Having piloted Absence, Expenses and Overtime modules on iTrent, we have now launched these to all staff. This has meant that line managers and employees now can manage and upload information themselves. Managers now have access to real time reporting and can scrutinise sickness analytics. User guides were produced in-house for all three modules.
- 8.2 HR continues to support staff with the various moves in The Deane House due to the start of the Accommodation Project. We also issued 115 vouchers for free flu jabs to staff.
- 8.3 Recruitment : Recruitment levels remain steady, however the majority of posts have been filled by secondments internally or agency staff rather than external applicants in anticipation of the Transformation Project.

- 8.4 Temporary Staff : The majority of temporary staff continue to be placed through Matrix and there are currently 51 active placements.
- 8.5 Transformation : The team has been busy designing and job evaluating the new posts for the One Future Model and organising the recruitment process.
- 8.6 Chaplaincy Service – The service provided by Reverend Ewen Huffman has been well received by staff and we will be conducting a three month review with the Taunton Chaplaincy Service shortly and anticipate that this service will continue.

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

- 9.1 The Mayor, Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey, was particularly busy pre-Christmas with the usual round of Carol services, seasonal events and celebrations across the Borough. This culminated in the Christmas Day morning goodwill visits to the local emergency services, The Samaritans, a local Care Home and the Maternity Unit at Musgrove Park Hospital to present the first born 'Christmas Baby' with a soft toy.
- 9.2 Traditionally, January is a quiet month allowing the Mayor to 'draw breath'. However, the past month has been busier than usual with the Mayor being invited to a wide range of events ranging from a 100th Birthday celebration to attending the Pantomime at The Brewhouse Theatre.
- 9.3 Since moving upstairs in late November, Democratic Services have settled well into their new office in Room 251. The move – by necessity – resulted in a major clear out of files and documents that were no longer needed and many old Minute Books and other civic artefacts and documents have been placed into store at the Somerset Heritage Centre at Norton Fitzwarren or other locations.
- 9.4 One artefact found a new home was the HMS Hecate Bell which had been on display near the main entrance to The Deane House. The bell had been presented to the Council in 1990 on the decommissioning of the survey vessel which had undertaken many voyages on behalf of the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO).
- 9.5 In the knowledge that the bell – which was hung from a substantial wooden 'A-frame' – was likely to end up permanently in store, an approach was made to the UKHO to see whether they would be interested in receiving back the 'Hecate Bell'. The response was swift and positive and I, accompanied by the Democratic Services Manager – Richard Bryant – were invited to the UKHO on the 31 January 2018 to formally hand over the bell to the UKHO.
- 9.6 The bell is currently on display in the entrance to the main building but it is likely to be transferred to one of the new office blocks being constructed on

site, particularly if the suggested name of the 'Hecate Building' is accepted by the Royal Navy.

## **10. Procurement Team**

- 10.1 The Procurement Team continue to provide support across a wide range of projects and business usual activities:
- 10.2 Michael O'Halloran is working on a number of key strategic projects including North Taunton Master Planning, the Firepool development, Lisieux Way and the new Leisure Contract. In respect of Lisieux Way and the Leisure Contract the procurement design is in advance stages and close to release
- 10.3. David Carpenter is beginning initial design work in respect of the procurement of professional services that may be required for the Brewhouse Theatre project. In respect of the Coal Orchard project the procurement focus moves to the award of the associated works contract.
- 10.4. Contracts recently awarded include:-
  - ICT – Remote Access Solution;
  - Professional Services - West Somerset Design Guide;
  - Professional Services – Taunton Waterways Action;
  - Works – Pool Filtration Services; and
  - Works – Pay on Foot Parking Solution.
- 10.5 The Team continue to support South Somerset District Council on several projects as well as providing general procurement advice
- 10.6. Work is underway to develop a range of updated procurement template documents. The aim being to facilitate a greater degree of self service and general procurement skills/understanding amongst staff.
- 10.6. Work is underway to develop bespoke procurement reports within the E5 system.
- 10.7. Other live projects include a material supply solution for the Depot based services, asbestos survey and removal contracts.

## **11. Finance**

- 11.1 I welcome Andy Stark as Financial Services Manager to the Team. Andy replaces Jo Nacey who has moved from the area.
- 11.2 The budget setting process has been completed and a number of reports have been presented to Scrutiny and the Executive on the budget position. This has also included an update to the Medium Term Financial Plan including updated forecasts of future funding and any potential budgetary gap.

The Council's capital spending plans have also been presented to Members for consideration.

11.3 We have also started early preparation for completing the Council's Final Accounts to make sure that we are ready for our external auditors and the statutory deadlines for publication.

11.4 We have continued to support a number of potential capital projects particularly those with a commercial and regeneration aspect including:-

- Firepool Hotel;
- The Collar Factory; and
- Taunton Station Regeneration.

Councillor Richard Parrish



# Council Meeting - 22 February 2018

## Report of Councillor Mrs Jane Warmington - Community Leadership

*THINK DIFFERENTLY, DO DIFFERENTLY ~ 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 are already being delivered differently in our disadvantaged urban areas through co-ordinated, frontline, problem-solving, multiagency one teams providing early help eventually based together in the area they serve. Rural parishes with more scattered communities are being helped to access services through community centres and local village agents who identify, signpost and support isolated residents to get the help they need. Urban priority areas need excellent education and health facilities within them if we are to build independence, resilience and raise aspirations in individuals, families and communities, to sustain improvements and reduce the need and costs of interventions in the future.*

### 1. Voluntary Sector Partners with Funding Agreements

- 1.1 Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) continues to support our voluntary and community sector (VCS) in a number of ways which include some core funding agreements; a small grants pot administered for us by Somerset Community Foundation; the Somerset West Lottery; and some TDBC commissioned services in support of our tenants (MIND, Citizens Advice Money Matters, and Inspire2Achieve with work readiness and jobs).
- 1.2 The support the VCS are able to offer within our communities is enormous and they update us on their achievements once or twice a year. The eight organisations with annual funding agreements have reported back on the first half of their year (April to September 2017) and these are summarised here:-

### 2. Community Council for Somerset

- 2.1 The Community Council for Somerset (CCS) offer a range of services including advising on community buildings such as funding, project planning, health and safety, connectivity, hiring agreements, energy and insurance, membership, food preparation and hygiene, fire safety, and licensing. .
- 2.2 Thirteen community groups have benefitted from this and include Pitminster Village Hall, Fitzhead Tithe Barn, Churchinford Village Hall, Comeytrove Village Hall, West Monkton Village Hall, Wiveliscombe Village Hall, Brittons Ash Community Hall, Priorswood Community Centre, Appley Pavilion, North Curry Village Hall, Kingston St Mary Village Hall, West Buckland Village Hall, Oake Village Hall and Rockwell Green Village Hall.
- 2.3 Two training events on community buildings attracted nineteen attendees from Taunton Deane with others from elsewhere in the county. Forty-seven village/ community halls are currently members and receive Thatch magazine, newsletters and bulletins.
- 2.4 Advice given on community regeneration, community development and planning includes sources of funding, housing needs surveys, community cafe

projects, charity structure, social enterprises and project planning. This has benefitted Nynehead Play Area, Neroche Parish Council, St Margaret's Hospice, St Michael's Galmington, Oake Community Shop, and the communities of Stawley and Ashbrittle.

- 2.5 CCS regularly attend the Taunton Deane Strategic Partnership and also TDBC's Community Planning Working (rural) Group. They are a member of the countywide advisory group on the Voluntary and Community and Social Enterprise Strategic Forum. CCS provide administrative and governance support for the Bishop Fox Educational Foundation. They introduced the Somerset Community Oil Scheme to save money for domestic, community organisations and business buying heating oil. CCS currently has sixty-seven active community group members in Taunton Deane.
- 2.6 As part of the Positive People Programme the Community Enabler from CCS has met twenty-two people in the Taunton Deane area over the six months, seventeen of whom have been referred on to the Positive People Programme (helping long term unemployed or those who may be disadvantaged into work) with three referrals signposted to other appropriate services.
- 2.7 CCS also runs the established Village Agents' programme (providing people in Somerset's rural communities with easier access to information and services) and TDBC helps to fund complete coverage across the parishes of Taunton Deane.
- 2.8 This model of local support is expanding to include Community Agents following a social prescribing trial funded by the Clinical Commissioning Group in two local doctors' surgeries; roll out after a separate trial funded by Adult Social Care to support their less urgent referrals; and Carers Agents after CCS was recently awarded the contract for Carers Support Services in Somerset.

### **3. Compass Disability**

- 3.1 Compass Disability Services have nearly 14,000 members and 600 people on their database. TDBC supports them to hold two six monthly gatherings for members in Taunton Deane and disseminate information throughout the year. Speakers have included advice on scams from Devon and Somerset Standards; Somerset Strategic Housing Officers Group discussing housing needs for those with disabilities; and information about The Deane House refurbishment.

### **4. Engage**

- 4.1 Engage offer advice and support to other voluntary and community groups through face to face meetings (drop-ins/appointments), emails or over the telephone. They match volunteers to volunteering opportunities and run annual Volunteer Week and host the award ceremony.
- 4.2 They are currently working with one hundred and fifty different groups; have matched over a hundred people wanting to volunteer to organisations needing volunteers; which has amounted to over seven thousand volunteer hours in six months (based on an average of ten hours volunteering per month); from advertising nearly two hundred and fifty volunteer opportunities with eighty-eight different groups (two and a half times as many opportunities as three years ago);

advertised through Facebook, Twitter, email, posters, leaflets, groups and forums, radio, Somerset County Gazette and Wellington Weekly.

## **5. Fuse Streetlinkz**

- 5.1 Streetlinkz provides an opportunity for around twenty youngsters who are not necessarily attracted to youth clubs and sports to be part of a group which hones circus skills and performance opportunities to help support them through their teenage years. Involvement invariably increases confidence and the ability to work as part of a team, builds trust, enhances social skills, confers some responsibility and helps keep you fit.
- 5.2 This has helped group members successfully progress into further education (drama, health and social care, horticulture, bricklaying, tree surgery); apprenticeships and jobs (nursery school placement, health and social care worker, trainee hairdresser, Macdonald's employee); and gain qualifications (food hygiene) and continue to learn through volunteering. Past members also still take part and contribute their time, skills and talents and remain supported by Fuse staff.
- 5.3 Performances at events include CicCic, River of Light, Orchard Planting, Streetlinkz Open Day, Milverton May Fayre, Somerset Day, dance project with Zoie Logic, Somerfest, Quayside Festival, August Activities Days in Halcon, August Pride in Priorswood activity, Burnham-on-Sea Appex Park Family Funday, Halcon Halloween Event, Halcon Apple Day, Priorswood Apple Day Treasure Hunt, Children's Wood Apples and Anniversaries. These events have attracted between tens to hundreds of people at each with two events attracting several thousand (Somerfest and Burnham-on-Sea Family Funday).

## **6. North Taunton Partnership, Priorswood**

- 6.1 North Taunton Partnership runs the Priorswood Community Centre which helps hundreds of people each year (footfall at the centre and events in 2016/2017 totalled over twelve thousand) through advice, signposting, hosting local surgeries, holiday activity days, social groups, exercise sessions, educational classes, local courses, free computer access and initiating local solutions.
- 6.2 One hundred and fifty surgeries have taken place over the six months with partners supporting people with advice on benefits, housing, employment, credit union, money management, skills/training and education, energy use, health, volunteering, police matters, and addressing loneliness.
- 6.3 The Community Centre contributes hugely to community cohesion, addresses community needs, offers local opportunities for regular volunteering (currently thirty-seven giving almost two thousand hours of their time), provides a local advice hub, organises or arranges diversionary activities which helps reduce anti-social behaviour, has set up family litter-picks, helps manage the community garden, works alongside thirty-three partner organisations many of which are members of the North Taunton One Team, all working together to help keep North Taunton an attractive vibrant safe place to live.
- 6.4 North Taunton Partnership are looking for volunteers to help out for a few hours in the Community Centre. Opportunities to volunteer include roles of receptionist,

tea/coffee making assistant, computer support/tutor, summer activities support, sports assistant, crafting volunteer, event set up and a general volunteer. For more details about these please contact [lesley.priorswoodcc@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:lesley.priorswoodcc@yahoo.co.uk) or ring 01823 353643 or drop into the Priorswood Community Centre beside the shops.

## **7. Taunton East Development Trust, Link Centre**

- 7.1 Taunton East Development Trust (TEDT) runs the Link Centre in Halcon which supports several hundred local residents with information and activities such as bingo, coffee mornings, holiday brunch club and activity days in school holidays (footfall over six months is just over four thousand). There are fifty-two volunteers who help out giving over 8,000 hours of their time.
- 7.2 The Link Centre hosts several local surgeries offering advice on housing (TDBC), employment (i2a), money management (CAB), health and exercise classes (NHS Zing), Adult Social Care and offers free computer access. Surgeries have had nearly 200 visits over six months.
- 7.3 TEDT with Halcon One Team are responsible for the very successful and much valued voluntary community workforce Link Power working in the community building new work skills and experience amongst their twenty or so volunteers. This is through ground maintenance and garden works with some volunteer administrative support. They contribute hugely to the look and feel of Halcon which looks a picture. Volunteers are being helped into work placements and paid work by Inspire2Achieve (commissioned by TDBC) working alongside Link Power and others.
- 7.4 TEDT also started the pop-up Link Kitchen which has supplied over a 1,000 breakfasts in six months and provides a great meeting place for local residents during the week and helps provide a small income for the Trust. Taunton Deane Volunteer of the Year Graham heads up the Link Kitchen.
- 7.5 TEDT is planning to move the Link Centre across the road to Moorland Place which TDBC have adapted with a much improved layout and the current Link Centre will return to flats. New trustees are being sought to help develop the Trust - please contact the new Community Development Officer Lee Bunn if you are interested and have skills to offer ([l.bunn@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:l.bunn@tauntondeane.gov.uk)).

## **8. Taunton Citizens Advice**

- 8.1 Taunton Citizens Advice have helped over 3,700 people across Taunton Deane with over 9,000 issues between them. Almost half the issues concerned benefits, followed by debt, finance, relationships, housing, legal, employment and consumer concerns. One third of people advised had dependent children. Over half the initial contacts were in person, just over one third were made by telephone and the remaining tenth wrote in (letter/email). 85% of people had a positive or very positive experience.
- 8.2 CAB enabled nearly £2,000 worth of debt to be written off through 19 Debt Relief and Bankruptcy Orders and achieved nearly £500,000 worth of additional benefits (total gains over course of a year) for over 150 people.

8.3 Referrals from the three One Teams in Halcon, North Taunton and Wellington for money management advice at local community centre surgeries provided by CAB were very similar, around 60 each over the six months (many complex).

## **9. Wiveliscombe Area Partnership and Wivey Link Community Transport**

9.1 Wiveliscombe Area Partnership runs the Community Office in the centre of the town fielding enquiries and offering advice to residents across a wide rural area. It hosts twice monthly surgeries for benefit and housing advice, the Village Agent and a weekly Police surgery which attracted nearly 50 visits in six months.

9.2 It offers free computer access and a well-used small photocopying service; holds public, tourist and local information; household and dog waste bags supply; assists with form filling; signposts to other agencies and sells tickets for local events. It also has a small meeting room for hire and similarly a storage capacity for bulky community items.

9.3 There is small plastics recycling service for plastic milk bottle tops, ink cartridges and laser toners, used postage stamps, trigger-tops from plastic spray bottles and mobile phones. These are all used to raise funds for various charities such as the South West Hospices.

9.4 There have been over 1,000 visits to the Community Office in six months and forty-four people regularly volunteer.

9.5 Wiveliscombe Area Partnership's community transport Wivey Link is run by the community office and has 665 registered users from a wide rural area. Most are over 60 years old although 59 are between eighteen and twenty-five and a similar number over twenty-five but under sixty. 47 users are registered disabled but many more are frail and elderly and struggle to get to the bus stops so appreciate being picked up and transported.

9.6 The 36 volunteer drivers have completed over 4,000 single passenger journeys in four vehicles covering nearly 35,000 miles. Reasons for journeys include hospital, doctor, dentist and other medical appointments; visits to day-centres, church, social events, visiting friends and shopping.

Councillor Mrs Jane Warmington

# **Council Meeting – 22 February 2018**

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

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

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

- 1.1 The completions are scheduled from Spring 2018. Regrettably there have been some delays owing to material supplies and labour but work is progressing well.
- 1.2 Work continues to prepare for the launch of the Council's shared ownership properties to offer an alternative form of low cost home ownership through the Council.

#### **12 Moorland Close, Taunton**

- 1.3 The work is due to complete mid-March and will provide 3 x 1 bed homes and community space.

#### **North Taunton**

- 1.4 Letters have been sent to both Taunton Deane tenants and to owner occupiers with regard to the first phase which is likely to result in a refurbishment programme. The exact details are yet to be finalised. A second public consultation event is taking place on Wednesday, 14 February 2018 and the Residents Design Group is working extremely well and providing invaluable community input to the project.

#### **Housing Enabling**

- 1.5 85 affordable homes have been completed up to December 2017 with a further 85 anticipated. However this figure is subject to change as some properties may complete in April/May rather than March. The 66 unit Extra Care scheme and 12 unit scheme for Learning Disabilities at Parmin Close, Taunton is scheduled to complete in Spring 2018 (April/May time).
- 1.6 The development pipeline remains strong even with the ongoing viability challenges received from numerous developments.
- 1.7 Housing Enabling are undertaking an affordable housing survey which has been commissioned by Ruishton and Thornfalcon Parish Council through the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. Other parishes are also in discussion to commission this service.
- 1.8 The Affordable Housing Open Day will be held on Wednesday, 6 June 2018 from 3pm until 7pm at Somerset County Cricket Ground. All are welcome and please encourage local residents to attend. It is a 'One Stop Shop' to find out about your affordable housing options.

### **2. Welfare Reform**

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

- 2.1 Little to add to the ongoing programme. We continue to award DHP for a number of valid reasons and we are working very closely with our tenants to examine reasons behind rent shortfalls and any remedial measures we can assist them with.

## **Universal Credit (UC)**

- 2.2 Following on from recent Government changes the freephone contact numbers have proved to be extremely successful as one would expect and resulted in more request for assistance being made to the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).
- 2.3 Removal of the seven day waiting period and reducing the six week wait from point of claim to five weeks has also made a difference in the overall picture with regards to hardship within the UC system although more needs to be done and we are using Government for additional measures to ease the burden.
- 2.4 The short-term measure where DWP have changed how claimants in temporary accommodation receive support is working well. Local authorities are able to recoup over 80% of the money they spend on temporary accommodation directly from the DWP rather than from the claimant.
- 2.5 The most significant change in UC is here the claimant can now claim a 'New claim advance' of up to 100% of the likely UC award. This advance can now be paid back over a much longer period of 12 months allowing claimants to pay their rent whilst waiting for their first UC payment.
- 2.6 If a claimant is in receipt of Housing Benefit and makes a claim for UC they are now entitled to a two week run on of Housing Benefit. This has still to be clarified and we await further information.

## **3. Deane Helpline**

- 3.1 Deane Helpline continues to go from strength to strength. From April to date we have taken on 529 new customers whilst over the same period we have lost 332. Traditionally for every new customer we take on we lose a customer, meaning for the most part they cancel each other out. However, we currently have a surplus of 197 customers for this financial year - a fantastic position to be in. We firmly put this down to improved networking within the health and social care sector and re-educating our partners on what our service can provide to their clients.
- 3.2 The new additional service of providing and installing keysafes has been popular amongst our customers and we have seen since October when the scheme began take up of approximately 12 installations a week. Whilst the majority have been existing customers, we are getting requests from non-customers which is encouraging. This has been achieved with little or no direct advertising of the service but by word of mouth of satisfied customers. We will be publicising the service far more and we hope more business will come from that project.
- 3.3 Conversion of existing customers is vitally important as these customers are

transferring from a key holding service to having their own keys located at their property, which means the Emergency Response Team are more agile in responding to emergency calls as they do not have to return to our office to collect keys and then

deploy again. This not only impacts positively on our response times, but also delivers savings for the service.

- 3.4 Finally, the programme of replacing 'end of life' lifelines is going well. We identified early on a modern, robust lifeline alarm unit and have been working closely with our provider to ensure the exchange of lifeline units to our customers is seamless. We have taken a strategic decision with the acquisition of the new alarms and they are ready for the analogue phone line switch off in 2025 as they are Internet Protocol voice ready, which is fantastic for our customers.

## 4. Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Service

### New Staff

- 4.1 Andrew Smith joined the team on secondment on the 2 January 2018 which brings the team up to 3 Full Time Equivalentents.

### Officer patches

- 4.2 We have now reviewed officers work patches so that they broadly reflect the Area Team boundaries.

### Central ASB Team

- 4.3 Retaining the officers as part of a central team ensures consistency of delivery across the whole Borough and also the ability to surge resources where required when demand dictates, as evidenced recently in North Taunton in relation to Organised Crime Gang (OCG) activity.

### Performance

- 4.4 Satisfaction with the service remains high. At the end of Quarter 3 96% (target 85%) of tenants who reported ASB in year to date rated the help and advice received as good or excellent.

### Casework

#### 4.5 ASB cases recorded between 09/02/17 – 09/02/18 (12 months)

35 new cases were opened during the period – a slight reduction in noise, harassment and physical violence complaints. Although noise remains one of the main concerns residents report:-

Alcohol	5
Domestic Abuse	1
Drugs misuse/Dealing	5
Garden Nuisance	2
Harassment	7
Hate Crime	1
Noise	7
Other Crime	1



Physical violence	3
Vandalism	1
Vehicles	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>

## Closed cases

4.6 All open cases were reviewed as part of a housekeeping exercise linked to the discussion about officer patches. This review has resulted in a significant increase in case closures for the period totalling 160, of which 76.8% were closed as a success.

## High Profile/Risk Cases

4.7 There are currently eight such cases currently being dealt with including three concerning Organised Crime Gangs (OCG) and we are working very closely with the Police on these matters. Of these an application has been lodged to the court for a mandatory possession order, another closure order is being pursued and in the other the tenant has been removed to safer accommodation whilst action is progressed.

4.8 I would like to express my thanks for jobs well done to the team with regard to all of these and in particular in Duke Street, Taunton where a closure order was successfully granted and the lives of many of our tenants were made considerably better.

4.9 We are acutely aware of the apparent rise in OCG activity and we are pursuing a rigorous policy with colleagues from the Police and other services.

## Other tasking

4.10 We have instigated a review of the Mandatory Possession Procedure and that is currently ongoing. We continue to support 'Chill and Chat' and we are currently looking at the maintenance of the Duke Street CCTV - all work in progress.

## 5. Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership (SWPSHP)

5.1 I have been asked to reiterate the current position with regards to the SWPSHP and the plans for the future.

5.2 The Council has been involved in the drafting of the housing element of the Somerset Better Care Fund Plan. This introduces an expanding range of housing options through use of the Disabled Facilities Grant element of the Better Care Fund. This includes:-

- Works that seek to avoid hospital admissions;
- Prevention grants (for example for energy efficiency work);
  
- Minor works grant for small scale adaptations around the home that may for example prevent trips and falls;
- Loaning equipment; and

- Further, grant and loan packages.

Changes to our grant policy to accomplish these measures has already been through Executive and reported to the Council.

### **And finally.....**

Given the uncertainty and disruption taking place with The Deane House refurbishment and Transformation I continue to be extremely impressed by the dedication and hard work of all of our staff who continue to deliver first rate services across the board to the people of Taunton Deane and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all.

Councillor Terry Beale