

You are requested to attend a meeting of the Executive to be held in The John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton on 11 November 2009 at 18:15.

Agenda

- 1 Apologies.
- 2 Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 14 October 2009 (attached).
- 3 Public Question Time.
- 4 Declaration of Interests
To receive declarations of personal or prejudicial interests, in accordance with the Code of Conduct. The usual declarations made at meetings of the Executive are set out in the attachment.
- 5 Reconsideration of decision following call-in - Proposed commissioning of a County-wide Home Improvement Agency. Report of the Democratic Services Manager (attached).
Reporting Officer: Richard Bryant
- 6 Potential Affordable Housing Redevelopment Opportunity - Parmin Close, Taunton. Report of the Housing Enabling Manager (attached).
Reporting Officer: Lesley Webb
- 7 Revised proposals for financing the purchase of the "Acolaid" Building Control Computer System. Report of the Building Control Manager (attached).
Reporting Officer: Brian Yates
- 8 The Taunton Protocol - Adoption and Application by Taunton Deane Borough Council. Report of the Project Taunton Manager (attached).
Reporting Officer: Mark Green
- 9 Windfall VAT Receipt. Report of the Strategic Finance Officer (attached).
Reporting Officer: Maggie Hammond
- 10 Core Council Review : Proposals for Theme 2 (Growth and Development) and Theme 4 (Operations and Regulation). Joint Report of the Core Council Review Project Director, the Growth and Development Manager and the Community Services Manager (attached).
Also see agenda item No.12.
Reporting Officers: James Barrah

- 11 Executive Forward Plan - details of forthcoming items to be considered by the Executive and the opportunity for Members to suggest further items (attached)

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

- 12 Core Council Review Proposals -Themes 2 and 4 : Confidential Appendix (attached).
Also see agenda item No.10.
Clause 1 - Council Employees.

Tonya Meers
Legal and Democratic Services Manager

03 December 2009

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.

If a member of the public wishes to address the Committee on any matter appearing on the agenda, the Chairman will normally permit this to occur when that item is reached and before the Councillors begin to debate the item.

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

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

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

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



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



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

For further information about the meeting, please contact Democratic Services on 01823 356382 or email d.durham@tauntondeane.gov.uk

Executive Members:-

Councillor R Henley - Leader of the Council

Councillor R Lees

Councillor A Paul

Councillor T Slattery

Councillor H Prior-Sankey

Councillor F Smith

Councillor A Wedderkopp

Councillor N Wilson

Councillor S Coles

Executive – 14 October 2009

Present: Councillor Henley (Chairman)
Councillors Coles, R Lees, Paul, Prior-Sankey, Slattery, Mrs Smith,
A Wedderkopp and Mrs Wilson

Officers: Penny James (Chief Executive), Joy Wishlade (Strategic Director),
Tonya Meers (legal and Democratic Services Manager), Caroline
Corfe (Community Arts Officer), Maggie Hammond (Strategic Finance
Officer), Adrian Priest (Asset Holdings Manager) and Richard Bryant
(Democratic Services Manager)

Also present: Councillors Cavill, Mrs Court-Stenning, Hayward, Morrell and
Williams.
Mark Green, Project Taunton

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm.)

83. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 16 September 2009, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and were signed.

84. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Henley, Paul and Prior-Sankey declared personal interests as Members of Somerset County Council. Councillor Prior-Sankey also declared a prejudicial interest in the item covered by Minute No. 89 below and left the meeting during its consideration. Councillor Coles declared a personal interest as a Director of Southwest One. Councillor Mrs Smith declared a personal interest as an employee of Somerset County Council. Councillor Slattery declared personal interests both as a Member of the Somerset Waste Board and as an employee of Sedgemoor District Council.

85. Task and Finish Review into Employment Land in Taunton

Submitted for information, comment and approval the recommendations of the Employment Land in Taunton Task and Finish Group.

The Task and Finish Review had been set up to seek a solution to the growing demand for employment land in and around Taunton.

At its first meeting, the Task and Finish Review had agreed that its terms of reference should be as follows:-

- To review the strategic employment sites currently available and recommend whether they ought to remain in the Local Plan;

- To identify locations for alternative strategic employment sites which could be more readily available for a wide range and types of businesses;
- To establish what could be achieved through the preparation of the current Local Development Framework (LDF) whilst considering how lengthy potential delays to land coming forward for development might be overcome;
- To undertake consultations with interested parties;
- To consider how the Council should work with statutory bodies such as the Highways Agency and others to enable any proposed sites to be brought forward; and
- To make recommendations to the Executive.

At the first meeting the Task and Finish Group acknowledged that it did not intend to duplicate work already being undertaken by the LDF Steering Group and that any recommendations made by the Task and Finish Group would feed into the preparation of the Core Strategy and the LDF.

A series of meetings of the Task and Finish Review had been held and evidence had been collected from a number of sources including consultants, professional agents and developers and officers from Somerset County Council and other statutory agencies.

The Task and Finish Group had discussed the recommendations it wished to make to the Executive. These recommendations had initially been considered by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 6 August when a number of amendments were suggested. The Task and Finish Group has incorporated these amendments into the recommendations which were as follows:-

Recommendation 1

In line with Circular 02/2009, the Council should initiate discussions with landowners and developers for the release of immediate short term employment land opportunities at Nerrols, Creech Heathfield and Walford Cross and other suitable sustainable sites for up to 5,000 square metres (around 2 hectares per site). Such discussions should aim to encourage the owners of land to release sites to businesses, wherever possible, on a freehold rather than a leasehold basis;

Recommendation 2

In line with Circular 02/2009, the threshold for out-of-centre office proposals for requiring a sequential assessment be raised to 1,000 square metres. This should enable additional windfall opportunities to come forward in the short term;

Recommendation 3

A strategic employment site of about 25 hectares with good access to both

the M5 Motorway and the A358 should be brought forward in the medium/long term, through the LDF. The Council recognise that it needed to collaborate closely with all relevant agencies if it wished to build in flexibility into the Core Strategy. The owners of any potential site identified should again be encouraged to release sites to businesses, wherever possible, on a freehold rather than a leasehold basis;

Recommendation 4

To progress a strategic employment site it was also recommended that a working group be set up and led by the Strategic Director, involving Economic Development, Project Taunton and representatives of all relevant agencies, a Councillor representative and others as appropriate, with the purpose of developing an evidence base and proposal for the LDF Core Strategy. Consideration should be given to a representative from Sedgemoor District Council being invited to sit on the Working Group. As part of this process there should be community engagement with the parishes that would be affected. It was recommended that the strategic employment site should provide opportunities for major inward investment and relocation of existing sites to Taunton. It was accepted development (non Class A1) would be necessary to fund the initial infrastructure to open up the site, but the total proportion of floor space for such uses should remain ancillary (around 10%) and focus on medium sized office suites (300 – 1,000 square metres) in order to remain consistent with Government policy and to avoid undermining Firepool as the strategic office site for the Taunton Strategically Significant City and Town (SSCT). Such a Working Group should report back to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee within 4 months, with a progress report;

Recommendation 5

The Executive be requested to identify the specific partners for the Working Group which would be led by Taunton Deane with the process and reporting back arrangements (to ensure progress was measured) being led by the Strategic Director, Joy Wishlade.

Resolved that the recommendations of the Employment Land in Taunton Task and Finish Group be accepted.

86. The Public Life of Public Space : The Taunton Deane Public Art Code

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the Taunton Deane Public Art Code and its implications for development of the public realm in the future.

Taunton Deane Borough Council had adopted the 1% for Public Art and Design Policy in June 2007. However, recognising the difficulties associated with requesting 1% of costs towards public art, the Public Art and Design Panel had commissioned independent Cultural Consultants to produce clearer guidelines for developers and a commissioning plan for Taunton as developments moved forward.

The Taunton Deane Public Art Code clarified the Council's policy statement. It had been re-worded as follows:-

“Taunton Deane Borough Council adopted a Public Art and Design Policy in June 2007. The aim was to promote and support excellence in public art as an integral element of the design of buildings and development and enhancement of the public realm. The policy related to large new buildings and open space developments in Taunton Deane under private and public ownership.

All developments in excess of 15 residential units or 2500 square metres (gross) of commercial floorspace would be required to contribute towards the public art and public realm enhancements through commissioning and integrating public art into the design of buildings and the public realm or by a commuted sum to the value of one percent of development costs.”

The Code contained policy and guidance on the planning process and how artists could be used at each stage of development, from the master planning process to community engagement as well as the creation of site specific pieces of work.

The Commissioning Plan gave the creative rationale underlying the Code, and recommended adopting the three themes of 'Play, Knowledge and Nature' to inspire public art approaches. This Plan also identified connectivity and legibility as key issues that public art could help address.

Reported that the Code would be designed into an attractive publication with images and examples of best practice. Noted that the Council was aiming to achieve best practice in developing Taunton as a sustainable, green, imaginative and distinctive town through creative contributions into planning and using public space.

The plan for the remainder of the current financial year included the need to move ahead with the Connectivity and Legibility Study and secure agreement on approaches to routes to and from the station and other transport interchanges, the River Tone and the town centre. A copy of the draft brief was submitted for the information of Members.

It was hoped to secure £10,000 for the specialist public art consultant to facilitate the study and for artists to undertake community engagement.

Resolved that the “Public Life in Public Spaces: The Taunton Deane Public Art Code” be endorsed.

87. **Growth Point Funding – Re-profiling the Spending Plan**

Reference Minute No. 23/2009, considered report previously circulated, concerning the need to re-profile the Growth Point Funding Spending Plan.

In December 2008 Taunton Deane and Somerset County Council were advised that the Growth Point allocation for Taunton was £3,338,104 capital and £301,249 revenue in 2009/2010 and a provisional amount for 2010/2011 of £3,972,516 capital and £300,698 revenue.

The priorities for using this funding were discussed with members of the Project Taunton Steering Group and the Project Taunton Advisory Board and were subsequently approved by the Executive earlier in the year. Details of the Funding Plan were submitted.

A letter from the Minister for Housing and Planning had been received in July 2009 reducing the capital allocation for 2009/2010 by 43% to £2,248,263. The revenue funding had not been reduced. The Minister also advised that there would be formal consultation on this proposal. Although this consultation period had only just commenced, a joint letter with the County Council had already been sent to the Minister setting out the reasons why the reduction should not be as onerous in Taunton.

Discussions had also been held with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), the Regional Development Agency (RDA) and with the Government Office for the South West (GOSW). All had agreed that it would be unlikely that the reduced figure quoted in the letter would be increased.

In view of all the other statements on the reduction in public spending next year and in the absence of any firm commitment from the Government about even the reduced figure being available, it was felt prudent to have two delivery options: one with no further Growth Points being available and the other with the reduced figure for 2010/2011.

Details of the re-prioritised spending plan were also submitted. The new element was the completion of the Northern Inner Distributor Road. This showed that if the Council continued to undertake the works previously prioritised and if no Growth Point funding was received next year, there would be an overspend of £2,691,000.

In this scenario it would be Castle Green which would be at risk as this was the project that was least aligned to the delivery of housing and economic growth. If the reduced Growth Point funding was received an overspend of £443,000 would still occur. However, in the current economic climate it was expected some tenders were likely to be well below the budget amount reducing the anticipated overspend significantly.

Resolved that:-

- (1) the amended priorities for Growth Points be approved; and
- (2) Full Council be recommended to agree the change to the Capital Programme of the capital elements of the Growth Point Funding Plan.

88. **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Resolved that the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting for the following item because of the likelihood that exempt information would otherwise be disclosed relating to Clause 7 of Schedule 12(A) to the Local Government Act 1972 and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

89. **Potential Purchase of Capital Asset, Taunton**

Reference Minute No. 55/2009, reported on the progress made to date with the proposed purchase of this capital asset.

As part of the due diligence for this project a legal report on various obligations in the lease was requested in order to identify what terms had / had not been complied with that would affect an investment / development appraisal. This advice had now been received and details were reported. A particular course of action had been recommended to the Executive as a result.

In addition, and as outlined in Minute No. 87 above, the reduction in Government funding meant that Project Taunton's budget/Growth Points would not be in a position to become involved in this project financially. Ownership of this project would now pass to the Property Asset Management Team.

Resolved that:-

- (1) Due to the change in circumstances and the new information received in connection with the lease, the decisions taken by the Executive on 17 June 2009 concerning this matter (Minute No. 55/2009) be rescinded; and
- (2) Either officers with relevant experience in Southwest One, or an external professional agent, be instructed to carry out negotiations with the current leaseholder with a report being submitted to the Executive for further decision by 13 January 2010 at the latest.

(The meeting ended at 7.20 p.m.)

Usual Declarations of Interest by Councillors

Executive

- **Members of Somerset County Council – Councillors Henley, Paul and Prior-Sankey**
- **Employee of Somerset County Council – Councillor Mrs Smith**
- **Director of Southwest One – Councillor Coles**
- **Member of Somerset Waste Board and employee of Sedgemoor District Council – Councillor Slattery**

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Executive – 11 November 2009

Reconsideration of decision following call-in – Proposed commissioning of a County-wide Home Improvement Agency

Report of the Democratic Services Manager

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey)

1. Background

- 1.1 At its meeting on 16 September 2009, the Executive considered a confidential report concerning proposals to commission a County-wide Home Improvement Agency.
- 1.2 The proposals had previously been considered by the Community Scrutiny Committee which had decided not to support a new Home Improvement Agency, specifically the Handyperson element of the service.
- 1.3 Despite this opposition, the Executive decided “that the proposed funding commitment to Supporting People for the County-wide Home Improvement Agency be agreed”. An extract from the Minutes of the Executive’s meeting is attached at Appendix A.
- 1.4 As a result, Councillors Mrs Court-Stenning and Hayward called in the decision and the matter was discussed at the last meeting of the Community Scrutiny Committee on 13 October 2009. An extract from the minutes of this meeting is attached at Appendix B.
- 1.5 The Committee agreed to refer the decision back to the Executive for further consideration.
- 1.6 Since then, the Members of the Executive have reviewed the decision made on 16 September 2009, taking into full account the views expressed by the Community Scrutiny Committee.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Executive is of the view that its previous decision should stand. However, it is committed to ensuring that the standard of the new service is at least as good as that currently provided and that the new service will therefore be reviewed after a year, with a report being brought back to the Community Scrutiny Committee.

Appendix A

Extract from the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 16 September 2009

82. **The Future of the Home Improvement Agency and Handyperson Services**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the impending changes to the funding and delivery of Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs) in Somerset.

HIAs provided a service to vulnerable Client Groups, supporting applications for Disabled Facility Grants and discretionary repairs across the private and public housing stock. They provided case-workers to assess need, liaise with contractors and ensured work was undertaken and completed to the client's satisfaction. HIAs also administered Handyperson schemes to provide a basic home repair service to vulnerable clients at a subsidised cost across all housing tenures.

Supporting People had decided that the current provision of HIAs across Somerset was no longer appropriate and were working with the other Somerset commissioners (including Taunton Deane) to commission a County-wide service from June 2010, which would include a Handyperson Scheme.

Submitted full details of the proposed new arrangements and how they would affect Taunton Deane.

Reported that under the new arrangements, Supporting People would be required to provide funding for a County-wide handyperson service. This gave the Council the option to withdraw our funding and rely on the HIA provided Handyperson service, or to add our funding into the 'pot' for an enhanced Taunton Deane Handyperson service.

Noted that any additional funding we chose to provide for a Handyperson Scheme would be paid to the new Home Improvement Agency to 'top up' the standard service. It would be counterproductive to run an additional scheme with different contact details and pricing models as this would prove confusing to customers and would compete directly with the new HIA.

The proposed funding commitment to the County-wide HIA was also reported.

When this item had been considered at the Community Scrutiny Committee on 15 September 2009, Members felt unable to support the

proposal on the information that had been supplied. The Committee was concerned that there could be a deterioration in the Handyperson Scheme for the people of Taunton Deane. Accordingly, it was agreed to inform the Executive that the Handyperson Scheme should remain at Taunton Deane until proven to be unnecessary.

The Strategy and Corporate Manager, Simon Lewis, reported a communication from Ms Viv Streeter of Supporting People which confirmed that a series of performance targets would be set to ensure that current levels of service received under the Handyperson Scheme were maintained.

Members of the Executive also felt that it would not be economic to continue funding Taunton Deane's own Handyperson Scheme alongside one provided by the HIA.

Resolved that the proposed funding commitment to Supporting People for the County-wide Home Improvement Agency be agreed.

Appendix B

Extract from the Minutes of the meeting of the Community Scrutiny Committee held on 13 October 2009

48. Call-In relating to the Proposed Commissioning of a County-wide Home Improvement Agency

The Chairman asked Councillors Mrs Court-Stenning and Hayward to state their reasons as to why they had called in the decision taken by the Executive at its meeting held on 16 September 2009 (Minute No.82/2009 refers) in relation to the proposed commissioning of a County-wide Home Improvement Agency.

Councillor Mrs Court-Stenning felt it was proper that the decision had been called in for the following reasons:-

- (1) Insufficient weight had been given to the views of the Community Scrutiny Committee, despite cross-party support for those views;
- (2) The Chairman had directed the Executive to accept the advice of the Officer, despite this not being a delegated matter and therefore being the responsibility of Members and in particular the Executive; and
- (3) The report had been flawed as there was no Equalities Impact Assessment and no Service-user consultation.

Councillor Hayward expressed his support and felt that the Community Scrutiny Committee had been concerned that there could be a deterioration of the Handyperson service and this was not given consideration at the meeting of the Executive on 16 September 2009. He also felt that the Portfolio Holder for Housing had exerted pressure on the Committee and that the role of an Executive Member was to listen and comment and not sway the decision of the Scrutiny Committee.

Members re-affirmed that they had wanted evidence that the service that would be provided, would be equal to or better than the current service. They also wanted assurances that response times and charges would not change and the same work could be carried out. It was confirmed that the same areas of work would be covered, but the detail of the response times and charges would form part of the tender process.

Members also felt that monitoring of the service would be important and this would be carried out by Supporting People.

The Chairman explained that the role of the Scrutiny Committee should be respected and that as a Committee, they were not convinced that the replacement service would match or improve upon the current service. The Handyman Service could be re-considered at a later date when it could be shown that the proposed Home Improvement Agency was an improvement to the current service.

Resolved that the decision made by the Executive on 16 September 2009 be referred back for further consideration as the Community Scrutiny Committee wanted the Executive to be completely satisfied that the County-wide Home Improvement Agency was at least equal to the service currently provided.

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Executive – 11 November 2009

Proposed Redevelopment of Parmin Close, Taunton to provide 'Extra Care' Affordable Housing in Perpetuity for the Elderly and those in need of Extra Care Housing In Taunton Deane

Report of the Housing Enabling Manager

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey)

The purpose of this report is to bring to the attention of the Executive the opportunity of redeveloping a land hungry council owned site which currently has 24 x 1 bed flats, 6 x 1 bed bungalows which are all Sheltered Housing and 1 x 3 bed house. Taking into account the decline in need for Sheltered Housing this site could provide a **State of the Art 'Extra Care'** complex of 70 x 1 and 2 bed homes for the residents of Taunton Deane who are in need of independent supported living rather than living in an institutional type environment.

I seek your support to progress these proposals through the recognised process to enable the delivery of a Flagship Scheme for Extra Care in Taunton.

This site is owned by Taunton Deane and is situated within a large Council owned social housing estate. Detailed below are my proposals for the proposed redevelopment and I would urge you to carefully consider these proposals, to recognise the potential and to support the progression of this scheme. This, in turn, will support the Council's agreed priority for providing Affordable Housing.

I believe these proposals reflect the Core Council's Review, the Council's commitment to provide Affordable Housing, compliment Project Taunton and are part of the first steps in providing better housing for the residents of Taunton Deane.

Background

Parmin Close is a sheltered housing scheme built in 1971, of traditional brick construction consisting of 30 elderly persons homes owned and managed by Taunton Deane Borough Council.

The present complex comprises of:-

- 1 x 3 bed house
- 12 x 1 bed mini flats

- 12 x 1 bed maxi flats
- 6 x 1 bed bungalows
- 1 x meeting room.

The properties have Electric Economy 7 heating – providing poor heat in the evenings. One tenant has chosen to install gas into her bungalow the remaining properties have no gas. All have double glazing.

Flats 4a – 14b are small mini flats with only a shower, and there is a well used meeting hall.

This proposal is not new. Approximately five years ago there was a proposal to demolish the twelve mini flats on the east side of Parmin Close and to construct a new three storey block of Extra Care flats on this and adjoining land owned by the Council. The demolished properties would be replaced with 12 x two bed homes and 12 x one bed homes. It was proposed to gradually upgrade the remaining flats and bungalows to Extra Care standard as and when they became vacant. The new facility was intended to house older people as part of an Extra Care Sheltered Housing Scheme.

Taunton Deane made two bids to the Department of Health unsuccessfully. The main reason for the lack of success was because the Council was not partnering with a Registered Social Landlord.

Comment from the Supported Housing Manager

“Whilst Taunton Deane has 27 Sheltered Housing Schemes across the Borough only two are Extra Care Housing Schemes. The fundamental difference between Sheltered and Extra Care is the partnership working provided in the past between the Council, Adult Social Care and the Care provider to ensure a continued 24/7 service, including sleep-in staff.

With the anticipated number of older people increasing over the forthcoming years it is anticipated that the demand for such accommodation will increase and present a real alternative to going into residential care or a nursing home”.

An overview of Extra Care living

“Most older people want services that allow them to retain control over their daily lives with support delivered as and when they need it. What they don’t want are rigid traditional models that take for granted an inevitable and progressive path from living independently to being cared for” (*Dr Stephen Ladyman MP in 2003*). **There is no evidence that this has changed.**

Extra Care and The Concept. It provides Housing with integrated care and support, specialist housing for frail and older persons, an alternative to residential care with independent living, own front door, and a choice of flexible person centred services.

It provides a community HUB, for the health and wellbeing for the wider older community, drop in services with an outreach for care and support. It offers leisure and social activities, informal day care and mostly a meeting place for our local elderly residents.

Current situation

The Housing Enabling Manager and The Supported Housing Manager met with Mark Newstead, Head of Development (Care) with Sanctuary Housing Association on several occasions. Sanctuary is renowned for its experience and expertise in providing Extra Care across the country. An Architect was instructed to carry out a feasibility study and to provide indicative drawings for an innovative scheme for this proposed scheme. The design and facilities of this scheme will ensure this development will become a 'Flag Ship' in Extra Care for Taunton Deane for our local people.

Funding will come from several sources –

- The Homes and Communities Agency
- Sanctuary Housing Association (either reserves or market borrowing)
- Department of Health (Bid money)
- Supporting People.

The standard of bids to the Department of Health is extremely high. To achieve this, the following issues will need to be addressed to ensure success:-

- Innovative design;
- Innovative service delivery;
- Community use of the building;
- Hairdressing, Restaurant/Café/Tea shop, Internet café;
- Local partnership agreement;
- Funding arrangements;
- Value for money; and
- Deliverability within agreed timescales.

The new complex will be constructed to a very high standard. It will achieve, at least, Code for Sustainable Homes level 4. This in turn will provide very comfortable living for the tenants and low energy costs.

To achieve this we need to work in partnership with Sanctuary Housing Association.

Due to this Council's lack of financial resources we will be required to dispose of the land to Sanctuary for a nominal amount. The land disposal will represent this Council's contribution towards the scheme. The Council may also be required to contribute towards the Statutory Home Loss payment and any displacement compensation. In return, these Extra Care properties will

be let through the Choice Based Lettings system ring fenced for residents in Taunton Deane in perpetuity.

To achieve success with a scheme like this, most **careful consultation** with the existing tenants should be carried out. The decanting of elderly people is a very sensitive issue and much thought must go into this. The writer of this report is working closely with the Supported Housing Manager and her team to ensure this happens.

The tenants will be entitled to the Statutory Home Loss payment, which is currently £4,700. They will also be entitled to compensation for displacement issues such as removals, curtains, carpets and reconnection fees.

On the 15 September 2009 two consultations were held. One in the afternoon especially for the 30 tenants who were invited to bring a relative, and the second in the evening for residents living nearby.

The afternoon consultation was attended by 24 tenants, officers from Taunton Council, representatives from Sanctuary and their Architects. Unfortunately the afternoon was disrupted by several tenants who prevented other tenants from listening to the presentation or asking their own questions. These questions were able to be addressed during the tea break.

Attached to this report (Appendix 1) is a list of comments from the tenants of Parmin Close and residents from Parmin Way. You will see from the comments sheets that most of the comments are from residents living nearby in Parmin Way.

As a result of initial discussions Sanctuary has agreed that all existing tenants of Parmin Close, whether they fit the Extra Care criteria or not, will be offered a tenancy of one of the new properties. They would also be allowed to take their pets with them, although Sanctuary has a no pet policy.

Although this proposed development has attracted publicity in the local papers it is fully understood that most of the current tenants do not want to move. Some have indicated that they would like to take the opportunity to move nearer family and friends. Some would like to move out of the area. Those tenants who wish to move elsewhere will be given priority with a direct match through the Choice Based Lettings system to any vacant properties that become available in their area of choice.

The author of this report has attended the Sheltered Housing Forum to provide an update on the proposals. After the 11 November 2009 all tenants in Parmin Close will be advised of the Executive's decision and if appropriate a second Consultation will be arranged before Christmas.

In Conclusion

In Taunton Deane there is a need for all forms of Affordable Housing. Over recent years we have fallen behind in our delivery by a least 3,000 affordable

homes. Just by acknowledging this demand and supporting this scheme it will go some way towards addressing the need for our elderly residents.

Working with Housing Associations to redevelop land hungry sites is a way of increasing the supply. This scheme will enhance our Extra Care provision considerably, as well as providing our present and future elderly residents with a good standard of independent living. This scheme will be built to at least Code 4 and as a result it will reduce energy bills and provide a better environment.

Recommendations

Members of the Executive are asked to consider the recommendations and approve:-

1. The principle of progressing the Redevelopment and Regeneration of an Extra Care complex in Parmin Close, Taunton which will replace the current sheltered housing units.
2. To dispose of the land to the Registered Social Landlord for a nominal amount as this Council's contribution towards the scheme.
3. On disposal of the land it should be legally agreed that the land can never be used for anything other than for the provision of Affordable Housing.
4. The disposal of the land, must in return, give letting priority to Taunton Deane residents through the Homefinder Somerset scheme.
5. Meet the tenants' aspirations, where possible for relocation including
 - Present tenants to be offered a property in the new complex whether they currently meet the Extra Care criteria or not.
 - Present tenants to be given the opportunity to take their pets to the new complex.
6. The Council will work closely with all the tenants of Parmin Close and keep them informed.

By agreeing to these recommendations your support will enable the progression of this scheme through the recognized process.

Mrs Lesley A Webb,
Housing Enabling Manager,
l.webb@tauntondeane.gov.uk
01823 356351 ex 2604

Appendix 1

Comments returned for Parmin Close Redevelopment

(15 October 2009)

Comments from Residents of Parmin Close

1. Taunton Deane always said they were a caring Council. If that is the case why do they want to move all us old people out of their homes here at Parmin Close, most of us are in our 70's and 80's one tenant nearly 90, who have lived here for years to go somewhere else so the close can be redeveloped for the sake of about another 30 flats.
2. A lot of us spent a lot of money getting our home as we wanted it and at our age don't want to start again.
3. Most of us here have health problems and we just don't want the hassle and stress a move is going to cause us. Do the Council want to hear of some residents going down with strokes and heart attacks or even worse dieing and it could happen, I have 5 health problems, one being high blood pressure, which medication is not bringing down.
4. It is understood that you can return to the new complex, but I don't think many people will want to. It seems there will be lifts to all floors, a lot of people don't like lifts, myself included.
5. I know there will be help to move and only go where w want to but none of us want to go anywhere, we are like one big family here and we look out for each other. We don't want to go to live near people we don't know, which would be for at least a year and possibly more.
6. Sanctuary have a no pets policy and didn't seem over keen for us to bring the pets we have at present. A pet is the only thing some people have to talk to and greet them when they come home. To take that away from them would be cruel, I know from when I lost my husband what a comfort my cats were to me. They give you a purpose to get up in the mornings and keep going. TDBC never objected to pets, so why is Sanctuary when its supposed to be a partnership between the two.
7. Please TDBC find other sites to redevelop and leave the tenants of Parmin Close to end their days in the home they know which was the whole idea of moving here.
8. More than one tenant has quoted "if they make me move it will kill me".
9. Losing sleep as they are worried about leaving their home.

10. One 80 year old living on his own said he would be very pleased to move into the kind of facility outlined at the consultation.
11. You did explain that the factory site was designated for employment. I do not know how likely it is that a tenant will be found for the factory. But it is not a very suitable location for a factory. Could not an application be made for change of use? The economics surely cannot be much worse than writing off 32 well-maintained dwellings and a community hall and the new facility would provide some employment.
12. I would also assume that the factory site would have the advantage of better vehicular access. Vehicular access via Parmin Way and parking facilities were the most obvious weaknesses of the consultation.
13. Using the factory site, Parmin Close tenants would not have to be disturbed until the new facility was ready and then only those tenants who wanted to move would have to move.

Comments from Neighbouring Residents of Parmin Way

1. The proposed building is to be four storeys high which would dominate the skyline over the whole area. The maximum height for the surrounding buildings are one and two storeys.
2. The proposed car parking should be within the curtilage of the site.
3. The residential estate road, ie., Parmin Way is not suitable to support the large number of vehicles that would be required to service the building during its construction and subsequent operation.
4. The existing pedestrian access to Ruskin Close would cause considerable disruption to the proposed project and should be closed as it will serve no useful purpose once the building is completed. However, the proposed re-siting of the footpath through Parmin Way will cause considerable inconvenience to the existing residents. This issue has already been discussed with the Sanctuary representative who is in total agreement.
5. Is Moorhaven a consideration in this proposal?
6. If the new building has '24 hour door entry system for added security' - how does that make it easily accessible? The current hall is not only used by elderly but younger residents use it regular for children's parties so are they now being excluded?
7. 'As many mature trees kept as possible to screen neighbours and factory' - To obscure what is proposed the trees would need to be very mature to hide a 4 storey building!

8. Very annoyed that did not receive a letter concerning the development in Parmin Close. Were told would not be affected but of course will be and it will have a detrimental affect on the value of our property.
9. Parmin Way is the only entrance into Parmin Close so the extra traffic, including cars, coaches ambulances etc., and work vehicles during construction is of serious concern. Parmin Way is a very narrow road and we have seen many near misses from our kitchen window. There are also many children and animals on the road. Therefore, we feel any extra vehicles is going to be dangerous.
10. Told at the meeting that this is a development for elderly people only. We would need this to be guaranteed. We are suspicious as to why there will be 2 bedroomed flats (there are none there now), a bistro, gym etc. Surely if it is the accommodation that is in short supply the above would be a waste of space and finances. Are the intentions not as we have been informed?
11. Traffic - too noisy/I work night shift when will I sleep. Roads not wide enough.
12. Parking - where will all visitors to new residents park?
13. Access Road not wide enough for through traffic.
14. Children playing in a very dangerous situation.
15. Better access must be a priority.
16. It is of concern that only one road entrance to this proposed development is from Parmin Way, as this area is already at times congested it would not be appropriate for at first the heavy construction lorries etc., to access and after, all the resident traffic, plus visitors plus all catering vehicles the area would continually be busy. Also it would not be a very safe area for mobility of wheelchair travel.
17. Another point with there being more accommodation, it is likely to need more emergency vehicles.
18. It does not state how many apartments there would be. The height of the four storey building would also, I'm sure, be detrimental to some residents.
19. It is also felt that having a bigger development would decrease the value of our property so to enlarge this complex we feel would not be appropriate.
20. Would we be compensated for all this disruption to our, at present, relatively quiet neighbourhood.
21. It concerns me that there is still only going to be one entrance from Parmin Way into Parmin Close. There is already congestion for residents of Parmin Way and as there will be a considerable amount of heavy lorries and other equipment when the demolition and rebuild commence, it will be horrendous.

Also will the road stand up to the extra weight that these vehicles will do. Another problem is will there be sufficient access for any of the emergency vehicles to get through?

22. Are the residents of Parmin Way going to be compensated in any way for the inconvenience, noise and heavy vehicles going to and fro when the demolition and rebuild commence?
23. Parking - there is little parking offered to the existing residents as it is. Many in Parmin Way have already HAD to put a driveway on the front of their property to accommodate their vehicles. The proposed allocated parking spaces for the 70 units (only being 20 spaces) will not be sufficient, to accommodate staffing, residents and visitors. When these people realise that there is no parking around, they will try to park in the surrounding areas.
24. Building Access - There is due to be only one access route to the new complex. This will increase the traffic significantly in what is a lovely, peaceful and quiet area. The lorries bringing in all supplies, will create extra noise, mess on the roads and damage to the vehicles, when they flick rubble, mud and stones up from the tyres or what drops off the top. How on earth they are expected to get around Parmin Way, with the corners and the existing traffic is unknown and don't forget it is against the law for an LGV to mount the pavement at anytime.
25. Height of flats - looking out of our property at the moment, we can see the Quantock Hills, and you actually feel that you are in the countryside. If the complex incorporates 4 storey flats this will affect our outlook immensely. Why can a 4 storey building be put up when we as long term residents are unable to have a two storey extension to our property even when we are not overlooked in anyway. This is hypocritical and very unfair. The look of the complex is not wonderful and I question why it has to be enclosed with a garden in the middle. This does not make it inviting for all to use the extra facilities, it makes it feel like their space and our space.
26. The existing Residents - on conversing with some of the residents, they don't want to move out or have this disruption placed upon them. Many of these people are elderly and frail. They have lived there for many years and have put their sole into the properties.
27. The re-directing of the pathway - Why is it that the residents in Wordsworth Drive have not been informed of the changes in the pathway, when it directly affects them, as it will make their gardens more accessible to potential thieves. This is a fairly low crime area and we don't need 'people' being offered things on a plate.
28. The Plans/Display - It doesn't look very good when The Sanctuary Group, supposedly after doing plans and research are unable to actually spell the names of an adjoining road correctly and we are suppose to trust what they are proposing.

29. The insensitivity of moving elderly residents many of whom are in ill health from their recently refurbished sheltered accommodation and dispersing them to various areas of the town. As they are a community who know and help each other this will isolate them and make them vulnerable. At the moment they live in a quiet area with all the amenities within easy distance. These people will not have the energy to move back into the new complex and many will sadly not be around to do so.
30. The complex proposed with 3 and 4 storey buildings is far too large for the area and will completely dominate the houses and bungalows that immediately back on to this site as well as the surrounding properties. It will also reduce the value of properties in the immediate vicinity.
31. Residents immediately on the site and adjacent to it will be subject to dust, mud and noise generated from the demolition and building process for a year or more.
32. There will be extra traffic imposed from large building equipment and lorries removing the debris and bringing in building supplies. After the project is built there will be continuous extra traffic from staff, visitors and large delivery vehicles. Access to Parmin Close is not easy for large vehicles as cars/vans are parked on the road, quite often on both sides.
33. It will greatly add to the existing parking problems. Adequate parking will be needed for cars owned by residents of the flats, staff and visitors. At the meeting it was mentioned that staff for the new complex would be sourced locally and therefore would not need cars. In reality not all staff will be local and those who are will use cars on night shift or in bad weather. Inadequate parking on site will lead to these people using valuable parking spaces in Parmin Way (many of the houses here are terraced and residents therefore can only park their cars on the road).
34. Workmen on the site during demolition and building will park their vehicles in Parmin Way thus adding to the parking problems.
35. The total waste of tax payers' money by demolishing recently refurbished properties and compensating residents by several thousand pounds to move out. Where is this money coming from and if the Council has this amount to spare should it not be spending it on repairing existing council properties?

Further Questions and Comments

- Why knock down buildings that are home to elderly residents?
- Why knock down buildings that were only built in the 70's and which are perfectly serviceable?
- Why propose to put this on a site which is totally unsuitable? - it cannot be serviced only at the inconvenience of local residents so a quiet no through road will become a noisy service road!

- Has any consideration gone into parking - residential parking? Visitors parking? Service yard? Parmin Way's parking areas are already oversubscribed with some residents already feeling the need to forfeit their front gardens for off road parking. Cars park on both sides of road so difficult to drive through already without more vehicles.
- Will there be a guarantee that it is purely accommodation for the elderly? What if Sanctuary Care sell it on?
- Why restrict those you contacted that live on Parmin Way - was it to reduce amount of objections?
- Why Parmin Close when there are plenty of other areas which are more accessible and in need of redevelopment?

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Executive – 11 November 2009

Revised Proposals for Financing the Purchase of the “Acolaid” Building Control Computer System

Report of the Building Control Manager

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Coles)

1 Executive Summary

On 5 March 2008 the Executive approved a proposal to purchase the Idox Plantech “Acolaid” Building Control and Land Charges modules for reasons of improved utility and the ability to integrate with new service delivery models being introduced elsewhere in the organisation, in particular the “Acolaid” support system in Development Control. Subsequently, the decision has been made corporately to discontinue support to the existing Universe system in 2010, so the conversion to Acolaid has proved to be opportune.

Funds for the Building Control purchase were agreed as £21,000 from the Housing and Planning Delivery Grant and £30,000 from the Building Control Reserve Fund.

Adverse trading conditions in 2008/2009 have led to the depletion of the Building Control Reserve Fund. Some additional cost in the software purchase has also been found necessary. This report explores financing options to close the funding gap that currently exists.

2 Background

The Building Control Service divides into two areas – the statutory service (discharge of functions under the Building Act 1984) - and the commercially competitive fee-earning Building Regulations service.

The fee-earning service is the major service, accounting for 80% of the work of the Section. The service is required to be provided on a self-financing basis (The Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 1998), and to this end the Council annually approves a Scheme of Charges in respect of the service provided. The Regulations require that the service should achieve a break-even position over any 3-year rolling accounting period. Although there is no bar on returning a deficit, the assumption is that corrective measures will be put in place to recover deficits over time. Surpluses are ring-fenced to a Reserve Account and are available for purposes of service improvement or fee reduction.

Prior to the introduction of SAP, the Council's computerised support system was Universe, which had been developed in-house over many years to encompass a number of specialist applications, including Development Control, Building Control and Land Charges.

Difficulties and shortcomings in their existing computer support system led the Development Control Section to research the market and purchase and install the Idox Plantech "Acolaid" support system in 2007/2008. To similarly update and improve computer support systems in Building Control and Land Charges, and provide the essential interfaces between these services and Development Control, the decision was made in 2008 to purchase the appropriate Idox Plantech Acolaid Building Control and Land Charges modules. For Building Control, the purchase had the added advantage that this system was already in use in their partner service in Sedgemoor District Council, and they would be able to tap into the knowledge and experience gained there.

Subsequent to this decision, it became apparent that the Universe system would not be supported into the future, so the purchase of Acolaid was doubly propitious. Advantageous terms were struck with Idox Plantech for the purchase of these systems, riding on the back of the Development Control installation.

The cost of the Building Control module was estimated at £51,000 and funding agreed at £21,000 from the Housing and Planning Development Grant and £30,000 from the Building Control Reserve Fund, which at the time stood at £44,629. There was also a prior commitment of £7,000 from this Reserve to fund a consultancy report on forming a Building Control Partnership.

3 Changes Affecting Funding Proposals

Purchase of the basic Building Control module was agreed at £48,550, within the original estimate. It was later decided to take advantage of an "invest to save" opportunity by buying-in the Plantech On-line applications facility at £9,900, saving £3,000 annually in licence fees over the existing system. It was anticipated that the Building Control reserve would be adequate to meet the additional cost. At this time a small surplus was anticipated in 2008/2009.

The sudden and deep recession in the second half of 2008 led to a severe drop in Building Control income and a shortfall in income against budget of £40,000 at year end. Immediate action was taken to close the budget gap in 2009/2010, but without significantly affecting the 2008/2009 figures, resulting in a loss on the Building Control trading account. This was met from the accumulated reserve in line with normal practice. This meant that the balance in the reserve at 31 March 2009 was only £13,059 (cf. Appendix A).

The income situation continued to deteriorate in the early part of the current financial year. The position has now stabilised and income has begun to pick up. However, it is likely that the already depleted balance on the reserve

account will be needed to meet another deficit on the trading account. It will therefore be necessary to fund the costs of Acolaid in a different way.

4 Additional Costs

Some additional costs have been found to be necessary as the project has developed as follows:

	£
SAP integration to create link to Debtors' system	9,050
Linking to SAP WEB pages	5,400

5 Financial Summary

	£	£
Original Purchase Cost	48,550	
On-line applications facility (cf. 3 above)	9,900	
Additional installation costs (cf. 4 above)	14,450	
Total Cost	<hr/>	72,900
Less: HDP Grant		21,000
Funding Shortfall:		<hr/> 51,900

6 Possible Funding Options

6.1 Unspent Grants or Allocations

There are currently no unspent funds that could be utilised to assist in this purchase.

6.2 Use of Council Reserves

The shortfall could be funded in whole or in part from the Council's reserves by way of a supplementary estimate. However, to maintain reserves at the levels consistent with Council policy it would be necessary to make a compensating contribution in 2010/2011. Given the extremely tight budget constraints, this would prove to be very difficult to achieve and would inevitably mean a cut in service provision.

6.3 Capitalisation

It would be possible to capitalise the shortfall of £51,900, recovering the costs over the useful life of the Acolaid system (15 years) through contributions from the Building Control trading account.

7 Funding Proposal

It is proposed that the shortfall in funding should be met from prudential borrowing to be serviced by revenue contributions from the Building Control trading account over the life of the system. Assuming interest at 5% and the repayment of debt over 15 years would imply an annual contribution from the trading account of approximately £6,055.

A new structure for the combined Taunton Deane/Sedgemoor Building Control Service is planned from 1 April 2010 that will build on the shared Manager and shared Support Team Manager already in place. A slimmed-down supervisory team managing a strengthened surveyor corps will produce salary savings for Taunton Deane of £9,685 in 2010/2011 and 2011/2012, rising to £17,429 in 2012/2013. The share of these savings accruing immediately to the fee-earning service amounts to £7,748, which would be sufficient to meet the ongoing costs of servicing any borrowing to meet the funding shortfall.

8 Finance Comments

The financial information and funding proposals above and at Appendix 1 have been prepared by TDBC Accountancy Section and carry the endorsement and recommendation of the Council's Section 151 Officer.

9 Legal Comments

The Council has already entered into this Contract for the supply of these systems and they are already being installed therefore failure to provide this funding will result in the Council incurring a debt to IDOX. Alternatively if the work is stopped at this time then the Council will have a partly installed system it can do nothing further with, this will have a knock on effect in terms of further efficiencies that could be made once the systems are fully integrated.

9 Risk Management

Risk	Consequence	Probability	Impact	Treatment
Funding not found	System not commissioned	2	4	Continue to use Universe
Universe not supported	Support system breakdown	5	3	Temporary manual back-up
Re-introduce manual systems	Labour intensive. No management reporting. No WEB information. No debtor linkage. No inter-authority linkages. Unable to maintain statutory CP registers	3	4	Re-investigate electronic support system purchase.

Conclusion: There are elements of risk that exceed the Council's risk profile, and the need to invest in a computerised support system seems inescapable.

10 Links to Corporate Priorities

Links to Delivery, Working in Partnership, Pioneer Somerset. "Acolaid" installation is the Taunton Deane Client 2 highest priority after SAP.

11 Equalities Issues

There are no equalities issues arising from this report.

12 Partnership implications

The Building Control service is provided jointly with Sedgemoor District Council through shared management and staffing arrangements. Acolaid would provide a common back-office system.

Non-purchase would make current shared and coordinated administrative arrangements more difficult. Support system commonality would be lost. Moves to merge forms and procedures would be halted. Taunton Deane might become a higher-cost provider, making uniform fee structures impossible.

13 Recommendation

It is recommended that the Executive should endorse:-

- (a) the principal of meeting the shortfall in funding of £51,900 from prudential borrowing to be serviced by revenue contributions from the Building Control trading account over the life of the Acolaid system; and
- (b) a commensurate increase in the 2009/2010 Capital Programme.

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Appendix A

Building Control Reserve – Movements 2008/09

	£	£
Opening balance April 2008	44,629	
Additional contribution	12,000	
	<hr/>	56,629
Less: HELM Consultancy report	7,000	
Customer portal licensing	4,549	
Year-end draw down	32,021	
	<hr/>	43,570
Closing balance March 2009		<hr/> 13,059

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Executive – 11 November 2009

The Taunton Protocol—Adoption and Application by Taunton Deane Borough Council

Report of Project Taunton Manager – Mark Green

(This matter is the responsibility of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Ross Henley)

Executive Summary

The Taunton Protocol was developed in conjunction with leading national experts in the fields of carbon reduction, building design and valuation. It sets ambitious and auditable targets for sustainable development which are ahead of current national standards either in scope or timing, or both, and which, if implemented, would produce significant reductions of Co2 and help meet the Government's challenging targets for reducing the impact of climate change.

The Protocol has been acknowledged as one of the most comprehensive and well developed documents of its kind produced to date and has won significant acclaim both locally and more widely.

The standards contained within it cover:-

1. Low Environmental Impact Building Design;
2. Climate Change Adaptation;
3. Sustainable Lifestyles and Community Involvement;
4. Materials;
5. Construction Site Management;
6. Biodiversity and Ecology.

These standards can be applied either comprehensively or in part and are sufficiently flexible to ensure that their application need never jeopardise scheme viability and delivery.

They have been incorporated within the signed Development Agreement for the Firepool site and have been embraced by the Council's chosen development partner; St. Modwen Developments Limited. They have also been supported by other major local businesses such as the Cricket Club, Somerset College and Musgrove Park Hospital.

This report includes three recommendations. The adoption of the Protocol by Taunton Deane has already been supported by the Project Taunton Steering Group.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Taunton Protocol was developed in conjunction with leading regional and national specialists in response to increasing pressure from Government to adopt measures targeted at reducing the impact of climate change; principally through the reduction of Co2 emissions.
- 1.2 Work on the document commenced in 2007 after assessing other similar and existing standards and protocols and concluding that all were either limited in scope or so 'high level' as to be almost meaningless.

2. The Taunton Protocol

- 2.1 A full version of the Taunton Protocol can be viewed by clicking on the following link:-
<http://www.projecttaunton.co.uk/downloads/finalissueprotocolseptember08.pdf>
(3 hard copies of the document [40pp A3 full colour] are available for inspection in the Members' Room)
- 2.2 Rather than focussing solely on carbon reduction measures, the Protocol addresses six key elements of genuinely sustainable development:-

1. Low Environmental Impact Building Design;
2. Climate Change Adaptation;
3. Sustainable Lifestyles and Community Involvement;
4. Materials;
5. Construction Site Management;
6. Biodiversity and Ecology.

Each element was developed by an acknowledged expert in that field and the overall process was co-ordinated by Fulcrum Consulting; one of a small number of expert advisors to the Government. Effects on cost and value were considered throughout the development of the Protocol and this element of the work was carried out by Alder King, Bristol.

- 2.3 Each key element of the Protocol contains a number of individual standards, all of which have been designed, wherever possible, to be complimentary and consistent with other existing and emerging strategies and legislation, e.g. Building Regulations, Buildings For Life and the Council's emerging public art and allotments strategies.
- 2.4 The Protocol has been designed in such a way as to be capable of internal or external audit and includes a 'check list' which developers can use to assess their performance against the various elements.

- 2.5 The Protocol has also been designed in such a way that elements can be applied individually or in combination; either in response to the type of development envisaged or as a result of viability testing.
- 2.6 The Protocol has been independently acknowledged as one of the best and most comprehensive documents of its kind and has won a prestigious award from RegenSW.
- 2.7 RegenSW have calculated that adoption of the Protocol standards for the new development planned for the centre of Taunton would reduce Co2 emissions by 35% compared to existing or proposed legislation; primarily by bringing forward the timing of the introduction of new standards.
- 2.8 The effects of the Protocol on building costs and values and land values are currently difficult to predict, Alder King consider that the increasing importance put on whole life costs by occupiers, together with the increasing effect of public and legislative pressure on corporate priorities is likely to swing the balance in favour of increasingly sustainable development. This effect is already evident in a number of other countries. In any event, the Protocol is sufficiently flexible to respond to market conditions.

3. The Legislative Framework

- 3.1 The Government has set challenging targets for Co2 reductions and has introduced a number of measures to improve energy efficiency, including, for instance, changes to Part L of the Building Regulations. BREEAM and Eco-Homes standards are also well established and understood by the development industry. Other standards, such as 'codes for sustainable homes' have emerged more recently.
- 3.2 The Protocol has incorporated existing standards wherever possible to give an established and easily understood baseline for assessment.
- 3.3 Although it is understood that the Government's existing definition of 'zero carbon' is likely to be changed in the near future and that the timing of some of the proposed legislative changes may be similarly changed (as may the actual standards themselves), the Protocol has been designed in such a way that it can be readily updated in response to such changes.
- 3.4 The Protocol has no statutory status and will not be incorporated into the formal planning framework as SPD. The position with the RSS, either generally or in relation to carbon reduction and sustainability, is currently uncertain. The Taunton Protocol is capable of being enforced only on TDBC owned land where the Council chooses to do so using its powers as landowner. Elsewhere, it can only be applied on a voluntary basis and with the support of either the landowner or developer.
- 3.5 To date, Protocol standards have been incorporated within the Development Agreement for Firepool and have been supported by Somerset County Cricket Club, Somerset College and Musgrove Park Hospital.

4. Recommendations

1. That wherever appropriate and economically viable, the standards contained within the Protocol be applied to all future development on land owned by Taunton Deane Borough Council;
2. That Taunton Deane Borough Council actively encourages developers of other non-Council owned sites to consider applying some or all of the standards contained within the Protocol; and
3. That the Protocol be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect emerging best practice and future changes to legislation.

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Taunton Deane Borough Council

Executive – 11 November 2009

Windfall VAT Receipt

Report of Strategic Finance Officer

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Nicola Wilson)

Executive Summary

This report gives details of a one off windfall and recommends transfer of the net amount into the General Fund Reserve.

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 This report seeks authorisation to transfer a windfall VAT receipt of £649,119. (income of £783,833, offset by expenditure of £134,714) to the General Fund Reserve.

2. Background

2.1 HM Revenue and Customs altered the regulations relating to claims for overpaid VAT but gave no lead period. Following a House of Lords judgement that this was unfair a window was opened enabling claims to be made back as far as 1974 up to the date that the three year cap was brought in. The cut off for these claims was 31st March 2009

2.2 The Council engaged Pricewaterhouse Coopers to conduct a review of VAT activity on a “no win no fee” basis, removing any risk of paying Pricewaterhouse Coopers unless benefits were identified.

3. Outcome of Review

3.1 The Council has now been able to reclaim overpaid VAT and associated interest in several areas as below.

3.2

VAT Relating to:	£
Excess parking charges 1 st April 1985 to 31 st March 1996	£68,166
Statutory interest on the above from 30 th April 1985	£65,109
Cemetery supplies 1 st April 1974 to 30 th November 1996	£5,024
Statutory interest for the above from the 31 st May 1974	£5,778
Cemetery supplies 1 st June 2006 to 30 th April 2009	£2,936
Leisure Admissions 1 st January 1990 to 30 th April 1994	£336,991
Statutory interest for the above 28 th February 1990	£299,829
Total	£783,833

3.3 The charge made by Pricewaterhouse Coopers for this work was £134,714 resulting in a net receipt of £649,119.

4. Recommendation

4.1 This receipt is a one off receipt and therefore should not be used to fund ongoing budget issues.

4.2 It is therefore recommended that the receipt is transferred to General Fund Reserves to fund any redundancies from the next phases of the Core Council Review.

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Taunton Deane Borough Council

Executive – 11 November 2009

Core Council Review Proposals – Themes 2 and 4

Joint report of the Core Council Review Project Director (Brendan Cleere), the Growth and Development Manager (Tim Burton) and the Community Services Manager (James Barrah)

(This matter is the responsibility of Councillor Ross Henley, Leader of the Council)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek Executive approval for detailed proposals for Themes 2 and 4 of the Core Council Review.

Executive Summary

Proposals for new ways of working and a new structure for the Core Council were approved on 17 February 2009.

The Core Council structure is now based on five themes:

1. Strategy and Corporate
2. Growth and Development
3. Business (DLO)
4. Operations and Regulation
5. Chief Executive, Strategic Directors and support staff.

A phased implementation of the Core Council Review is now under way, with phase 1 (Strategy and Corporate) already operational from 1 April 2009.

Theme 3 (Business/DLO) of the Core Council Review is subject to an independent study by consultants (Turner and Townsend) and will be reported on separately.

This report concentrates on proposals for Themes 2 and 4 of the Core Council Review. Implementation of these two themes is now running to a common timetable, following Full Council approval of an alternative approach to completing the Core Council Review on 30 April 2009.

The Human Resource implications of proposals in this report are significant and a number of staff within Themes 2 and 4 have been placed at risk of redundancy.

The projected annual revenue savings for the General Fund arising from Theme 2 and 4 proposals will be approximately £450,000 from 2010/11.

Formal consultation has now concluded, resulting in a number of amendments to the proposals, which are outlined in the report.

The Executive is now recommended to seek the approval of Full Council for the amended Theme 2 and 4 proposals.

2. Background

- 2.1 The original agreed aim of the Core Council Review remains – to introduce a new structure and ways of working that will enable the Core Council to:
- Be fit for purpose, delivering our vision, widened roles and ways of working
 - Deliver substantial efficiency savings for 2009/10 and beyond
- 2.2 Full Council agreed an overall structure for the Core Council on 17 February 2009, based on the following five Themes:
1. Strategy and Corporate
 2. Growth and Development
 3. Business (DLO)
 4. Operations and Regulation
 5. Chief Executive, Directors and support staff
- 2.3 These themes will provide the 'home-base' for staff within the new structure. However, staff will frequently find themselves working closely with those in other thematic groups on particular issues or projects. An overview of the Core Council themes, functions and agreed phasing arrangements is attached as Appendix A.
- 2.4 Theme 1 (Strategy and Corporate) was implemented on 1 April 2009. Proposals for Theme 3 (Business/DLO) are subject to a review by independent consultants (Turner and Townsend PLC) with options coming before Corporate Scrutiny Committee and Executive in October/November 2009. The Chief Executive will bring forward Theme 5 proposals for member approval.
- 2.5 Full Council agreed on 30 April 2009 to the early and simultaneous recruitment of new managers for Theme 2 (Growth and Development) and Theme 4 (Operations and Regulation). These posts have now been recruited, and the initial brief for the post-holders is to bring forward detailed structural proposals for consideration by members in Autumn 2009. The following indicative timetable was agreed at Full Council on 30 April 2009:

Table 1: Indicative Timetable for Themes 2 and 4

Action	Indicative Date
New theme managers in post	July 09 <i>(completed)</i>
Detailed proposals for themes 2 and 4 published	Late September 09
Consultation on detailed proposals	Ends in late October 09
Executive considers consultation responses and detailed proposals. Makes recommendations to Full Council	11 November 09
UNISON considers Executive recommendations, with opportunity to comment on these prior to Full Council on 23 November.	November 09.
Full Council decides on detailed proposals	23 November 09 <i>(special meeting – earlier than originally communicated)</i>
Implementation of new structures for Growth and Development and Community Services.	By end March 2010

2.6 Previous reports on the Core Council Review have identified three critical areas which must underpin the whole organisation, its future direction and development:

- Understanding of the drivers for change in the organisation
- A clear overall vision for the authority
- New ways of working (thematic working)

2.7 Appendix B summarises the above three areas and has informed the detailed proposals contained in sections 3 and 4 of this report.

3. Patterns of Future Investment

3.1 The Executive have given officers informal direction on the review in terms of areas for investment and areas to explore reducing investment. In time, this will be worked into a refined profile of services as part of the Corporate Strategy.

3.2 Officers have been guided to increase investment in climate change, tackling deprivation and community development and affordable housing. These will form key projects within the revised Corporate Strategy and refined profile of services, which will be subject to member scrutiny shortly. As these are cross-cutting issues, the approach to thematic working outlined in Appendix B will assist delivery. Elements of the Core Council Review proposals will include additional staff resources and/or improved focus of existing staff resource on a particular identified priority, such as affordable housing and community development.

- 3.3 Officers were asked to address economic development priorities by focusing resources on the delivery of the economic vision recently presented to members by Professor Mark Hepworth.

Officers were directed to do this at the same time as decreasing overall investment in economic development, thereby achieving more focus and officer flexibility for less resource.

- 3.4 Officers have been guided to decrease investment in management, administration and support, tourism and the tourist information service, Heritage and Landscape and the natural environment, waterways, private sector housing (including grants) and Environmental Health.

4. Detailed Proposal for Theme 2 of the Core Council (Growth and Development)

- 4.1 The Growth and Development Theme comprises the Council's Development Management function, Planning Enforcement, Landscape and Heritage services, Housing Enabling, Building Control and Economic Development (including Tourist Information). Existing structure charts are attached as Appendix C.
- 4.2 The proposal has been developed following discussions with managers, elected members and the Change Programme Member Steering Group. The proposed structure (attached as Appendix D) seeks to maximise the available resource in areas that will deliver the future growth agenda and also to facilitate more project related working across themes. The proposals also take account of the informal direction provided by the Executive, summarised in section 3. The principle of Leads and Officers established in the Strategy and Corporate theme is replicated here, although there is need for some other posts within this structure in view of the front line nature of some of these services. The Growth and Development Manager also has responsibility for the Building Control Service, although shared management with Sedgemoor District Council will continue.
- 4.3 The theme is to be led by a single theme manager who will have direct line management responsibilities for seven lead officers covering the following work areas: Landscape, Heritage, Development Management, Housing Enabling and Economic Development (two posts). The seventh lead is a Business Support role which will take on much of the service planning, performance and budgetary responsibilities in order to free up the other leads to maximise delivery of services to the community.
- 4.4 Landscape
- 4.4.1 The Landscape Lead will be supported by a Landscape Support Officer and part-time Biodiversity Officer. However, the provision of ecological advice is an area which may be subject to further review following discussions with Somerset County Council in respect of the possible provision of a combined service. The rights of way functions currently administered by the Heritage and Landscape Team will be transferred to Legal and Democratic. Whilst the Council will still be able to meet its statutory obligations in this area, it will clearly no longer be able to deliver the enhanced service currently provided.

4.5 Built Heritage

- 4.5.1 Workloads in respect of built heritage remain high and it is therefore concluded that more than one officer is required to fulfil this function. However, efficiencies can be made by embedding one of the officers within the Development Management teams to minimise duplication of roles in respect of listed building proposals.

4.6 Development Management

- 4.6.1 A Lead Officer in Development Management is essential to enable the Growth and Development Manager to be able to concentrate on leading the theme and to promote the sustainable growth agenda. The Development Management Lead will also generally act as lead officer to the Planning Committee. The existing team structure in Development Management is to be loosened to improve its flexibility. However, the two Area Co-ordinator posts will still have managerial responsibility for a geographic area and will therefore be a key point of contact for members. Whilst a significant level of resource is to be maintained at a senior level in order to ensure that the Council can respond to major growth proposals, the reduction in number of more junior planning officers is a response to the downturn in application numbers. Planning Enforcement will continue to be managed as an integral part of the planning service, and the existing level of resource will be maintained.

4.7 Housing Enabling

- 4.7.1 Housing Enabling is a priority where additional investment is required. The Housing Enabling Manager is currently supported by an assistant. It is proposed to replace the assistant role with an officer post in order to increase the amount of front line resource. Administrative support will be provided by the generic administration team.

4.8 Economic Development

- 4.8.1 It is critical to Taunton Deane's future prosperity that there is an economic development post at a suitably senior level where they are able to negotiate with authority with senior business managers and with agencies and partners. The Economic Development Specialist post will fulfil this role, reporting directly to a Strategic Director. This postholder will also need to work closely with Project Taunton. A diagram showing the linkages related to this post is attached as Appendix E. In addition it is proposed that there be two Project Leads for this work area, who will manage a range of sub-functions including business support (including rural business support), skills development, cultural development, marketing and tourism. The Leads will be supported by two Project Officers. Whilst this does represent a reduction relative to existing staff numbers, this does include the deletion of 1.4 full time equivalent frozen posts. In addition the level and more flexible nature of the posts proposed will result in more effective service delivery and enhance opportunities to deliver a new Economic Development Strategy for Taunton Deane.

4.9 Tourist Information

4.9.1 In line with the Executive's informal guidance (set out in Section 3) to decrease investment in tourist information, this function will be reviewed and a number of options considered with a view to reducing the impact on the General Fund by approximately £50,000. Options include reduction in opening hours, increased focus on more profitable areas of business, reduction in staffing levels, shared location and joint service delivery. Proposals will be brought to members separately in the new year, with a view to implementation by April 2010.

4.10 Building Control

4.10.1 This service has progressed well with a shared management arrangement with Sedgemoor District Council. Currently three posts are shared across the two authorities leading to savings and creating increased resilience and flexibility on both sides and to ensure that the service remains viable in a competitive market place. Work continues to further align systems and therefore maximise efficiency across both councils. The strict financial controls in relation to income from this service limit the opportunities for further significant savings to the authority. It is therefore proposed that Building Control will be designed into a new structure largely unchanged to allow the shared management arrangement with Sedgemoor District Council to continue to develop. It had originally been proposed that Building Control be part of community services, but can equally sit within Growth and Development.

4.10.2 In the medium term the current shared Building Control Manager is due to retire in March 2010 and plans are under way for how the partnership with Sedgemoor will deal with this change, deriving ongoing savings for the Building Control service in the longer term.

4.11 Business Support

4.11.1 The Business Support Lead will manage a team comprising two Planning Support Officers, an Administration Officer, a Validation Officer responsible for the registration of planning applications and a generic administrative resource of six full time equivalents who will provide administrative support across the theme in addition to duties relating to the processing of applications. This includes the deletion of two full time equivalent frozen/temporary posts and will be more cost effective than the current administrative support arrangements. In light of the shared arrangements with Sedgemoor, Building control will retain its own dedicated admin support. With improved technology associated with 'Acolaid' there should be no longer the need for any dedicated planning land charges resource.

4.12 Changes to Theme 2 proposals arising from formal consultation

4.12.1 The formal consultation process generated comments from the Corporate Scrutiny Committee, staff and UNISON. A summary of points made in the consultation, and the response to these, is attached as Appendix F. The following changes to Theme 2 proposals have been made as a result:-

- 4.12.2 Planning Enforcement is to be incorporated in the Growth and Development structure. The two Planning Enforcement Officers will report to the Development Management Lead, whilst the Enforcement Support Officer will be part of the Business Support Team.
- 4.12.3. Building Control will be managed as part of the Growth and Development Theme. However, in the light of the shared management arrangements, opportunities for thematic working are limited and Building Control will retain its separate administrative support.
- 4.12.4 The original proposal showed the Planning Officer resource reduced from 4.5 FTE to 3 FTE. In response to concerns in respect of the implications of an upturn in workloads as a result of economic recovery and in order to assist Legal and Democratic Services with negotiations relating to footpath diversions, this is now proposed to be increased back to 3.5FTE.
- 4.12.5 However, notwithstanding the additional 0.5FTE which is a response to concerns raised in respect of fluctuations in planning application work, the overall reduction in planning staff would still result in a reduced ability to respond effectively should workloads return to previous peak levels. This area, therefore, needs to be kept under review.

4.13 Projected Savings and Impact

- 4.13.1 Overall, the proposals for the Growth and Development Theme will deliver annual revenue savings of approximately £250,000. This will result in a reduction in the levels of service we are able to provide in terms of landscape and rights of way, although statutory requirements will still be able to be met. The overall number of planning officers is to be reduced, but a good level of service should be able to be maintained in light of the recent reduction in application numbers. However, there would be an adverse impact if workloads increase to their previous levels. The review of Tourist Information will need to balance service delivery with cost. The new housing enabling post will significantly enhance frontline delivery. As previously stated the reduction in economic development posts should be outweighed not only by having a dedicated senior role, but also more flexible roles at appropriate levels.

5. **Detailed Proposal for Theme 4 of the Core Council Review (Operations and Regulation)**

- 5.1 Firstly, it is proposed to re-name the Operations and Regulation Theme to Community Services, as it is considered that this name more accurately and positively reflects the nature of the varied services within the theme. This theme encompasses the current services of Cemeteries and Crematorium, Environmental Health, Housing Operations and Parking and Civil Contingencies. The proposal also includes the addition of Community Safety and Leisure Development to the theme. Existing structure charts for some of these areas are attached as Appendix C.
- 5.2 The proposed structure is outlined in the text below and shown in the structure charts at Appendix D. The approach taken to review the Community Services Theme seeks to maximise the effectiveness of the available resources and to facilitate more project related working across themes. The work to date has been guided by the following general principles:-

- A recognition that many of the services within the theme are performing well and many are already organised in an effective way.
- Recognising the priority of services set by members, as outlined in section 3.
- Where possible to protect front line service delivery and staff.
- To be mindful of business continuity of front line services in particular in relation to the number of staff put “at risk”.
- The Housing Revenue Account ring fence that prohibits many housing related teams from being able to contribute to General Fund savings.
- To make substantial savings where possible.

- 5.3 Due to the diverse nature of the services in the theme, the work has had to take into account a range of external pressures and issues, all with a wide range of timescales, and attempt to allow for some of these in the proposals. Therefore what follows is a combination of immediate structural proposals, largely involving a management framework for the theme, and a range of other proposals and projects that will be pursued for services over a range of different timescales. Some of these involve other partners where further discussion and consultation is required, others involve incremental changes or more work to be done to examine the feasibility of what is being considered. Therefore further specific issues arising from these proposals will continue to be progressed over the coming months and some of these may be presented to members for further discussion and approval at a later date.
- 5.4 The principle of Leads and Officers established in the Strategy and Corporate theme is replicated here where possible, although the scale of services and number of staff in this theme means that the span of control and level of responsibility is significantly different. This makes an exact replication of the structural arrangements in the Strategy and Corporate Theme inappropriate.
- 5.5 Community Services will be led by a single theme manager (Community Services Manager – James Barra) who will have direct line management responsibilities for four new lead officer posts and three existing manager posts. The four new lead posts will cover the following work areas: Housing Services, Community Development, Community Protection and Business Support. The three existing manager posts relate to those for Cemeteries and Crematorium, Parking and Civil Contingencies and Deane Helpline. Each of these areas will be addressed in more detail below.
- 5.6 Cemeteries and Crematorium
- 5.6.1 The service is a very well run business that already derives significant levels of income for the Council. It is also largely self contained and does not fit easily alongside other services in the theme. Recently appointed consultants working on the review of Deane DLO are exploring options for operating the service on an even more commercial footing, potentially with a degree of separation from mainstream council services. In the meantime, it is proposed that this service transfers unchanged into the new Community Services structure.

5.7 Parking and Civil Contingencies.

- 5.7.1 Due in part to changes in legislation work is well underway to progress a County Wide Parking Enforcement Partnership encompassing all the councils in Somerset. The current proposal indicates that the new partnership will go live in late 2010. If this project is approved and progresses as planned it will result in very little of the parking service remaining with this Council, the residual role will involve elements of clienting and asset management. It is therefore proposed that the parking service will be planned into a new structure in such a way that it can be easily largely removed at the point at which the partnership commences.
- 5.7.2 The current Parking and Civil Contingencies Manager also has responsibility for Civil Contingencies, Shopmobility and Concessionary Travel. Depending on the timing and impact of the Parking Enforcement Partnership, consideration will need to be given to how these functions will be delivered by this Council in future. The work relating to Shopmobility and Concessionary Travel is essentially a client role and may in the longer term be best located in the Client Team in the Corporate and Strategy Theme. Civil Contingencies generates significant work across all services and must be given the highest priority in order to ensure our responsibilities are fully discharged and our preparedness is at the desired level. In the longer term the Council will need to consider how this function is supported corporately, and consequently the level of service that we procure from the Somerset Local Authorities Civil Contingencies Partnership. However for the purposes of the review these services slot into the new structure as outlined.

5.8 Housing Services

- 5.8.1 A new lead post has been created which is distinctly different from previous Housing Senior Management posts. This post will lead a large group of staff engaged in Housing related activities. Firstly, and largely due to Housing Revenue Account (HRA) ring fencing and our prescribed responsibilities to our tenants the two Housing Estates teams, the Rents Recovery and Voids team and Supported Housing will slot through to the new structure unchanged.
- 5.8.2 However the staffing changes proposed in the new structure will impact on the HRA and require the HRA to be re cast particularly in terms of what staff it supports during the budget setting process. Additionally there are a number of important issues to be addressed by the landlord service over coming months for example addressing Anti Social Behaviour and furthering Tenant Empowerment, issues which have already been before members. In relation to Anti Social Behaviour it is felt that a cross tenure/whole community approach is required and therefore a resource to undertake this work may sit better in the Community Development or Community Protection parts of the structure but to be effective will require input from many parts of the organisation so effective thematic working will be essential.
- 5.8.3 In relation to Tenant Empowerment the structure now includes three new posts funded by the Housing Revenue Account in order to establish and support the agreed new Tenant Services Management Board.
- 5.8.4 The issue of Housing Asset Management is being considered by Corporate Management Team alongside Theme 3 of the Core Council Review. The longer term

location of the Housing Asset Management function will be determined when proposals for Theme 3 have been decided upon, in due course.

- 5.8.5 The Housing reception desk in Deane House is currently staffed and managed by the Housing Options team. However the Main reception, Benefits and Planning receptions are all operated by SW1. Consequently it is proposed that SW1 Customer services take on the management of Housing reception, and to explore how further consolidation of the reception area and staffing can be achieved, to improve the customer experience in this area.
- 5.8.6 The Housing Options Team itself provides very important services to a vulnerable client group and this team constitutes the last element of the Housing Service in the new structure. Two vacant posts have been removed from this team in the new structure and an Administrative Assistant post will be located in the Business Support team. This in itself constitutes significant change for this team, however it is considered that there is more potential to generate further savings by increased collaborative working with the other Somerset Authorities, indeed this issue is a material part of the Pioneer Somerset Strategic Housing Project. There has been very early discussion regarding closer working with Sedgemoor District Council. However, it is now felt that this work will be targeted at the strategic elements of the service rather than the day-to-day operation of the service which primarily, by its nature, has to be delivered locally. Therefore, there are no other immediate staffing implications for this team arising from the review.

5.9 Business Support

- 5.9.1 A new lead post has been created for Business Support, in part to offset the overall reduction in management capacity, to free up the other lead posts to maximise delivery of services to the community by allowing them to focus efforts on managing and delivering the operational service rather than corporate administrative issues that currently take up significant operational manager's time. The Business support team will be created by bringing together existing administrative and clerical capacity from across the theme, which will develop over time into a capacity that can be used more generically and flexibly.
- 5.9.2 The Business Support Lead will manage staff in a central team and staff who are already embedded in operational teams. The Business Support function will be crucial to the effective management of the theme and have a wide range of activities such as: performance monitoring and statutory returns, liaison with SW1, maintaining websites, provision of management information, software systems administration, budget monitoring and in many cases the first point of customer contact via telephone and e mail channels to services.

5.10 Community Development

- 5.10.1 A new post of Community Development Lead will be created to manage a new team of existing posts to address community development, leisure development and community safety issues.

This small team will be pivotal to delivering specific benefits in our neighbourhoods, where our strategic aspirations, plans and duties manifest themselves as physical work and social improvements in the community.

5.10.2 The work of this team will focus on specific local priorities in relation to issues such as deprivation, anti-social behaviour and improved leisure facilities and local amenities. It will also seek to identify and attract new external funding for the benefit of communities and oversee how these resources are deployed. The team will also have the ability to call in staff with specific skills and expertise from across the rest of the theme or from other themes to address specific issues or projects. As such, the team will be instrumental in delivering thematic working by deploying a range of operational resource to specific community projects and priorities.

5.10.3 Since the initial proposal, a second Community Development Officer post has been added to the structure of this team, primarily funded by the Housing Revenue Account. The work of the two Community Development Officers will focus on the most deprived estates in line with the Council's strategic aspiration to tackle deprivation in those areas.

5.11 Community Protection

5.11.1 A new post of Community Protection Lead is proposed to oversee the Council's regulatory functions; the new management arrangement also includes retaining one Principal EHO post. The services forming this area are those formally constituting Environmental Health along with Private Sector Housing Teams. This move constitutes a reduction in management capacity and posts across these areas, and the loss of two former environmental health posts. This will also result in terminating the shared management arrangement for Licensing with South Somerset District Council..

5.11.2 The Community Protection part of the structure includes the Home Improvement Agency (HIA), Private Sector Grants and Housing Standards functions. Members will be aware of the current discussion and reports regarding the future direction of the Home Improvement Agency in relation to a County wide consortium bid for Supporting People funding, to continue to operate the function for the next three years, and how pending the result of this bidding process the Taunton Home Improvement Agency will be required to demonstrate more separation between it and the statutory grants administration function.

5.11.3. This essentially leaves the Councils Private Sector Grants Team and Housing Standards team. In West Somerset and Sedgemoor Councils, this work is undertaken by an established Private Sector Housing Partnership. Discussions have taken place on the potential for Taunton Deane to join this partnership, and this matter is to be progressed alongside the HIA work described above. There are a range of potential benefits in pursuing this course of action; by removing duplicated effort, creating a more robust joint structure, more mutual support for small pockets of specialist staff, joint procurement and shared management arrangements all of which will allow these services to operate more efficiently in future. More work needs to be done to negotiate and agree our entry into the partnership, including more staff consultation.

If this route is agreed the partnership will be managed outside of Taunton Deane structures but the Council would retain an ongoing clienting arrangement for the partnership, which is likely to sit in the Strategy team, to link with the strategic housing role of this team.

In the meantime a holding position for day to day management of these functions has been created in the Community Protection structure that may or may not be required pending the timescales for progression of this approach. Since this issue was first proposed, the Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership Board have agreed in principle to Taunton Deane joining this partnership, and discussions are well under way with the staff group concerned. If agreed a detailed report specifically on this issue will be brought before members over the coming months.

5.11.4 The Council currently operates a Pest Control Service comprising two Pest Control Officers and administrative support. There is no specific duty on the Council to operate a service itself, and significant savings can be made from contracting out the service to an external provider, in a similar way to how the Dog Warden service was some years ago and is currently operated effectively by an external contractor. The statutory duty on the Local Authority is contained in the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act, and is to take steps to secure that the Borough is kept free from rats and mice, and in particular:-

- From time to time to carry out inspections
- To destroy rats and mice on land where the LA are the occupier and otherwise keep such land free from rats and mice where practicable
- To enforce the duties of owners and occupiers of land under the provisions of the Act.

5.11.5 The Council currently operates the following Pest Control subsidies:-

- All residents on specified benefits (income based job seekers allowance; income support; guaranteed pensions credit) pay half the cost of all treatments other than rodents. The appointed contractor may or may not continue to offer subsidised treatments, and this would depend upon whether the Council were to stipulate, contractually, that subsidies are to remain.
- As a social landlord the Council has previously decided to pay the £15 cost for all rodent treatments required in Council accommodation. Contracting the service may have implications for the HRA in terms of either removing the subsidy or increasing the cost of rodent treatment to the customer.

5.11.6 The Pest Control Service currently operates a number of commercial and domestic contracts. These may be terminated by either the Council or the purchaser after the second subsequent regular scheduled inspection and any work resulting from it. Alternatively these commercial or domestic contracts may be written into any service contract that the Pest Control Contractor should continue to honour permanently or until the contract date expires.

- 5.11.7 The proposal is therefore to progress investigation of contracting out this service with a view to a new provider operating the service from around April 2010. Savings will be derived from the existing direct costs of providing the service, along with administrative staff savings, less the negotiated payment to the potential provider of the new service.
- 5.11.8 If this course of action is pursued, The Transfer of Undertakings Protection Employment Regulations 2006 (TUPE) will apply. This will mean that existing staff that provide this service will transfer across to the new service provider. The Local Government Act 2003 also applies which guarantees those staff that transfer a pension of equal value to their existing local government pension (The Best Value Authorities Staff Transfers (Pensions) Direction 2007).
- 5.12 Deane Helpline
- 5.12.1 This service provides very specific and vital services to some very vulnerable parts of our community; it also has a key role to support many of the Council's operations out of office hours, in terms of dealing with emergency enquiries and monitoring staff lone working. This service operates as a trading account and delivers £30K to general fund each year, and has been very successful in achieving excellent levels of accreditation and attracting significant numbers of external contracts. However, as income has increased so have the operating costs in equal measure. The business potentially can be more effective and produce more income for the Council. In order to do this a detailed review of both the income and in particular the external contracts and the employment arrangements for the service will be required.
- 5.12.2 The starting point for this work is to address one particular contract that the business appears to be losing significant money on, and this may be the opportunity to create some capacity within the service to undertake the review work required. Investigations to date have resulted in a further £50K being delivered by this service, and this figure will be included in the imminent budget setting process.
- 5.12.3 The service is currently being managed by the Supported Housing Manager, taking on additional duties following the departure of the Call Centre Manager some time ago. If the detailed review of the service results in the Council having more confidence in the longer term financial viability of the operation, then steps will be taken to replace the vacant Control Centre Manager post, at the appropriate time.
- 5.13 Changes to Theme 4 proposals arising from formal consultation
- 5.13.1 The formal consultation process generated comments from the Corporate Scrutiny Committee, staff and UNISON. A summary of points made in the consultation, and the response to these, is attached as Appendix F. The following changes to Theme 4 proposals have been made as a result:
- 15.13.2 Building Control moved to Growth and Development Theme as described in section 4.12 of this report.
- 15.13.3 Planning Enforcement moved to Growth and Development Theme as described in section 4.12 of this report. This creates a position of increased isolation for the remaining small Licensing service in the Community Protection part of the structure.

Additionally concern has been expressed by members in relation to the decline in resources in the Licensing service. Consequently a new structure for the Licensing Service is proposed that includes a new post of Licensing Manager and re shaping the rest of the team to make three Licensing officers. This is considered to be a more viable team and service in the future. This will increase capacity in this team from 3 full time equivalent posts in the original proposal to 4, including the addition of a dedicated manager for this busy and high profile service. The additional cost involved in this change has mainly been met by the removal of a further part time (0.6 FTE) Senior Environmental Health Officer from the Food and Health and Safety team following a recent staff resignation.

15.13.4 Tenant Empowerment. Additional posts have been added into the Housing Services Structure, funded by the Housing Revenue Account as described in paragraph 5.8.3

15.13.5 Community Development – an additional Community Development Officer post has been added to this team, as described in paragraph 5.10.3.

5.14 Projected Savings and Impact

15.14.1. Overall, the proposals for the Community Services Theme will deliver annual revenue savings of approximately £200,000. It is very difficult to accurately assess the full impact on the services and on our customers from these proposals. Attempts have been made to follow the informal direction provided by the Executive, focus on new ways of working and Council priorities, keep day to day services running effectively and ensure our statutory and other duties can continue to be fulfilled.

However, the proposals include a significant reduction in management capacity and some reduction in front line resource that will have a clear impact that will have to be effectively managed into the future.

Most notably there have been reductions in capacity in the existing Environmental Health and Housing Options teams, which will result in increased tensions in these services with potential failure to meet inspection programmes or to provide the same level of service as currently exists.

6. Thematic Working – Addition to existing job descriptions

6.1 For jobs that slot across into the new structure, it is proposed that a small addition will be made to existing job descriptions to reflect the aims and objectives of the review that will not be applied through a totally new job description for the post. Following consultation, this addition will be made to all existing Job Descriptions but does not constitute a material or significant enough change to warrant a re- evaluation of the post. The current draft of this addition is shown below.

Along with the specific duties and responsibilities of the post, the postholder will be required to work in an increasingly flexible and collaborative way.

In practice this may mean:

- *Strong co-operation and greater inter-play between different service areas and disciplines, to address particular organisational and/or community issues and priorities.*
- *Greater use of 'task and finish' working to bring expertise, interest and capacity to a project not traditionally perceived as part of the 'day job' for individuals.*
- *A wider framework of accountability with staff potentially reporting to different managers for different projects.*
- *Greater sharing of knowledge and expertise across different themes. There will be opportunities to gain experience and career development and to bring new perspectives to achieve better outcomes for the organisation, local residents and communities.*
- *Convening and working closely with partner organisations to tackle complex community issues that require the input of more than one agency.*
- *More generic working, where professionalism and technical expertise will be the norm, where individuals take responsibility and ownership of issues.*

7. Human Resource (HR) Implications

- 7.1 The detailed proposals in this report have significant human resource implications for staff in Themes 2 and 4.
- 7.2 Significant consultation has taken place with the UNISON Change Forum over the last six months relating to these proposals and the Taunton Deane UNISON Branch has been formally notified of the proposals. This has included the development of a staff Care and Support Plan. This support detailed in this plan will be available to staff throughout the remainder of the Core Council Review.
- 7.3 A number of Theme 2 and 4 staff affected by these proposals have been formally notified as being at risk of redundancy. The confidential Appendix G identifies these posts and the 'ring-fencing' arrangements that will apply in respect of recruitment to posts within the proposed new structures. The appendix also specifies those posts which are proposed as 'direct transfers' into the new structure.

8. Recruitment Approach and Timetable for Themes 2 and 4

- 8.1 Pending Full Council approval, recruitment to all new posts in Theme 2 and 4 will be completed where possible by the end of March 2010.
- 8.2 Recruitment and ring-fencing arrangements have been subject to detailed consultation with UNISON in accordance with the Council's own Redundancy Policy and with the staff who are 'at risk'.
- 8.3 Job descriptions and person specifications for all new posts have been prepared and are available for staff to view on the Core Council Review Sharepoint site, and are available for members on request. A job evaluation exercise has now been substantially completed and the grades of most of the new posts are shown on the proposed structure charts.

- 8.4 An external recruitment exercise will be carried out for all new posts, in the event that these are not filled internally. This may extend the above indicative timetable by a minimum of three months. Other new posts will be filled either by internal recruitment or by staff who are unsuccessful in their application for higher graded posts.
- 8.5 Salary protection will not be offered to staff who apply for and are recruited to a lower grade post.
- 8.6 A People Management Framework, Charter and set of managerial competencies have been developed. These are consistent with the widened roles and new ways of working outlined in Appendix B. Assessment against these competencies will form an important part of the recruitment process to new management posts. This documentation will also guide future organisational development activity.

9. Accommodation

- 9.1 Accommodation arrangements need to enable the successful operation of the new Core Council. If the proposals for Themes 2 and 4 are approved by Full Council, it is proposed that SWOne is commissioned to carry out a review of accommodation. The scope for the accommodation review will be wide, looking at all Council accommodation and also at different ways of working to support the new Core Council.

10. The Financial Implications of creating Themes 2 and 4

- 10.1 The ongoing General Fund savings generated by the proposals for Themes 2 and 4 will be approximately £450,000 per annum. In order to deliver substantial efficiency savings, this entire sum will be contributed towards the Council's budget gap position for 2010/11 onwards.
- 10.2 The net revenue cost to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) of these proposals will be approximately £27,000. However, managers are currently working on savings plans that will make savings in the HRA which will offset this cost. Full details of the new Housing Revenue Account will be brought before members during the normal budget setting process.
- 10.3 The one-off costs to the General Fund associated with Theme 2 and 4 proposals will not be known with certainty until the recruitment process is completed (end of March 2010). Analysis of potential outcomes has been undertaken, indicating that the one-off costs to the General Fund Reserves will, depending on the recruitment outcomes, be in the range of £134k (best case) - £592k (worst case). The more likely outcome is somewhere in the middle.
- 10.4 It is important therefore that the Councils General Fund reserves are in a sufficiently healthy position to support this review. A separate report is presented to this meeting, detailing a windfall VAT receipt of £649,119, in which it is recommended that the full sum be transferred into the General Fund Reserve. The recommendations in this report to the Executive and Full Council will request that a sum of £592k is "ring-fenced" to fund the one-off costs of this proposal. Any surplus will be automatically returned to General Fund Reserves in late March 2010.

This minimises the risk associated with the uncertainty of the one-off costs, and means the Council is in a position where Themes 2 and 4 of the review are affordable and deliverable

- 10.5 Similarly, the one-off costs of these proposals on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) reserves will not be known with certainty until recruitment has been completed. Financial modelling indicates the one of costs to the HRA being in the range £0 - £127k. The recommendations in this report to the Executive and Full Council will therefore request that a sum of £127k is “ring-fenced” from the HRA Reserves to fund the one-off costs of this proposal. Any surplus will be automatically returned to HRA reserves in late March 2010.

11. Links to Pioneer Somerset

- 11.1 Pioneer Somerset is a five year programme of enhanced two tier working, agreed by the six principal authorities of Somerset after the rejection of a bid for a single unitary council for the County.
- 11.2 There are a number of emerging proposals for enhanced two tier working under the umbrella of Pioneer Somerset. This proposal precedes the longer term proposals coming out of the Pioneer Somerset Programme. However, the Core Council will work in a way to shape the further development of Pioneer Somerset proposals and respond to these as they emerge.

12. Consultation

- 12.1 Formal consultation period on the first phase of this proposal ran from 24 September until 24 October 2009. Points made during the consultation process, and the response to these, are summarised in Appendix F.
- 12.2 The process of developing Theme 2 and 4 proposals also involved informal consultation and dialogue with staff and members over a considerable period of time. Overall, the consultation process featured:
- The newly appointed Theme Managers meeting with managers, undertaking staff briefings and producing an interim paper.
 - Fortnightly meetings of the UNISON Change Forum, including regular updates on the Core Council Review and input on key features of the proposal (e.g. ring-fencing arrangements, approach to consultation etc)
 - Elected members of all parties providing input on the emerging proposals, primarily through the Change Programme Member Steering Group.
 - Comments from the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 1 October 2009.
 - Discussions with Turner and Townsend (DLO Consultants) on potential links to Theme 3.

12.3 The proposals for Themes 2 and 4 have been amended as a result of the consultation process, as described in sections 4.12 and 5.13 respectively.

13. Political Management Arrangements

13.1.1 Full Council has asked for a review of political management arrangements alongside Core Council Review.

This project is being led by the Council's Monitoring Officer, and proposals will come to members with the aim of achieving implementation in the next Municipal Year

14. Risk

14.1 An updated risk assessment and action plan connected to this proposal has been completed and is kept up to date by the Project Director and reviewed regularly by CMT.

15. Equality Impact Assessment

15.1 The development of this proposal, and the approach proposed for recruitment activities, is in accordance with all relevant equalities legislation. Managers within each of the proposed thematic groups will be responsible for carrying out detailed Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) of their respective service areas. Actions arising from these EIAs will be included within the appropriate service operational plan, or the Council's Corporate Equality Scheme.

16. Next Steps

16.1 The views of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on proposals for Themes 2 and 4 will be considered by the Executive on 11 November 2010.

16.2 The Executive will make a recommendation to Full Council on 23 November. Full Council will then make a decision based on the Executive recommendation and in light of the outcome of the formal consultation with staff and Unison.

17. Recommendations

17.1 The Executive is **recommended:**

- i) To consider the comments of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee (at Appendix F)
- ii.) To consider other comments from staff and UNISON during the formal consultation process, also attached as Appendix F.
- iii) **To approve and recommend to Full Council:**
 - a.) The detailed proposal for the Themes 2 and 4 of the review, as described in sections 4 and 5 of this report.
 - b.) That a sum of £592k is "ring-fenced" from the General Fund Reserves to fund the one off costs of Theme 2 and 4 proposals. Any earmarked

fund remaining at the end of this first phase will be returned to the General Fund Reserve at the end of March 2010.

- c.) That a sum of £127k is “ring-fenced” from HRA Reserves to fund the one off costs of Theme 2 and 4 proposals. Any earmarked fund remaining at the end of this first phase will be returned to the HRA Reserve at the end of March 2010.
- d.) That political management arrangements are reviewed separately with members with the aim of achieving implementation in the new municipal year (2010).
- e.) The phasing arrangements for remaining Themes of the Core Council Review, attached as Appendix A.

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Background Papers

Executive, 30 April 2009 – *Core Council Review: Alternative Approach to Implementing Themes 2 and 4*

Corporate Scrutiny Committee, 1 October 2009 – *Core Council Review Proposals – Themes 2 and 4*

List of Appendices (attached):

- A Overview of Core Council Themes and Phasing Arrangements
- B The Council’s Vision and Overview of Thematic Working
- C Existing Structure Charts for Themes 2 and 4
- D Proposed Structure Charts for Themes 2 and 4
- E Diagram showing the proposed Economic Development specialist post
- F Summary of points raised in the consultation
- G *Staff Ring-fencing Arrangements for Posts in Proposed New Structure (Confidential)*

APPENDIX A

Overview of Proposed Core Council Themes, Management Arrangements and Phasing

Theme	Indicative Role and Functions	Management Arrangements	Phasing
Strategy and Corporate	<i>Strategy</i> for the place and the organisation. Functions include: performance and improvement, forward planning and the Local Development Framework, CAA, economic strategy, sports strategy, housing strategy, community strategy and Local Area Agreement, legal & democratic; research & consultation, equalities, health improvement, sustainability, climate change, PR & marketing, client and contract management, retained services, transformation, corporate performance, information management, website and strategic customer access.	3 management posts and new staffing structure	Implement in one phase , with recruitment to all new posts in March 2009. (Completed)
Growth and Development	<i>Delivery</i> of growth and development in the community. Functions include, enabling affordable housing, development management/planning enforcement, heritage and landscape, economic development & regeneration, Building Control, Tourist Information Centre, Project Taunton.	Theme Manager appointed (July 09).	Proposal for Theme 2 structure approved by Members in November 2009, implemented by March 2010.
Business (DLO)	Highways, Horticulture & Housing DLO, and Housing Asset Management pending full review.	Current management and staffing arrangements continue, pending full review.	Commissioning proposals approved by members: June 2009 Preferred option approved by Executive: November 2009. Implementation timetable depends on nature of preferred option.
Operations and Regulation	Community Protection, Car Parking, Cemeteries & Crematorium, Building Control, Housing Services, Deane Helpline, Leisure and Community Development, Community Safety, Community Projects, Enforcement Functions.	Theme Manager appointed (July 09).	Proposal for Theme 4 structure approved by Members in November 2009, implemented by March 2010.
CMT and full review of final structure	Chief Executive, strategic directors and support staff.	Current management and staffing arrangements continue, pending full review	To be confirmed

APPENDIX B

Summary of the Current Drivers for Change, the Council's Vision and Ways of Working

Current Drivers for Change

Current issues which are driving the need for organisational change include (but are not limited to):

- An increased emphasis on the role of councils as 'place-shapers' and promoters of the wider well-being of the area.
- Financial pressures and the need to deliver substantial ongoing efficiency savings.
- The need to engage better with residents and communities, giving them a greater say in local decision making, priority setting and resource allocation.
- Rising customer expectations.
- The need to manage and respond to continuous and multiple changes.
- The need to develop further long term partnerships with private, public and voluntary sector organisations.
- The need to create the right environment and culture for high performance – including the right working environment.
- The need to build officer leadership capability and capacity.

Vision

The Council's vision is to:

“Make life better for people and communities”

This vision underpins the Core Council Review and will guide the work of the Council in future.

Ways of Working

To illustrate our vision further, the following roles and ways of working have been agreed with members. These will act as ‘design principles’ for the new Core Council and the future development of the organisation:

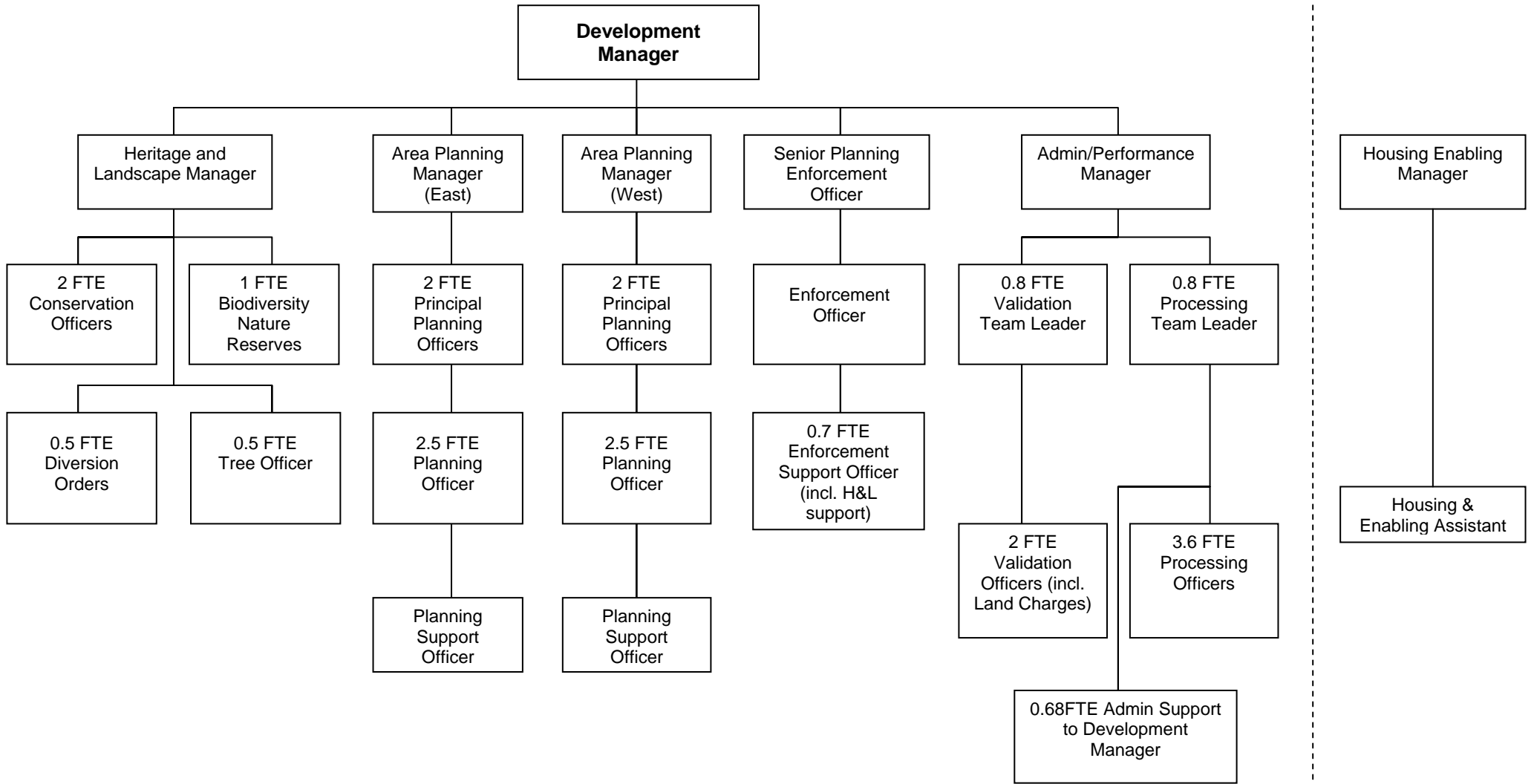
Roles <i>What will we do?</i>	Culture <i>How will we work?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficiency and Improvement. To deliver substantial efficiency savings, through the new structure and in the way we operate. • Place-shaping and wider well-being. To understand the issues and challenges facing Taunton Deane. To establish more clearly what kind of place we want the Borough to be, and overcome obstacles to achieving this. To deliver LAA outcomes for the area. To act as a convenor of local services and partners. • Community engagement and empowerment. To give people a stronger say in local services and priority setting. To move towards an engagement model where the community decides and the Council acts as an executive to enact these decisions. • Good Services. To enable the delivery of good, value for money services, reflecting local priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership. To offer strong leadership and take ownership of issues that matter to people. • Ambition. To be ambitious for our area and communities. • Focus. To establish a limited number of top priorities and focus on the delivery of these. • Outward looking. To be concerned with the wider well-being of the area. • Customer first. To put the needs of customers and residents at the heart of all we do. • Flexible. To be flexible and responsive to different community needs and changing circumstances within the community and organisation. • Collaborative. To work in partnership to improve the lives of residents and communities. Not to be precious about our own organisational autonomy. • Performance. To rigorously manage performance of services and outcomes. To be a formidable client. • “One Council”. To promote stronger common purpose and collaborative working across different parts of the authority. • Change. To initiate change where necessary and engage positively with changes affecting the authority and area.

In practical terms, this will mean a different way of working for staff at all levels across the authority. The points below are designed to illustrate how working in the new Core Council will be different:

- Stronger co-operation and greater inter-play between different service areas and disciplines, to address particular organisational and/or community issues.
- Greater use of 'task and finish' working, with opportunities for people to bring their expertise, interest and capacity to a project not traditionally perceived as part of their 'day job'.
- A wider framework of accountability for individuals, who will report to different managers for the different projects they are involved in. Within this framework, individuals will still receive day-to-day support from a single manager, who will carry out regular performance reviews and facilitate personal/career development. This is a fundamentally different way of working for all Council staff.
- Greater responsiveness to urgent and/or important issues ('hotspots') that arise in communities and localities across the Borough.
- More generic working, where professionalism and technical expertise will be highly valued, but not to the extent that wider issues affecting the Council and community are perceived as 'somebody else's department'.
- Greater sharing of knowledge and expertise across different themes. There will be opportunities for individuals to gain experience, develop their career and bring new perspectives to achieve better outcomes for the organisation, local residents and communities.

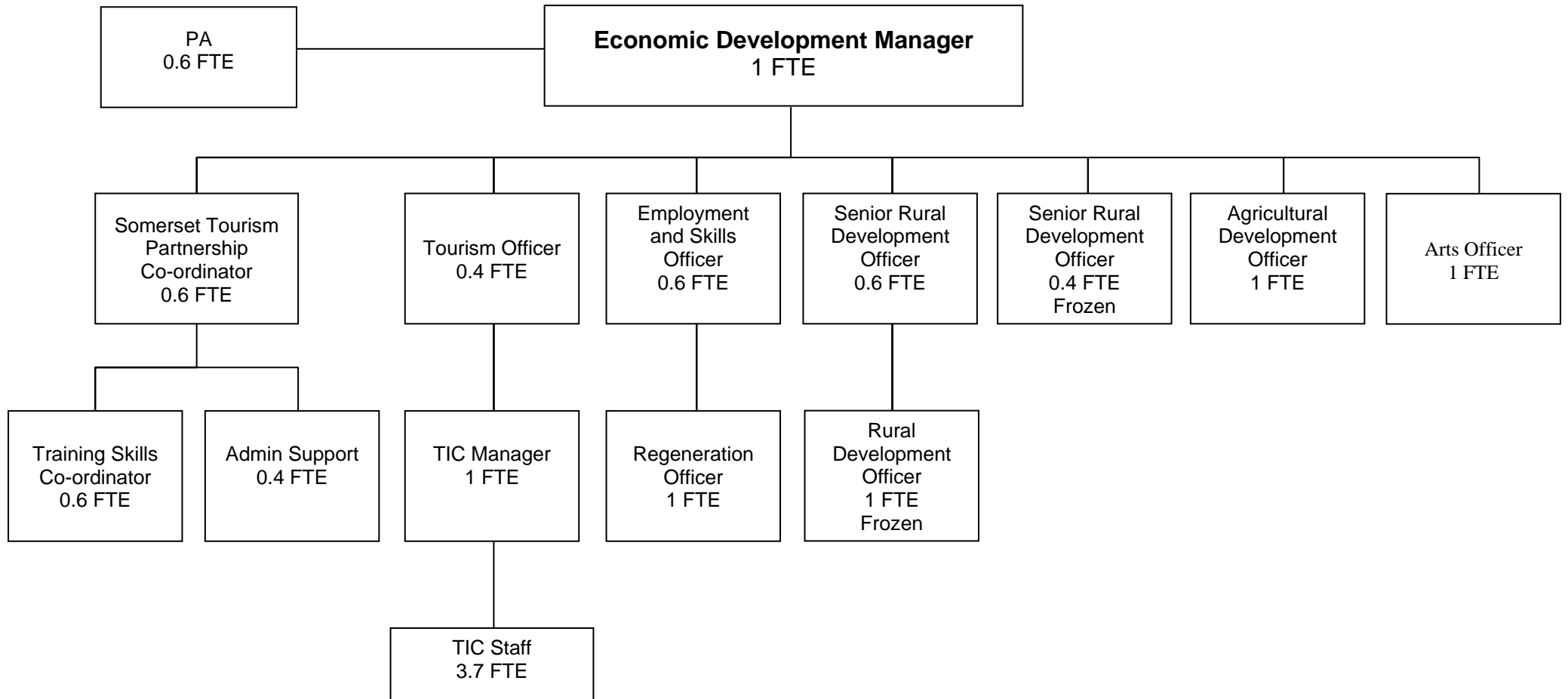
APPENDIX C

Development Management Current Structure (Excluding Building Control)



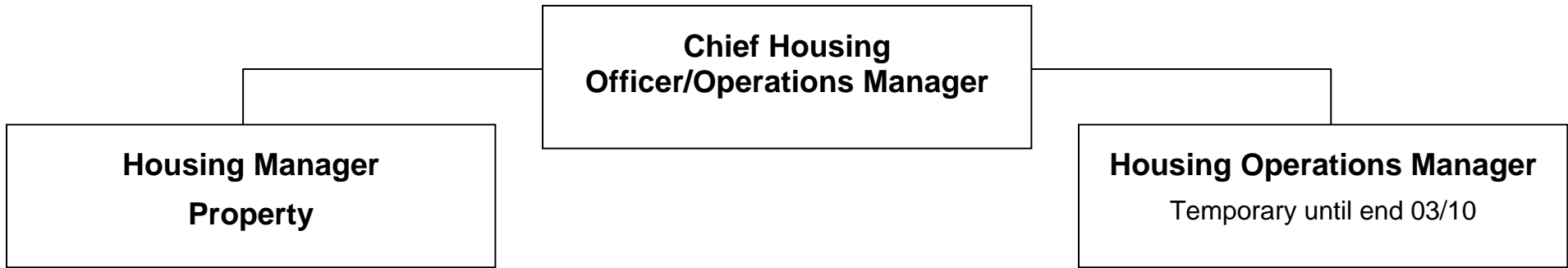
APPENDIX C

Economic Development Current Structure

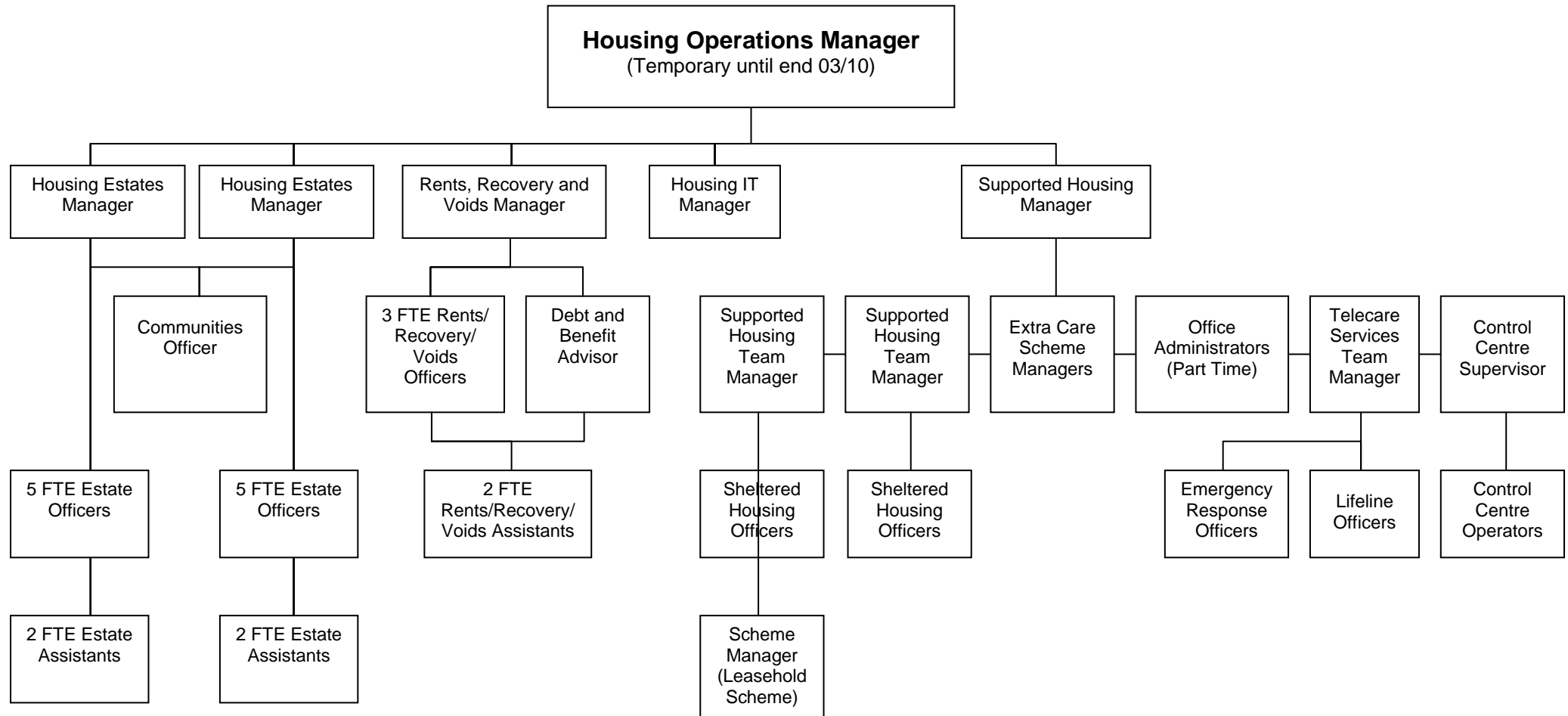


APPENDIX C

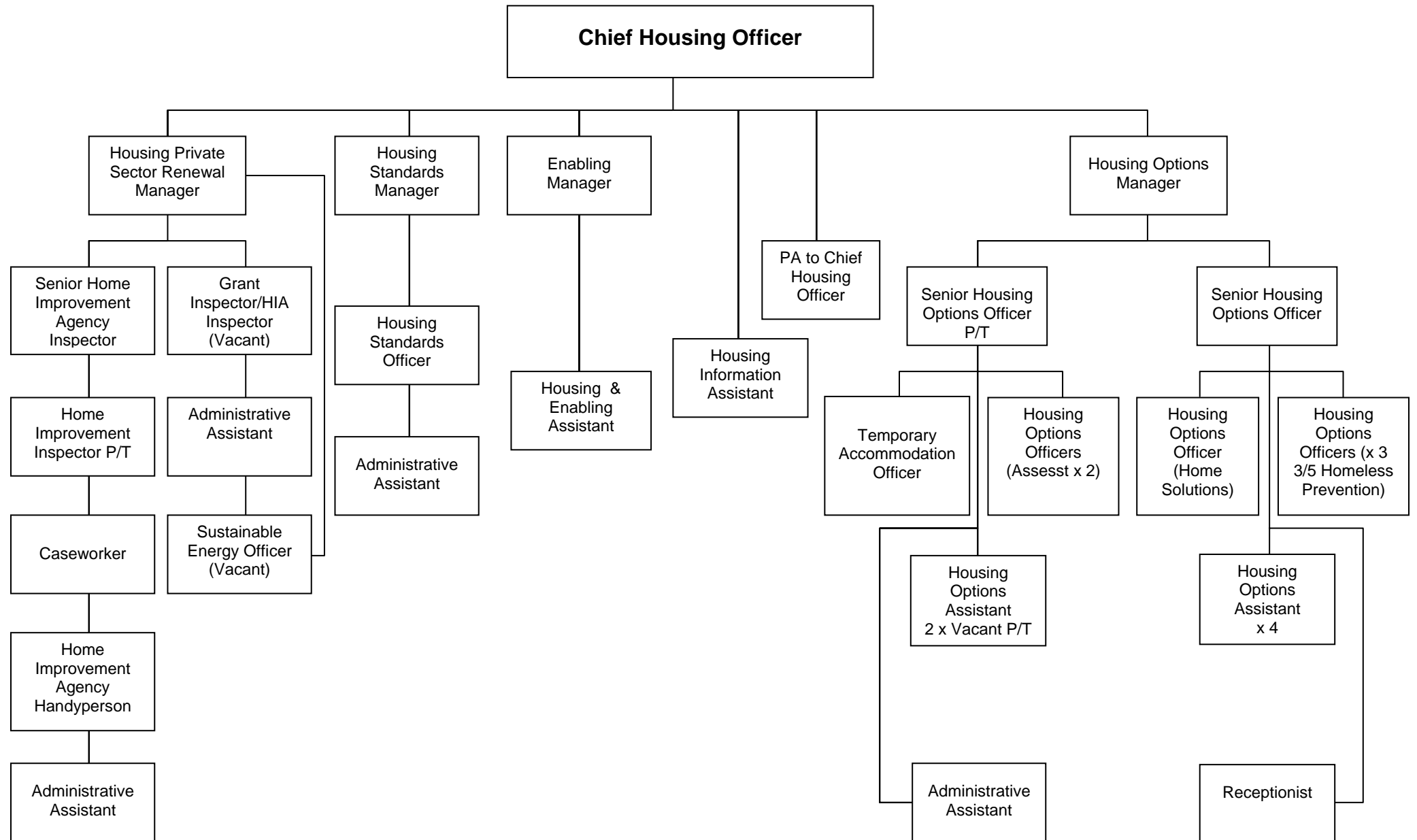
Housing Management Structure September 2009



APPENDIX C

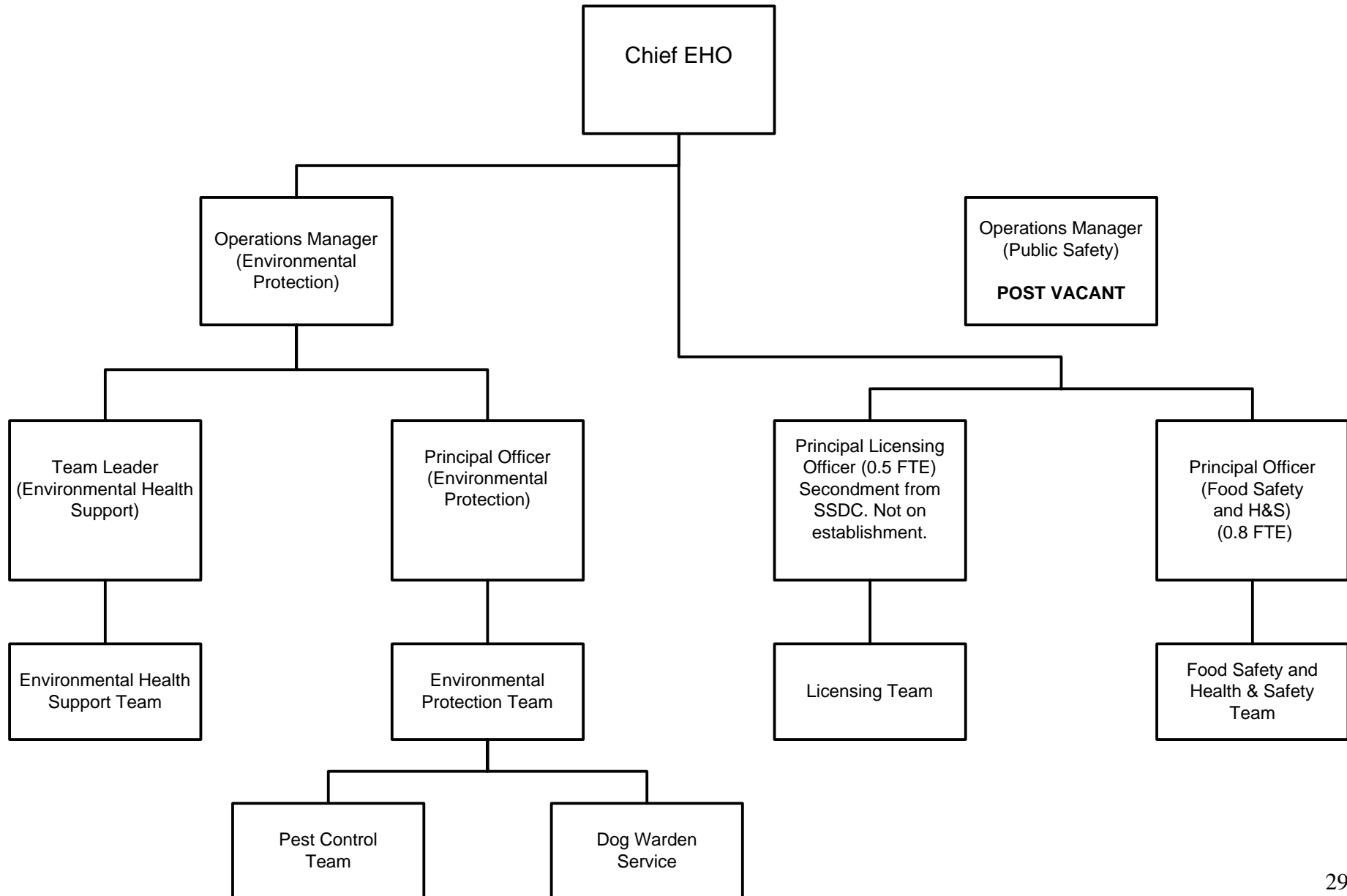


APPENDIX C



APPENDIX C

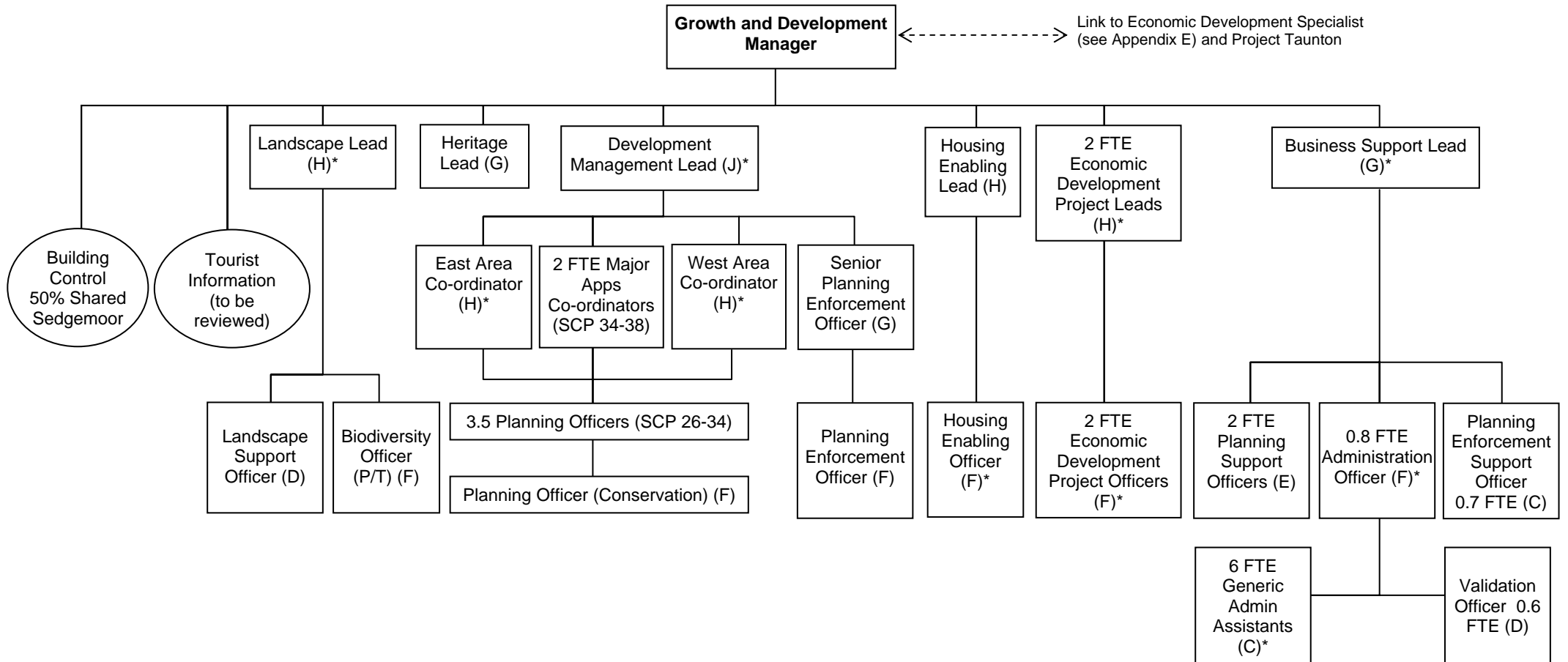
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH – STRUCTURE SEPT 09



Proposed Growth and Development Organisation Chart

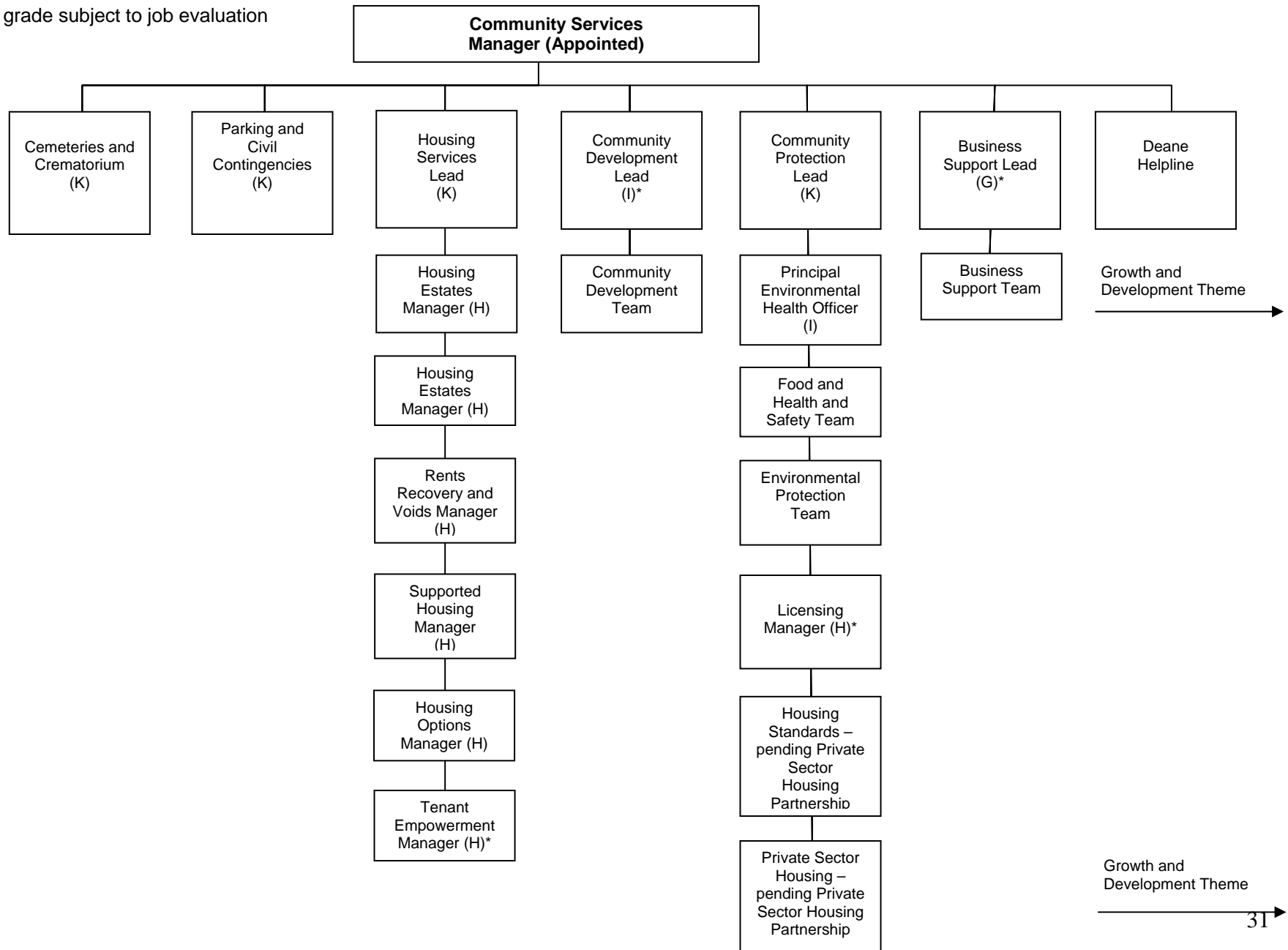
APPENDIX D

*Indicative grade subject to job evaluation



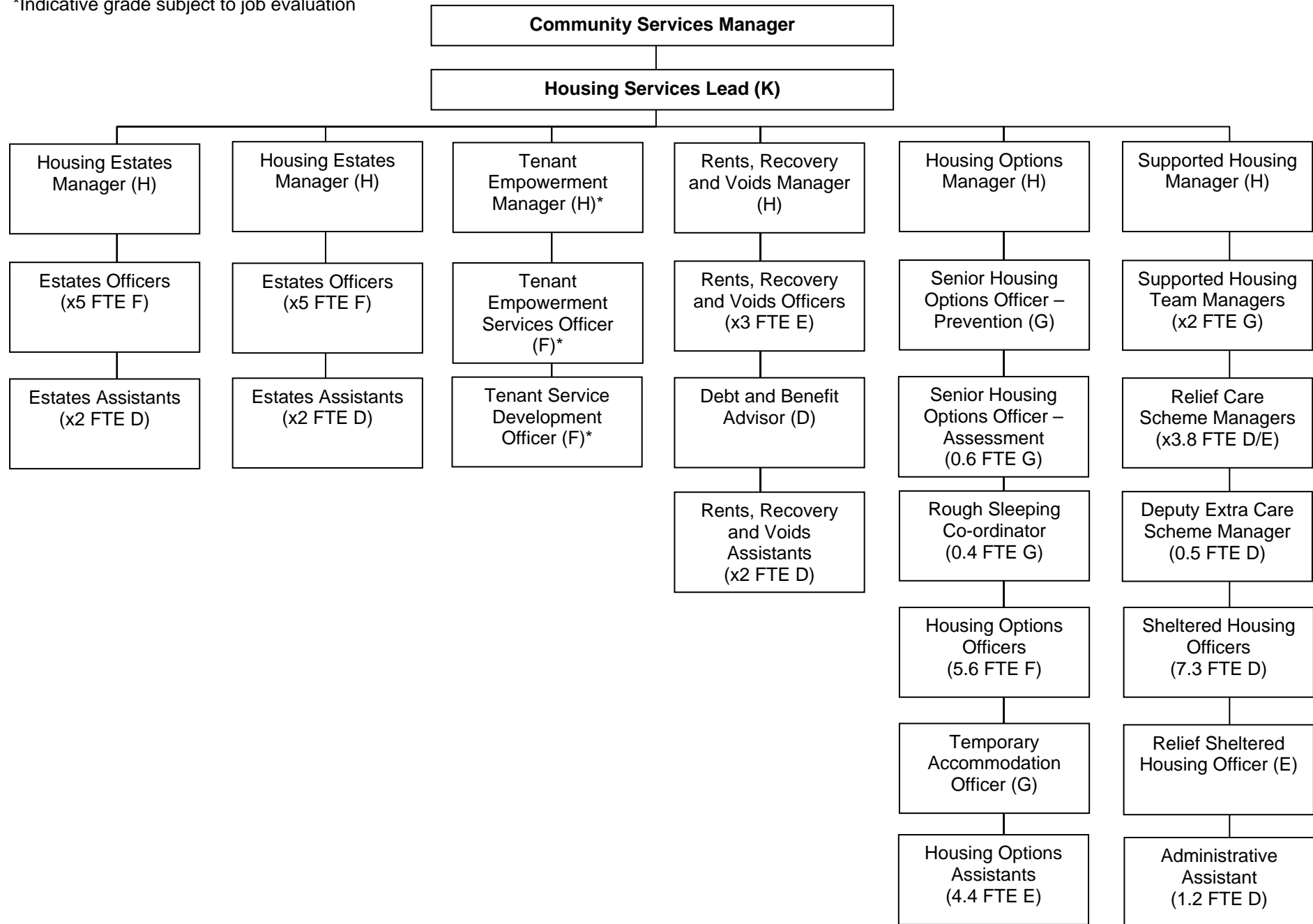
APPENDIX D Proposed Community Services Management Structure

*Indicative grade subject to job evaluation



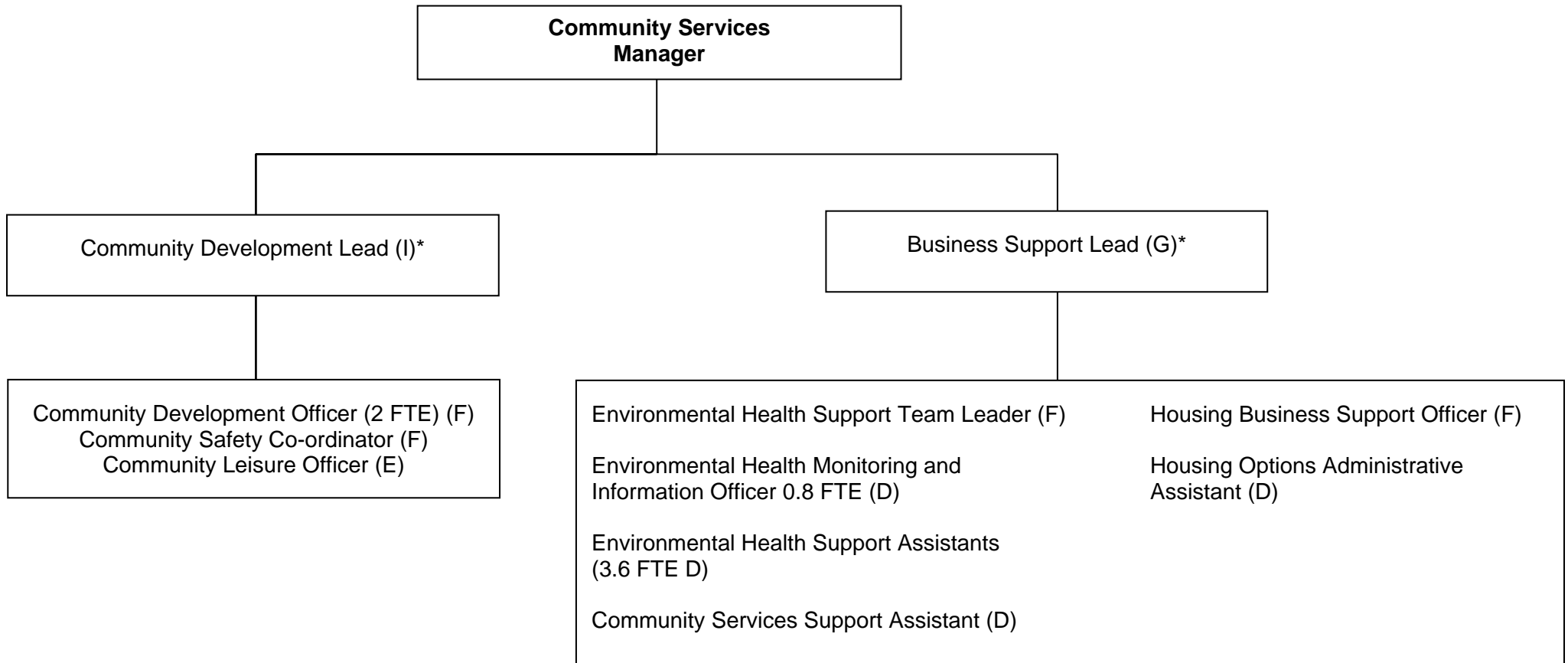
APPENDIX D Housing Services – Proposed Detailed Structure

*Indicative grade subject to job evaluation



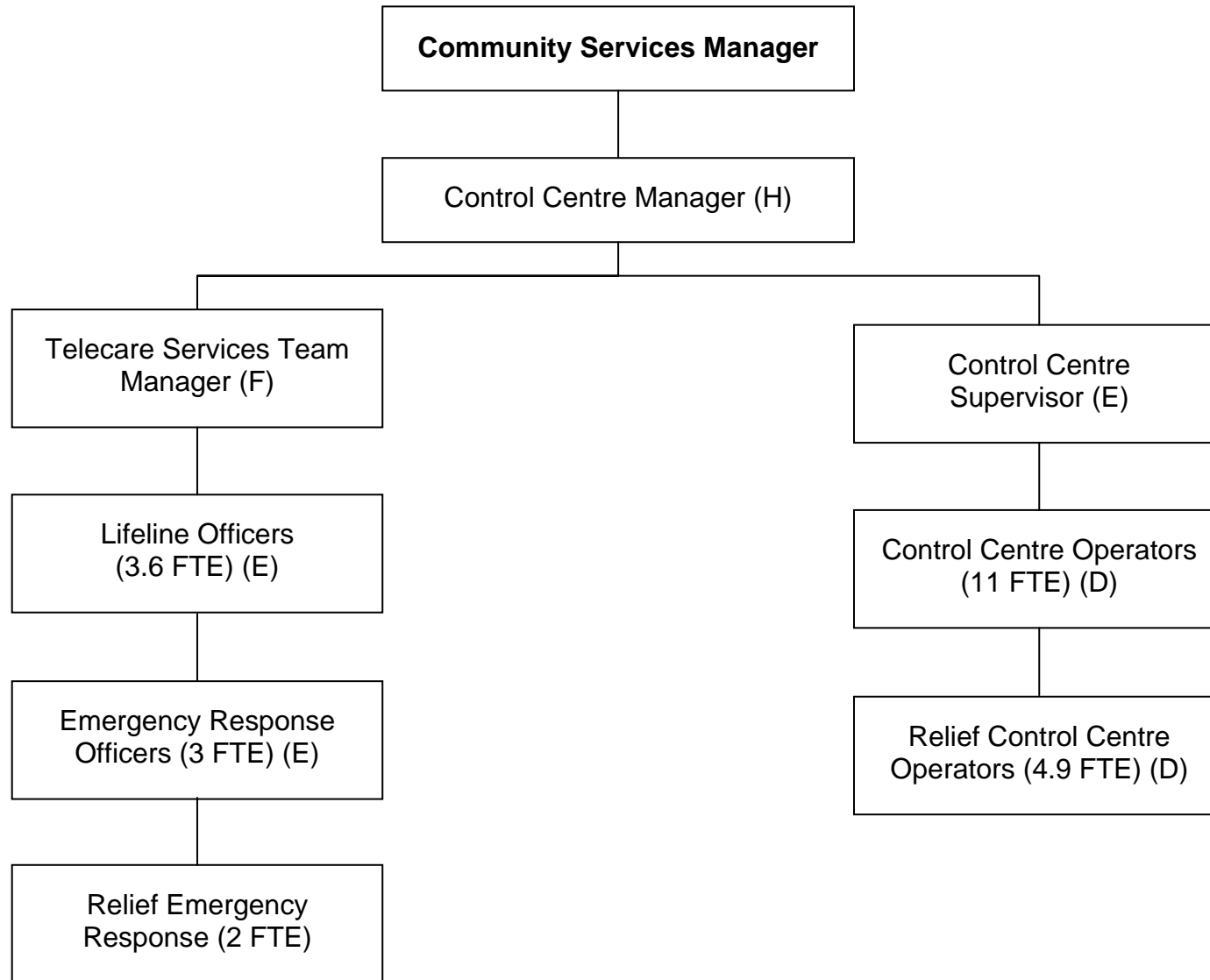
APPENDIX D Community Development and Business Support – Proposed Detailed Structure

*Indicative grade subject to job evaluation



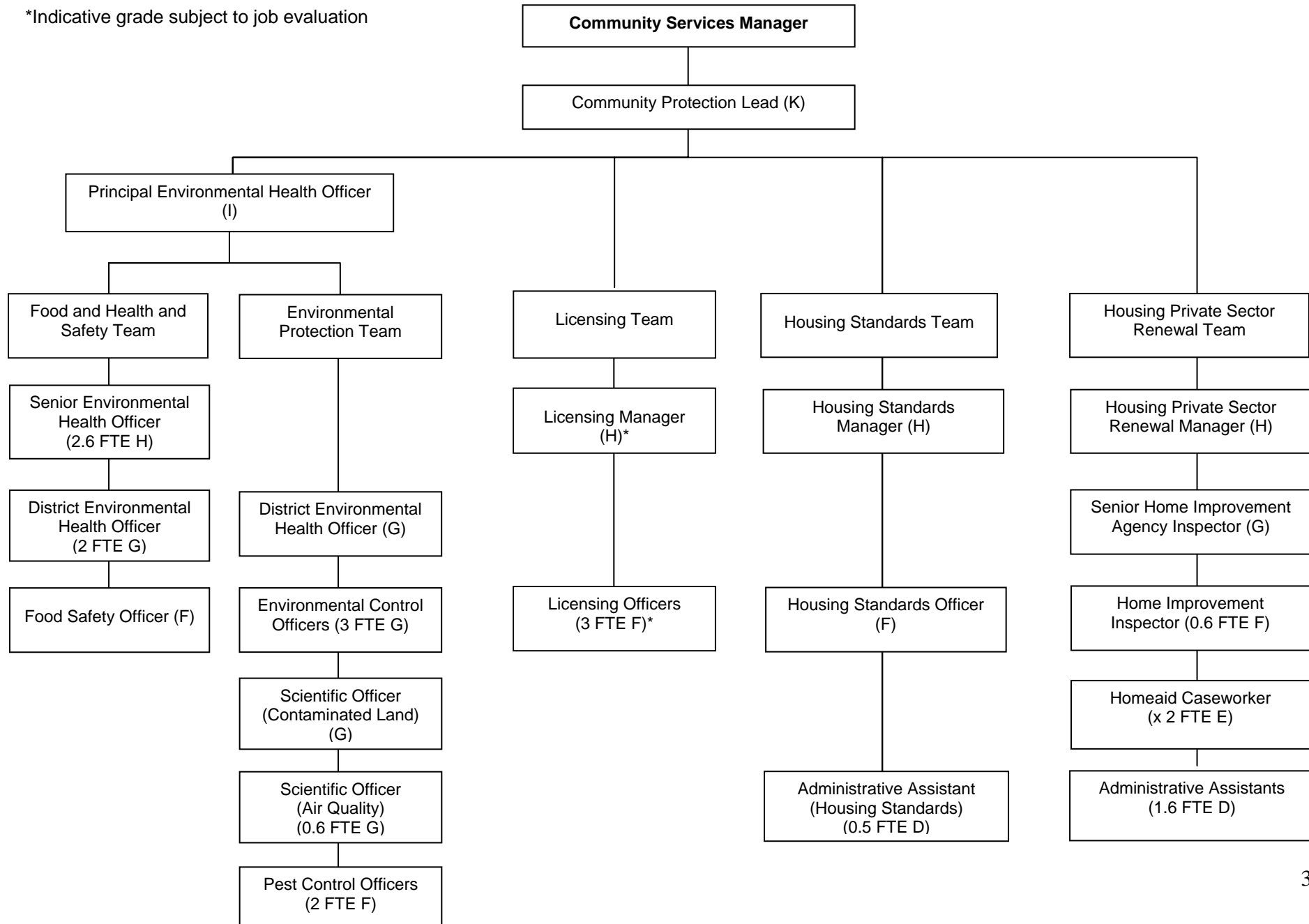
APPENDIX D

Deane Helpline – Proposed Detailed Structure



APPENDIX D Community Protection – Proposed Detailed Structure

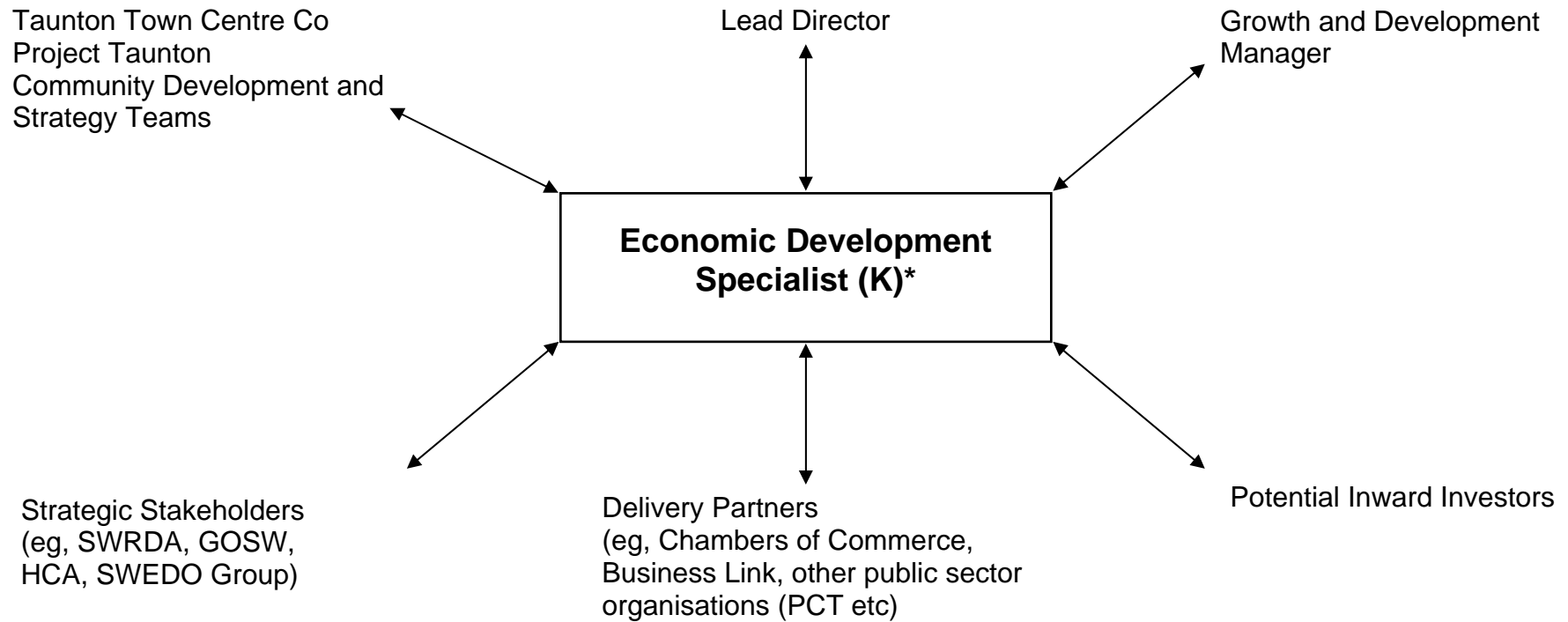
*Indicative grade subject to job evaluation



APPENXDIX E

Economic Development Specialist (Linkages)

*Indicative grade, subject to job evaluation



APPENDIX F

CORE COUNCIL REVIEW – THEMES 2 AND 4

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

(A) General (B) Theme 2 : Growth and Development (C) Theme 4 : Community Services

(A) General

No	Comment	Source(s)	Response
G1	It is preferable to fully explore options to reduce capacity voluntarily, rather than through compulsory redundancy	UNISON Corporate Scrutiny Committee	The proposals seek to balance delivery of services to a level which adequately reflects members' priorities with individual wishes of members of staff. Compulsory redundancies will be kept to a minimum through, for example, the deletion from the staff establishment of posts which are already vacant or 'frozen'. The proposal also sees a large number of staff 'slotting in' to the new structure.
G2	Structure charts should indicate which posts represent staff to be slotted in, which have been ring-fenced to persons at risk of redundancy and the remainder that need to be filled as a result of internal or external recruitment	UNISON	Ring-fencing details have been shared with UNISON and members have also received a confidential appendix to the proposal, outlining the detailed ring-fencing arrangements which apply to all posts in the proposed structures.
G3	Concern with the implication (para 3.2 of the report) that resources can be 'diverted' from other themes to increase investment in areas such as climate change. This fails to acknowledge the depth of cuts that have already been made in Theme 1: by definition, there are no resources to spare.	UNISON	The new ways of working which form a key part of the Core Council Review require the Council to be more flexible in the way that priorities are supported. This will mean a frequent re-prioritisation of the areas staff are concentrating on, as part of routine corporate and operational planning, to ensure that effort is focused on the areas that are most important to members.

No	Comment	Source(s)	Response
G4	Concern has been expressed that grouping Planning Enforcement and Licensing may result in a conflict; for example, where Planning Enforcement wanted a licence revoked, that had been agreed by Licensing. The weakening of the relationship between Planning Control and Planning Enforcement also raises concerns, as there was about the separation of Planning Policy (placed in Theme 1) from Planning Control (Development Management). UNISON question the ability of the Council's planning service to be proactive, when it is split between 3 themes	UNISON	Paragraphs 4.12.2 and 5.13.1 of this report identify the changes made to the proposal, including retaining Planning Enforcement in the Growth and Development Theme, and enhancements to the Licensing Service structure within Community Protection.
G5	When referring to Partnership creation, it is essential that this does not reduce accountability. (For example, it is understood that the Somerset Waste Partnership are not enforcing the removal of refuse from pavements: powers that were transferred from the TDBC Environmental Health service when SWP was created, resulting in a loss of influence over a key service by the Borough Council).	UNISON	The creation of any new partnerships contained in these proposals is an "in principle" agreement only. If, for example, the Private Sector Housing partnership as described progresses, a separate and specific report will be introduced through an appropriate Member cycle, and will feature issues concerning governance and, therefore, accountability
G6	The Council needs to be more commercially aware.	Corporate Scrutiny Committee	<p>The need to be more commercial is being looked at primarily under Theme 3 of the Core Council Review. Consultants are exploring the potential for increased commerciality, and their brief includes the requirement to look not just at Deane DLO services but also the potential connection to other income-generating services of the Council (eg: Crematorium).</p> <p>In addition, work is under way in a further Council "Business" – the Deane Helpline – to assess its commercial position with a view to increasing the profitability of this service.</p>

No	Comment	Source(s)	Response
G7	A review should be carried out to ensure adequate administrative support was provided to allow senior officers to carry out their new roles	Corporate Scrutiny Committee/Staff	The issue of the appropriate level of administrative support will be kept under review in the new structure.

(B) Theme 2 - Growth and Development

No	Comment	Source(s)	Response
G&D1	<p>Concern if it is really possible to reduce resources in Economic Development at the same time as delivering the economic vision. A similar conflict arose in Theme 1, where planning policy staff numbers were reduced at the same time as priority was supposed to be given to delivering the Local Development Framework (LDF).</p> <p>It appears that significant difficulties have been experienced as a result (for example, involving delays to the Local Development Scheme that had previously been agreed with Government Office SW).</p>	<p>UNISON</p> <p>Corporate Scrutiny Committee</p>	<p>Whilst the number of Economic Development staff is reduced, the benefits of more flexible roles should enable the Council to deliver those projects identified by the Economic strategy more effectively.</p>
G&D2	<p>Concern that within Economic Development, no post is specifically identified as an Arts Officer.</p> <p>Unless it is Members' intention to discontinue provision of an arts service, UNISON submits that specialist skills will continue to be required, especially as paragraph 4.8.1 refers to 'sub functions' responsibilities which include 'cultural development'.</p>	<p>UNISON</p>	<p>The proposal seeks to move away from narrow roles to amore flexible structure in order to respond more effectively to Project based work. As stated in para 4.8.1 skills in a range of areas including cultural development will be required amongst the post holders.</p>

No	Comment	Source(s)	Response
G&D3	The Housing Enabling Service required additional funding and land in order to meet the Council's priorities	Corporate Scrutiny Committee	The additional resource should assist in the location of affordable housing sites and the securing of additional external funding
G&D4	It was detrimental to move Planning Enforcement into the Community Services Theme	Corporate Scrutiny Committee	Paragraphs 4.12.2 and 5.13.1 of this report identify the changes made to the proposal, including retaining Planning Enforcement in the Growth and Development Theme, and enhancements to the Licensing Service structure within Community Protection.
G&D5	The Conservation Officer should not make decisions on major planning applications, which should be referred to Planning Officers, who could take into account all material considerations	Corporate Scrutiny Committee/Staff	This is not at issue as all decisions are currently and will in future be signed off by an officer who is a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute.
G&D6	There was a conflict between the decreased investment in Tourism and the possible relocation of the Tourism Office	Corporate Scrutiny Committee Staff	As stated in para 4.9.1 the review of the Taunton Tourist Information Centre will look at various options including relocation, which could in itself deliver significant savings
G&D7	Flexibility was needed with regard to the Planning Officers, in order that their numbers could be increased in the event of an upturn in the economy	Corporate Scrutiny Committee Staff	This point is accepted (see para 4.1.13.1) Whilst an additional 0.5FTE is maintained as a response to these concerns (as well as to help with rights of way work) the resource level will need to continue to be monitored.
G&D8	The proposal to delete two Planning Officers, two Area Planning Managers and to change the development Manager post will result in a greater amount of work and pressure to those "in the middle" – the co-ordinators as well as the three remaining Planning Officers.	Staff	Whilst reduction in resource will inevitably have some impact it is considered that the number and level of posts retained should be sufficient to maintain a reasonable service, although this will need to be continually reviewed in the event of major workload fluctuations

No	Comment	Source(s)	Response
G&D9	<p>The inevitable increase in workload associated with the Council's Growth Point status will inevitably lead to an increase in number of planning applications received, will result in serious delays to processing applications and constant complaints from applicants, agents and developers. The structure will then no longer be fit for purpose.</p> <p>It is very frustrating to spend time apologising for delays due to numbers of applications and the limited number of staff, instead of getting on with the job.</p>	Staff	As stated above, it is considered that the structure proposed is appropriate, taking into account current workloads. However, there is also an acceptance that this will need to be reviewed in future should application numbers rise significantly.
G&D10	<p>There seems no reason to move the Planning Support Officers to the Admin/Business Support. Their main role is to support the Planning Officers and any structure should highlight this aspect. There are significant issues with the proposed pay scales/levels of responsibility, especially when compared with the previous JE submissions</p>	Staff	Whilst the Planning Support Officers are to be managed by the Business Support Lead their primary role will remain support to the Development Management Teams
G&D11	<p>Tourism should be a Council priority. Travel centre section of TIC is appreciated and profitable, and could be further improved by the centre adopting a high profile location. Increased profits in this area could then support other less profitable TIC services.</p>	Staff	The decision to seek general fund savings from Tourism Information is in line with priorities identified by the Executive (para 3.4). The review will consider options for increased income generation as one possible way of securing the necessary savings.

No	Comment	Source(s)	Response
G&D12	<p>Opportunity within Economic Development Section to focus one of the positions on cultural matters and events in order to exploit opportunities from events like the Tour of Britain or the 20/20 World Cup.</p>	Staff	<p>The more flexible nature of the new roles in Economic Development are designed to enable more project-based work in order to deliver the Council's Economic strategy. Whilst there will no longer be a single officer with a specific remit for culture, cultural development will continue to be delivered as part of the strategy.</p>
G&D13	<p>A reduction in £50,000 subsidy of the Tourist Information Service will effectively mean closure of the service. The TIC is one of the positive 'front windows' of the Council. Rather than total contraction, it would be good to become an official Welcome to Taunton Centre exploiting opportunities with partners such as SCC, Project Taunton, Taunton Cultural Partnership and the Town Centre Company.</p> <p>The review of the TIC rather than specifying an actual cost saving should instead allow for it to become even more commercially aware which, in turn, will achieve the goals of the CCR.</p>	Staff	<p>The review of the Tourist Information Service is looking at a range of options including focus on more profitable areas of business and potential relocation as ways of reducing its cost to the general fund (para 4.9.1). In line with the Executive's stated priorities, it is imperative that the cost of the service to the Council is reduced.</p>
G&D14	<p>The Arts Officer brings added value to cultural social and economic development in Taunton Deane. The internal and external demands on the post already outstrip capacity, and it is unrealistic to expect the same amount of work to be done on less than a full post.</p>	Staff	<p>Whilst there will no longer be a post with the title 'Arts Officer', cultural development will continue to be delivered in line with priorities set out in the Economic Strategy.</p> <p>In appointing the two Economic Development Project Lead roles, the Council will be looking for a range of skills to deliver various aspects of the Economic Strategy.</p>

No	Comment	Source(s)	Response
	<p>Examples of the officer's role include development of TDBC's cultural priorities statement, Public Art Policy, and Shop Art Showcase, as well as community development work. The current post holder creates additional leverage of resources into Taunton Deane as well as bringing strategic oversight, experience of project management and hands-on delivery.</p> <p>Loss of the arts service will lead to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reduction in external resources - loss of in-house expertise - loss of informed contribution to strategic context and partnerships - loss of revenue and support to deprived wards who have seen benefit of summer programme - loss of information, advice and communication <p>Current post holder has taken on work of two previous staff and it is recommended that two roles are recognised again, and remit and budget be transferred to Community Development.</p> <p>It is also recommended that one of the Economic Development Lead Officers should be a specialist in cultural development.</p>		<p>These will include those relating to cultural developments, as well as business support, skills development, marketing and tourism (para 4.8.1)</p> <p>It is considered entirely appropriate that cultural development should sit within the Growth and Development Theme, although there will inevitably need to be close links with Community Development, which will be achieved by adopting thematic ways of working proposed which is a key part of this review.</p>

No	Comment	Source(s)	Response
G&D15	<p>Planning enforcement function is not regulatory but discretionary. Planning enforcement is a distinct function integral to Development Management that needs to be carried out by officers with necessary skills and abilities.</p> <p>A better solution should be to set up an enforcement group to discuss common issues and have a mutual assistance working protocol.</p> <p>Planning enforcement must monitor its day-to-day link with Development Management as it is planners that have delegated powers to take enforcement action, or through the Planning Committee.</p> <p>Enforcement section is successful in resolving complaints and in the majority of cases through negotiation, which is very different from other regulatory services.</p>	Staff	Concerns in respect of locating Planning Enforcement in a different Theme from Development Management have been considered, and it is proposed to retain Planning Enforcement within Growth and Development (para 4.12.2). The idea of a cross-cutting enforcement group is a good one, and will be taken forward,

Theme 4 – Community Services

No	Comment	Source	Response
CS1	Unless it is intended to procure additional capacity from Southwest One (at the appropriate extra costs), UNISON have doubts whether clerical and administrative teams can operate in a vacuum from their respective professional services, whilst still delivering the required level of service	UNISON	There is no intention for clerical and administrative teams to operate in a vacuum. The proposal for a Business Support Team extends the principles already in place in parts of existing services within Community Services.

No	Comment	Source	Response
	<p>Clerical staff are currently the first point of contact for the public (e.g. when a telephone enquiry is made) and so need to be in close contact with professional staff: an understanding of the professional 'arm' of the service is needed.</p>		<p>The need for specific and specialised clerical support to be close both physically and operationally to the relevant technical function being supported by the clerical capacity is clearly recognised and will continue. However, what is also recognised is that certain other administrative tasks can be undertaken more generically, irrespective of what "technical" function this relates to.</p>
CS2	<p>Before contracting out and losing control of a service that is high-profile to many residents of Taunton Deane, UNISON proposes an in-depth review of the Dog Warden service to determine efficacy, and whether this should serve as a model for Pest Control externalisation.</p>	UNISON	<p>A review has been undertaken of the externalisation of the Dog Warden contract; additionally, recent benchmarking undertaken helps complete a picture of the arrangements. Contracting out the Dog Warden service was as a result of a Best Value review of the in-house service undertaken in 2001. At the time, the key drivers for this change were staffing problems with the in-house service and cost.</p> <p>Although savings were made, these were modest at the time. Although there are similarities between the Dog Warden service and Pest Control, there are distinct differences in this context, most notably that Pest Control provides the opportunity to charge for services, thereby increasing the commercial attractiveness as opposed to the Dog Warden service where this is not possible.</p>

No	Comment	Source	Response
			<p>A contract has continued with a single provider and, overall, is deemed to be a considerable success. We have an excellent relationship with the contractor who is flexible to our needs, offers increased service resilience from a wider specialist workforce operating in the region generally, and it continues to ensure that TDBC does not have to maintain the overheads and organisation of a very specialised service.</p> <p>The most recent financial benchmarking exercise for this service carried out by TDBC in 2007 evaluated data from 26 other local authorities. This study shows that the current service provided by TDBC is over £1 lower than the average cost for Dog Warden hours per 10,000 head of population. The contract continues to offer excellent value for TDBC taxpayers.</p>
CS3	A detailed report should be provided on how the provision of the pest control service by a new provider would impact on the community	Corporate Scrutiny Committee Staff	If agreement is reached on the proposal to progress the investigation of contracting out the Pest Control Service, a specific full and detailed report will be brought back to Members to assess the full impact of such a move, prior to any final decision being made.
CS4	A review of the Licensing Officers be carried out to ascertain how the reduction in staff would impact on the service	Corporate Scrutiny Committee Staff	Paragraphs 4.12.2 and 5.13.1 of this report identify the changes made to the proposal, including retaining Planning Enforcement in the Growth and Development Theme, and enhancements to the Licensing Service structure within Community Protection.

No	Comment	Source	Response
CS5	<p>Concern that the position of Environmental Health Support Assistants remains unresolved pending the outcome of the work on the Pest Control service, and there has been a very long period of uncertainty. Additionally, that if redundancies are proposed, this staff group will not get the same consultation/notice period as other staff now at risk of redundancy;</p> <p>Also, uncertainty about what work will and will not be expected to be undertaken by this staff grouping future.</p> <p>Question also raised of the need to retain the Environmental Health Support Team Leader post and a new Business Support Lead post.</p>	Staff	<p>The ongoing uncertainty regarding the Environmental Health Support Assistants' posts results from the fact that if the Pest Control service is externalised, a certain amount of clerical work will also no longer need to be undertaken by the Council to support this function, resulting in less capacity being required across these posts.</p> <p>However, prior to externalising a service, the Council will have to make a number of specific and important decisions about the service, and this, combined with the tendering process unfortunately will take some time. This is regrettable but, unfortunately, unavoidable.</p> <p>The Council will ensure that an appropriate period of consultation and notice of redundancy, if required, will be implemented at the appropriate time. The potential reduction in capacity in these posts will directly equate to a reduction in work demands arising from externalisation of the Pest Control service. The inclusion of both Business Support lead and Environmental Health Support Team Leader are felt appropriate for the effective working of the new structure.</p>

No	Comment	Source	Response
CS6	<p>Under item 3.2 'Patterns of Future Investment' officers have been guided to increase investment in climate change, tackling deprivation and community development, and affordable housing. There seems to be little capacity within the community development team in terms of resources to enable the delivery of this.</p> <p>In 5.11 it is recognised that this small team will be pivotal and yet there is a theme lead, 3 officers and 2 posts externally funded that are allocated to this. If our strategic aspirations, plans and duties manifest themselves as physical work and social improvements in the community through the work of this team, then this needs addressing.</p> <p>It cannot be responsible for attracting external funding and oversee – and be instrumental in – delivery of community projects (5.22.1.) through the auspices of a few willing individuals.</p> <p>Appendix A highlights community projects and Appendix B the need to engage better with residents and communities, giving them a greater say in local decision-making, priority-setting and resource allocation. These mechanisms are in place but we do not utilise the results. We are given presentations on the results, but we do not address issues eg: within the Place Survey. It is not that the work doesn't take place, it is that the follow-up work is not fully implemented</p>	Staff	<p>It is recognised and has already been highlighted to Members that the new Community Development Team only gives a new focus to this issue, and not any new capacity, and aspirations must be tempered accordingly. However, it is anticipated that flexible and thematic working will generate some additional capacity to be targeted at this issue.</p>

No	Comment	Source	Response
CS7	<p>It is proposed that the Council loses a Housing Options Officer post and a part time Housing Options Assistant position. Additionally, prior to April 2009 Housing Options had the support of a full time member of staff within the Housing Strategy team. This is a further reduction in capacity not recognised within the report.</p> <p>While I understand the need for efficiencies and savings to be made there are a number of reasons why I am concerned about the reduction in numbers, in particular the reduced number of Housing Options Officers.</p> <p>- The position of Housing Options Officer is an extremely busy one and I fear that a reduced number of officers will increase the stress and tension that can exist within a team that deal with a vulnerable and challenging client base. Some of the Housing Options Officers are already concerned about an unhealthy home/workplace balance.</p> <p>- There is a danger that having less time will result in poorer quality work. An example would be poorer quality homeless decisions that will be more easily challengeable and could result in households being placed in unsuitable temporary accommodation at a large additional cost to the Council. The savings being made by the Council through the review would then be nullified.</p>	Staff	<p>These concerns are recognised and, whilst where possible front line jobs have been protected, due to the scale of the savings required this has not been possible everywhere. It is also right that, where possible, vacant posts should be removed from the structure first in preference to making further redundancies. Whilst it is acknowledged that the team has a challenging and demanding role, there still remains significant capacity within the team structure as proposed to deliver the service (11FTE Housing Options Officers and Assistants plus 3 Management positions).</p> <p>It is anticipated that with effective management and ongoing prioritisation, the workload can continue to be addressed, although in some areas level of service may have to be reviewed. The ongoing costs of temporary accommodation and any changes to this will be closely monitored.</p>

No	Comment	Source	Response
	<p>- As mentioned above there is a distinct correlation between staffing numbers and the cost to the Council of placing households in temporary accommodation such as Bed and Breakfast.</p> <p>A reduced workforce may result in time not being spent on homelessness prevention and a knock on effect on performance, targets and budgets.</p> <p>- There has been a particular staffing problem within Housing Options throughout 2009. I am concerned that the CCR has been used as vehicle to resolve this issue at the expense of the original aims of the review.</p> <p>- While it is accepted that a closer working relationship with Sedgemoor District Council and /or the other four Somerset Authorities may resolve some of the issues identified above it is equally possible that these links will not be rolled out quickly or in the case of local service delivery, which is the service being cut may not be rolled out at all.</p> <p>- The Homeless Strategy is a statutory document produced in partnership with the other four Somerset Authorities. When produced and the action points identified Housing Options were going to have access to a FTE in the Housing Strategy team who was going to work on implementing the many action points.</p>		

No	Comment	Source	Response
	<p>Following the introduction of Theme 1 that resource was taken away from Housing Options as a result of reduced staffing levels within the newly formed strategic team. Consequently we have struggled to take forward the action plan in any meaningful way. A further reduction in operational staff will make the task of delivering the strategy impossible.</p> <p>- Finally, the reduction in staffing levels for Housing Options appears to be completely at odds with many of the stated aims and the strapline of the CCR. The home page of the CCR web page states that the vision is “to make life better for people and communities”. I am struggling to share this vision and am unable to see how a reduction in the number of people assisting homeless and roofless people is going help achieve this aim.</p> <p>The report states that officers have been guided to increase investment in tackling deprivation and where possible protect frontline services. Again, the proposals in reality appear to be at variance with some of the stated aims of the review</p> <p>Housing Options has had The Core Council review hanging over us for 2 years, when every time a member of staff has left, or reduced their working hours, we have had an uphill struggle to fill any posts.</p>		

No	Comment	Source	Response
	<p>We have often had to try and stretch existing resources, whilst still trying to provide a service, to what are often the most needy or deprived members of our community.</p> <p>I struggle to find a situation that can be more deprived than being street homeless, or being a young inadequate/ disadvantaged family, who have to go into bed and breakfast for a temporary period of time because we do not owe them a rehousing duty as they have been found to be intentionally homeless, and they face the prospect that if we do not re-house them, then social services will take their children into foster care to avoid them being on the streets with their parents.</p> <p>One of the priorities that I thought the Council had agreed to invest in were front line services that addressed deprivation, I am therefore perplexed, but not surprised, that the result of this long awaited review was that a front line service has had a cut in staff. I do not see how, after April 2010, that Housing Options will be able to provide all the services that both partner agencies, the public and managers at TDBC expect.</p> <p>The CCR has been used to resolve a staffing situation that was problematic to TDBC, it has had nothing to do with what that post was and how the work would be done if the post was removed.</p>		

No	Comment	Source	Response
CS8	<p>Comments relate only to the proposed changes to Environmental Health. I note that management capacity has been reduced considerably. Councillors and Senior Management should be aware of the likely negative impact on staff morale, and work output is likely to suffer if management are unable to dedicate sufficient time to ensuring the day-to-day work of the service is completed to a satisfactory standard, and is done within a reasonable timescale.</p> <p>There is external pressure for Environmental Health to increase their remit over the coming months and years, and it may not be possible to take on these challenges alongside the current or revised workload. I am confident that, if the work of the service can be reviewed and revised, and realistic targets set, the structure can be made to work – although there is the possibility that in some circumstances statutory targets may not be met.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I understand 35 people expressed an interest for voluntary redundancy. How many of these people have been given the opportunity to take this up and did it have any bearing on the decisions made regarding the new structure? ○ I am concerned that the full impacts of these proposals on our services and customers have not been accurately assessed, as stated in para 5.14.1 of the report. 	Staff	Generally a duplication of the issues addressed above.

No	Comment	Source	Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To what extent did feed back from coal face staff and managers on the needs and demands of their particular services influence the decision making process? Does Full Council fully appreciate how these proposals will affect the day to day running of the Council's services? And when are staffs going to be told what they can no longer deliver? ○ A significant number of staff have been put at Amber and been advised that although they are not at risk at this present time they may be subject to this at some point. This has caused concern for a number of staff as they were hoping to have some clarification on their posts but have been left no knowing. <p>Are there any further dates for staff who are at amber as to when they are likely to know how the new structure will affect their jobs?</p> ○ The structure charts are a little unclear. It would be useful if new posts could be clearly identified along with posts which have been slotted in and details of who may be ring fenced for other posts. 		

No	Comment	Source	Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="300 199 1041 416">○ Para 3.2 states that officers have been guided to increase investment in climate change. My concerns are that in increasing investment in such areas will mean that resources and time are pulled away from other Themes and that the impact of this not full appreciated. <li data-bbox="344 456 1041 673">The recent climate change workshops (which where compulsory for all staff) where informative although I question the impact it has had on staff in changing their behaviour, compared to the time and resources it took to arrange and deliver. <li data-bbox="300 713 1041 970">○ Para 5.12.3 and Section 11 mention partnership working as part of the Private Sector Housing Partnership and forming greater links through Pioneer Somerset. I am concerned that this may reduce accountability of these services, but yet the customer ultimately believes the Council is responsible. <li data-bbox="344 1010 1041 1150">An example of this would be the formation of the Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) and combining of the Counties waste responsibilities in 2007. 		

No	Comment	Source	Response
	<p>At this time all responsibilities for enforcement around waste under the Environmental Protection Act and the Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act transferred from the relative Environmental Health Teams and became the responsibility of the partnership. However it has recently been established that since the SWP was established they have failed to introduce an enforcement policy and don't take any enforcement action regarding removal of refuse from pavements, rubbish been put out at the wrong time or place etc. This causes frustration from customers as they don't understand why the Council are unable to deal with these problems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I am concerned about the proposed Business Support Teams and in particular the team based within the Community Services Theme as referred to in para 5.10.1 and para 5.10.2. ○ My concerns are around the team becoming isolated for their professional services and as a result not being able to keep up with current legislation or changes in guidance, topical issues, complaints or premise problems. 		

No	Comment	Source	Response
	<p>I believe this has shown to be evident within Environmental Health with the Admin Support Team feeling detached from the respective teams they use to be members of and struggling to keep abreast of the current, ever-changing issues.</p> <p>I would however agree that the team does provide support for its members at times of leave or sickness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Para 5.12.4 – 5.12.8 discusses the possibility of contacting out the Pest Control Service and makes comparisons to the existing contracted Dog Warden Service. I am concerned that the impact of contracting out this service is not fully appreciated and the effect it will have on the service delivered. <p>At present we have an extremely professional and knowledgeable pest control team with years of experience between them. This is reflected by the continued positive customer feedback we receive and the numerous domestic and commercial contracts we have had for a number of years.</p> <p>I appreciate that contacting out the service could provide savings but my fear would be that this is at the detriment of the service we provide.</p>		

No	Comment	Source	Response
	<p>We would lose the flexibility we presently have in the service to carry out further investigations and work with other officers and department to resolve ongoing pest control problems. This would ultimately put more strain on other areas of the council and possibly result in more enforcement action needing to be taken, where before we could resolve problems informally.</p> <p>The Pest Control service is essential to public health and often the most vulnerable people in society require these basic services. As such I believe it is key to assisting in tackling deprivation in our poorest areas and if we lose this service it would have a direct impact upon them.</p> <p>I would ask before the decision to contract out the Pest Control Service is made that a full review is carried out of the existing services and any savings identified.</p> <p>Also it should be noted that although the Dog Warden contract may provide a cost effective service it has significantly reduced since it was first signed. The service is no longer 1.4 Dog Wardens which allowed for out of hours working but has now reduced to 3 days a week and no additional works are undertaken such as promotional or educational activities.</p>		

No	Comment	Source	Response
	<p>In recent years we have also had problems with the contracted staff and who they are accountable to, for example poor attitudes when dealing with customers, shabby appearances, poor time keeping and falsifying of timesheets etc. But asides for those issues we find often they have an attitude of 'that's not in my contract' which restricts the flexibility we can provide to the customer and the quality of the service we provide. It does seem appropriate to bring Housing Standards into this section as the roles are linked to regulatory/enforcement work.</p> <p>Planning Enforcement. - I'm not a planner, but from my dealings with them it seems that one of the main roles of the current planning enforcement team is to follow up current developments to make sure that all the planning conditions have been met. It may be hard to separate this function from Development Management.</p> <p>The numbers of managers within existing "Environmental Health" part of Community Protection seems to be reducing from 4.5 (one vacant) to 2.</p> <p>At present the Principal Officers in EPT and Food/H&S deal with technical/work queries, complaints, queries from Councillor etc as well as staffing issues within the team.</p>		

No	Comment	Source	Response
	<p>If the two Principal Officers are reduced to one, this would mean that some of the day to day work that they do would have to be passed onto the rest of the officers in the team. Also, if the role of Operations Manager is removed this could place more strategic work on the Principal Officer post. This is at a time when resources are already stretched.</p> <p>The teams within Community Protection have a “Senior” Officer with the exception of Environmental Protection. The role of the senior officers is not made clear in the current document. It would be useful if EPT could have a Senior post where one of the team could oversee some of the day to day work and deal with queries from the team, public and councillors etc and to stand in for the Principal Officer on occasions.</p> <p>Without this position in EPT the role of managing workloads and dealing with queries etc will fall to the Principal Officer, who will already be stretched due to combining two posts. Line management of staff could remain with the Principal Officer to avoid adding another layer of management.</p>		

No	Comment	Source	Response
	<p data-bbox="297 228 555 266">Pest Control</p> <p data-bbox="297 323 1039 427">It is proposed to review the subsidies provided by The Council and to investigate the contracting out of the pest control service.</p> <p data-bbox="297 472 1032 759">If the subsidies are reduced and residents have to pay the full cost of any treatment for rats and mice this could result in some residents choosing not to use the service. They may try to treat themselves or not treat at all. This could result in an increase in the number of cases where The Council has to take enforcement action to require the owners/occupiers to carry out treatment.</p> <p data-bbox="297 804 992 979">The amount of officer time spent on enforcement action could outweigh any savings made through reducing subsidies, and there would also be a greater risk to public health through increased numbers of pests.</p> <p data-bbox="297 1024 1028 1200">If the Pest Control Service is contracted out there is likely to be a reduction in the level of service provided to the public. At present Pest Control Officers and admin staff give a lot of advice on pests and ways to take action to deter pests.</p>		

No	Comment	Source	Response
	<p>However, the main concern of contractors will be to carry out as many treatments as possible which could result in less advice being given. (and more rats means more treatments which means more work for contractors, so where is the incentive for them to give advice instead of treating?).</p> <p>Thematic Working</p> <p>The proposal to carry out more work across the theme is a good idea. There are a number of areas where work overlaps and it is important that different teams give the same advice or don't duplicate work. It would be good for staff to work across different sections, as long as it can be accepted that this could affect the performance of a team if resources are diverted into other areas.</p> <p>One thing that would help to improve links between different parts of the Council would be to get everyone into one building. Having worked in both Deane House and Flook House I can confirm that when in Deane House, you do get to know people in other teams, even if it is meeting them in the kitchen or corridor.</p> <p>Also, when you do want to speak to someone it is easy to go and see them rather than phone or email.</p>		

No	Comment	Source	Response
	<p>Having staff in different buildings (and even spread out in different parts of the same building) affects communication and cross theme working. I have attended a number of forums, corporate away days and was even on an Investors in People panel for a year before it fizzled out, and the issue of staff at locations other than Deane House feeling remote from “the council” was often raised, with staff at Kilkenny and the DLO feeling particularly cut off.</p> <p>I note that there is a proposal to carry out an accommodation review. This would be a good opportunity to address these issues.</p>		

4.11.09

Report	Objectives	Details Of Consultation	Officer	Decision To Be Made By	Date
Local Development Framework Core Strategy Consultation Document			Ralph Willoughby-Foster		30/11/2009
Gambling Act 2005 and re-adoption of Taunton Deane's Gambling Policy			Olivia Walton		02/12/2009
Built Facilities Sports Strategy			Ann Rhodes		02/12/2009
Green Spaces Strategy			Karen Hughes		02/12/2009
Playing Fields Strategy			Karen Hughes		02/12/2009
Quarterly Corporate Performance/finance Update (Quarter 2)			Dan Webb		02/12/2009
Fees and Charges 2010/2011			Emily Collacott		02/12/2009
Savings Delivery Plans 2010/2011			Emily Collacott		02/12/2009
Allotments Strategy			Karen Hughes		02/12/2009
Proposed Capital Spend on Play and Youth Facilities			Karen Hughes		02/12/2009
Treasury Management Update 2009/2010 and Minimum Revenue Provision for 2010/2011			Lizzie Watkin		02/12/2009
Carbon Reduction Plan			Kevin Toller		13/01/2010
Proposed extension of Wellington Cemetery			Paul Rayson		13/01/2010
Review of Essential Users and Car Allowances			Brendan Cleere		13/01/2010
Council Tax Base 2010/2011			Emily Collacott		13/01/2010
Locality Based Service Delivery			Richard Sealy		13/01/2010
Purchase of Capital Asset, Taunton			Joy Wishlade		13/01/2010
Pest Control Contracting			Martin Daly		13/01/2010
Somerset Tourism Partnership Business Plan			David McCubbin		03/02/2010
Corporate Strategy 2010 - 2013			Mark Leeman		03/02/2010
Corporate Equality Scheme and Action Plan 2010 - 2013			Lisa Redston		03/02/2010
General Fund Revenue Estimates 2010/2011			Emily Collacott		03/02/2010
Council Tax Setting 2010/2011			Emily Collacott		03/02/2010
Housing Revenue Account, Revenue Estimates and Rent Levels, Deane Helpline and Deane Building DLO Account for the 2010/2011 Financial Year			Emily Collacott		03/02/2010
Capital Programme 2010/2011			Emily Collacott		03/02/2010
Economic Development Strategy			Phil Sharratt		03/02/2010

Private Sector Housing Partnership			Martin Daly		03/02/2010
Tourist Information Centre Review			Tim Burton		03/02/2010
Somerset Waste Partnership Business Plan			Joy Wishlade		03/02/2010
Establishment of a Taunton Growth Board			Joy Wishlade		03/02/2010
Quarterly Corporate Performance/Finance Update			Dan Webb		03/03/2010
Asset Management Plan			Joy Wishlade		31/03/2010
Quarterly Corporate Performance/Finance Update (Outturn)			Dan Webb		16/06/2010

Executive – 11 November 2009

Present: Councillor Henley (Chairman)
Councillors Coles, R Lees, Paul, Prior-Sankey, Slattery, Mrs Smith,
A Wedderkopp and Mrs Wilson

Officers: Penny James (Chief Executive), Joy Wishlade (Strategic Director),
Brendan Cleere (Strategic Director), Tonya Meers (Legal and
Democratic Services Manager), James Barraah (Community Services
Manager), Tim Burton (Growth and Development Manager), Lesley
Webb (Housing Enabling Manager), Brian Yates (Building Control
Manager), Maggie Hammond (Strategic Finance Officer) and Richard
Bryant (Democratic Services Manager)

Also present: Councillors Bishop, Brooks, Cavill, Mrs Court-Stenning, Gaines,
Hayward, Horsley, House, Morrell, O'Brien, Stuart-Thorn and
Williams.
Phil Bissatt, UNISON Representative, Mark Green, Project Taunton
and Maurice Stanbury, Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm.)

90. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 14 October 2009, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and were signed.

91. Public Question Time

Councillor Morrell spoke in connection with the forthcoming further meeting of the Planning Committee to consider the application relating to the proposed residential development of land west of Bishops Hull Road.

He understood that arrangements had been made for the Planning Committee to hold its meeting in St. Andrews Church Hall in Taunton due to the numbers of local people who were likely to want to attend. However, in his view this was far from the ideal location.

He understood that some of the officers saw the merit of holding the meeting within the local community and therefore asked the Executive whether, at this relatively late stage, this could be considered.

In response, Councillor Henley promised to discuss this matter with both the Chairman of the Planning Committee and the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation (Councillor Coles).

92. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Henley, Paul and Prior-Sankey declared personal interests as Members of Somerset County Council. Councillor Prior-Sankey also declared

a personal interest as a Member of the Supporting People Commissioning Body. Councillor Coles declared a personal interest as a Director of Southwest One. Councillor Mrs Smith declared a personal interest as an employee of Somerset County Council. Councillor Slattery declared personal interests both as a Member of the Somerset Waste Board and as an employee of Sedgemoor District Council.

93. **Proposed Redevelopment of Parmin Close, Taunton to provide 'Extra Care' Affordable Housing in Perpetuity for the elderly and those in need of Extra Care Housing in Taunton Deane**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the opportunity of redeveloping a "land hungry", Council owned Sheltered Housing site at Parmin Close, Taunton to provide a state of the art Extra Care complex of 70 units of accommodation.

The proposal reflected the Core Council's Review, the Council's commitment to providing Affordable Housing and complimented Project Taunton.

Parmin Close was a sheltered housing scheme built in 1971, of traditional brick construction consisting of 30 elderly persons homes owned and managed by Taunton Deane Borough Council. The present complex comprised:-

- 1 x 3 bed house;
- 12 x 1 bed mini flats;
- 12 x 1 bed maxi flats;
- 6 x 1 bed bungalows;
- 1 x meeting room.

Plans to redevelop this site were not new. Details of proposals which had been designed five years ago were submitted. At the time, the Council made two bids for funding to the Department of Health, both of which were unsuccessful. The main reason for this lack of success was because the Council did not partner with a Registered Social Landlord.

Whilst Taunton Deane had 27 Sheltered Housing Schemes across the district, only two were Extra Care Housing Schemes. The fundamental difference between Sheltered and Extra Care was the partnership working provided in the past between the Council, Adult Social Care and the Care provider to ensure a continued 24/7 service, including sleep-in staff.

With the anticipated number of older people increasing over the forthcoming years, it was anticipated that the demand for such accommodation would increase and present a real alternative to going into residential care or a nursing home.

Reported that a number of meetings had been held with Sanctuary Housing Association who were renowned for their experience and expertise in providing Extra Care across the country.

An Architect had been instructed to carry out a feasibility study and to provide indicative drawings for an innovative scheme for this proposed scheme. This had shown that it would be possible to more than double the number of units on the site with 70 x 1 and 2 bed homes. The design and facilities of the scheme would ensure this development would become a 'Flag Ship' in Extra Care for Taunton Deane for local people.

It was anticipated that funding for the scheme would come from several sources including the Homes and Communities Agency, Sanctuary Housing Association (either reserves or market borrowing), the Department of Health (Bid money) and Supporting People.

The standard of bids to the Department of Health was extremely high. Therefore, in an attempt to ensure success, the following issues would need to be addressed:-

- Innovative design;
- Innovative service delivery;
- Community use of the building;
- Hairdressing, Restaurant/Café/Tea shop, Internet café;
- Local partnership agreement;
- Funding arrangements;
- Value for money; and
- Deliverability within agreed timescales.

The new complex would be constructed to a very high standard, at least Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4, providing very comfortable living for the tenants and low energy costs.

To achieve this, the Council would need to work in partnership with Sanctuary Housing Association. Due to the lack of financial resources available, the Council would be required to dispose of the land to Sanctuary for a nominal amount, as the Council's contribution towards the scheme.

In return, these Extra Care properties would be let through the Choice Based Lettings system ring fenced for residents in Taunton Deane in perpetuity.

It was recognised that to achieve success with a proposed scheme like this, the most careful consultation with the existing tenants had to be carried out.

Noted that the tenants would be entitled to the Statutory Home Loss payment, which was currently £4,700. There would also be an entitlement to compensation for displacement issues such as removals, curtains, carpets and reconnection fees.

Further reported on the initial consultations that had taken place on 15 September 2009 involving the 30 existing tenants (who were invited to bring a relative) and residents living nearby. Submitted for the information of Members, a list of comments made by the tenants of Parmin Close and residents from Parmin Way.

As a result of these initial discussions Sanctuary had agreed that all existing tenants of Parmin Close, whether they fitted the Extra Care criteria or not, would be offered a tenancy of one of the new properties. They would also be allowed to take their pets with them, although Sanctuary had a no pet policy.

Reported that it was fully understood that most of the current tenants did not want to move. Some had indicated that they would like to take the opportunity to move nearer family and friends. Some wished to move out of the area. Those tenants who did wish to move elsewhere would be given priority with a direct match through the Choice Based Lettings system to any vacant properties that become available in their area of choice.

The Chairman invited Messrs Halliwell and Aldridge who were residents of properties in Parmin Close to address the meeting. Both spoke against the proposed redevelopment and suggested that the Council should perhaps look at acquiring land on the former Thales site to build this Extra Care facility. Mr Stevens from the Taunton and Wellington Pensioners Forum also spoke. He requested the Executive to take into account the views of the residents.

The Executive recognised that this was a very difficult decision. However, the proposed facility would be invaluable both to the existing residents who opted to move into one of the new units and the generations of elderly residents who would follow. The general view was that, on balance, the scheme was a viable option.

Resolved that:-

- (1) The principle of progressing the redevelopment and regeneration of an Extra Care complex in Parmin Close, Taunton which would replace the current Sheltered Housing units be agreed;
- (2) The land concerned be transferred to an appropriate Registered Social Landlord (Housing Association) for a nominal amount as this Council's contribution towards the scheme;
- (3) On disposal of the land it be legally agreed with the Housing Association that the land could never be used for anything other than for the provision of affordable housing;
- (4) It be agreed with the Housing Association that the disposal of the land, must in return, give letting priority to Taunton Deane residents through the Homefinder Somerset scheme;
- (5) Where possible, the tenants' aspirations for relocation be met, including:-
 - (a) Present tenants to be offered a property in the new complex whether they currently met the Extra Care criteria or not; and
 - (b) Present tenants to be given the opportunity to take their pets to the new complex; and

- (6) The Council would work closely with all the tenants of Parmin Close and keep them informed as to progress with the proposed redevelopment.

94. **Reconsideration of decision following call-in – Proposed commissioning of a County-wide Home Improvement Agency**

Reference Minute No. 82/2009, reported that the Executive's decision concerning proposals to commission a County-wide Home Improvement Agency taken at the meeting held on 16 September 2009, had been called in by Councillors Mrs Court-Stenning and Hayward.

The call in had been considered by the Community Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 13 October 2009 where it had been decided to refer the decision back to the Executive for further consideration.

Since then, the Members of the Executive had reviewed its previously made decision taking into full account the views expressed by the Community Scrutiny Committee.

Although the Executive was minded to allow its previous decision to stand, it was committed to ensuring that the standard of the new service was at least as good as that currently provided. Accordingly, it was proposed that the new service would be reviewed after a year, with a report being brought back to the Community Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved that the decision made by the Executive on 16 September 2009 in connection with a County-wide Home Improvement Agency be confirmed.

95. **Revised Proposals for Financing the Purchase of the "Acolaid" Building Control Computer System**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the proposal to purchase the Idox Plantech 'Acolaid' Building Control and Land Charges modules.

The Building Control Service was divided into two areas – the statutory service and the commercially competitive fee-earning Building Regulations service.

The fee-earning service accounted for 80% of the work of the section. This was required to be provided on a self-financing basis and the Council annually approved a Scheme of Charges in respect of the service. The Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 1998, required that the service achieved a break-even position over any three year rolling accounting period.

Prior to the introduction of SAP the Council's computer system, Universe, encompassed a number of specialist applications, including Development Control, Building Control and Land Charges. Difficulties and shortcomings with this system led Development Control to purchase and install the Idox Plantech 'Acolaid' support system in 2007/2008.

To similarly update and improve computer support systems in Building Control and Land Charges, and provide the essential interfaces between these

services and Development Control, the decision was made in 2008 to purchase the appropriate Idox Plantech Acolaid Building Control and Land Charges modules.

Subsequently it became apparent that the Universe system would not be supported into the future, so the purchase of 'Acolaid' proved opportune.

Funding for the Building Control purchase was agreed at £21,000 from the Housing and Planning Development Grant and £30,000 from the Building Control Reserve Fund.

Unfortunately the current economic recession had led to a severe drop in income and meant that the balance in the reserve at 31 March 2009 was only £13,059. The following options were therefore considered to meet the funding shortfall:-

- Unspent Grants or Allocations – there were no unspent funds that could be utilised;
- Use of Council Reserves – to maintain reserves at the levels consistent with Council policy, it would be necessary to make a compensating contribution in 2010/2011. This would be difficult to achieve and would mean a cut in service provision;
- Capitalisation – it would be possible to capitalise the shortfall of £51,900, recovering the costs over the useful life of the 'Acolaid' system (15 years) through contributions from the Building Control Trading Account.

Having considered these options, it was proposed that the shortfall in funding should be met from prudential borrowing to be serviced by revenue contributions from the Building Control trading account over the life of the system. Assuming interest at 5% and the repayment of debt over 15 years would imply an annual contribution from the trading account of approximately £6,055.

A new structure for the combined Taunton Deane/Sedgemoor Building Control Service was planned from 1 April 2010 that would build on the shared Manager and shared Support Team Manager already in place. Submitted details of the anticipated savings that would result from this structure.

The share of these savings accruing immediately to the fee-earning service amounted to £7,748, which would be sufficient to meet the ongoing costs of servicing any borrowing to meet the funding shortfall.

Resolved that:-

- (1) the principal of meeting the shortfall in funding of £51,900 from prudential borrowing to be serviced by revenue contributions from the Building

Control Trading Account over the life of the 'Acolaid' system be endorsed;
and

(2) a commensurate increase in the 2009/2010 capital programme be agreed.

96. **The Taunton Protocol—Adoption and Application by Taunton Deane Borough Council**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the Taunton Protocol which had been developed in conjunction with leading national experts in the fields of carbon reduction, building design and valuation.

The Protocol set ambitious and auditable targets for sustainable development which were ahead of current national standards either in scope or timing, or both. If implemented these would produce significant reductions of Co2 and help meet the Government's challenging targets for reducing the impact of climate change.

The Protocol had been acknowledged as one of the most comprehensive and well developed documents of its kind produced to date and had won significant acclaim both locally and more widely.

The standards contained within the Protocol covered:-

- Low Environmental Impact Building Design;
- Climate Change Adaptation;
- Sustainable Lifestyles and Community Involvement;
- Materials;
- Construction Site Management; and
- Biodiversity and Ecology.

These standards could be applied either comprehensively or in part and were sufficiently flexible to ensure that their application would not jeopardise scheme viability and delivery.

The standards had been incorporated within the signed Development Agreement for the Firepool Site and had been embraced by St Modwen Developments Limited. They had also been supported by other major local businesses.

During the discussion of this item, the Chairman proposed changes to both recommendations (1) and (2) in an attempt to strengthen the wording to ensure as many large developments as possible in Taunton where built in accordance with the Protocol.

Resolved that:-

- (1) In principle, the standards contained within the Protocol be applied to all future development on land owned by Taunton Deane Borough Council subject to viability;
- (2) Taunton Deane Borough Council raises the application of the Protocol in all pre-application discussions with developers of other non-Council owned sites so that consideration is given to the application of some or all of the standards contained within the Protocol; and
- (3) The Protocol be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect emerging best practice and future changes to legislation.

97. Windfall Value Added Tax (VAT) Receipt

Considered report previously circulated, concerning a one off windfall VAT receipt of £649,119.

Some time ago, HM Revenue and Customs altered the regulations relating to claims for overpaid VAT but gave no lead period. Following a House of Lords judgement that this was unfair, a window was opened enabling claims to be made back as far as 1974 up to the date that the three year cap was brought in. The cut off for these claims was 31 March 2009

The Council had engaged Pricewaterhouse Coopers to conduct a review of VAT activity on a "no win no fee" basis, removing any risk of paying Pricewaterhouse Coopers unless benefits were identified.

The Council had now been able to reclaim overpaid VAT and associated interest in several areas including excess parking charges, cemetery supplies and leisure admissions amounting to £783,833.

The charge made by Pricewaterhouse Coopers for this work was £134,714 resulting in a net receipt of £649,119.

Resolved that the receipt be transferred to the General Fund Reserve to fund any redundancies from the next phases of the Core Council Review.

98. Core Council Review Proposals – Themes 2 and 4

Considered report previously considered, concerning the proposals for Themes 2 and 4 of the Core Council Review.

The new structure for the Core Council had been approved in February 2009 and was based on five themes:-

1. Strategy and Corporate;

2. Growth and Development;
3. Business (DLO);
4. Operations and Regulation; and
5. Chief Executive, Strategic Directors and support staff.

Phase 1 had been operational from 1 April 2009 and Theme 3 of the Core Council Review was subject to an independent study by consultants.

The Core Council Review had identified the following three critical areas which had to underpin the whole organisation, its future direction and development:-

- Understanding of the drivers for change in the organisation;
- A clear overall vision for the authority; and
- New ways of working.

The Executive had given officers informal direction on the review in terms of areas for investment and areas to explore reducing investment. Key projects included climate change, tackling deprivation and community development and affordable housing. Officers had also been asked to address economic development priorities by focussing resources on the delivery of the economic vision and decreasing investment in economic development.

Decreased investment would be sought in management, administration and support, tourism and the tourist information service, Heritage and Landscape and the natural environment, waterways, private sector housing (including grants) and Environmental Health.

Theme 2 - The Growth and Development Theme comprised the Council's Development Management function, Planning Enforcement, Landscape and Heritage services, Housing Enabling, Building Control and Economic Development (including Tourist Information). Existing structure charts were submitted for the information of the Executive.

The proposal had been developed following discussions with managers, elected Members and the Change Programme Member Steering Group. The proposed structure sought to maximise the available resource in areas that would deliver the future growth agenda and to facilitate more project related working across themes.

The theme would be led by a single Theme Manager who would have direct line management responsibilities for seven lead officers, covering Landscape, Heritage, Development Management, Housing Enabling and Economic Development (2 posts). The seventh lead was a Business Support role. The detailed proposals for Theme 2 were outlined.

Reported that the formal consultation process generated comments from the Corporate Scrutiny Committee, staff and UNISON. As a result, the following changes to Theme 2 proposals had been made:-

- Planning Enforcement was to be incorporated in the Growth and Development structure. The two Planning Enforcement Officers would report to the Development Management Lead, whilst the Enforcement Support Officer would be part of the Business Support Team.
- Building Control would be managed as part of the Growth and Development Theme. However, in the light of the shared management arrangements, opportunities for thematic working were limited and Building Control would retain its separate administrative support.
- The original proposal showed the Planning Officer resource reduced from 4.5 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) to 3 FTE. In response to concerns in respect of the implications of an upturn in workloads as a result of economic recovery and, in order to assist Legal and Democratic Services with negotiations relating to footpath diversions, this was now proposed to be increased back to 3.5 FTE.

The overall reduction in planning staff would still result in a reduced ability to respond effectively should workloads return to previous peak levels. This area, therefore, would need to be kept under review.

Overall, the proposals for Theme 2 were likely to deliver annual savings of approximately £250,000 and the detailed proposed structure was reported. This would result in a reduction in the levels of service the Council was able to provide in terms of landscape and rights of way, although statutory requirements would still be able to be met.

The overall number of Planning Officers was to be reduced, but a good level of service should be able to be maintained in light of the recent reduction in application numbers. However, there would be an adverse impact if workloads increased to their previous levels.

The review of Tourist Information would need to balance service delivery with cost, whilst the new Housing Enabling post would significantly enhance frontline delivery. The reduction in Economic Development posts should be outweighed not only by having a dedicated senior role, but also more flexible roles at appropriate levels.

Theme 4 – The Community Services (formerly Operations and Regulation) Theme encompassed the current services of Cemeteries and Crematorium, Building Control, Environmental Health, Housing Operations and Car Parking and Civil Contingencies. The proposal also included the addition of Community Safety and Leisure Development. Existing structure charts were submitted for the information of Members.

The proposal sought to maximise the effectiveness of the available resources and to facilitate more project related working across themes. The work had been guided by the following principles:-

- A recognition that many of the services within the theme were working well and many were already organised in an effective way;
- Recognising the priorities set by Members;
- Where possible, protecting front line service delivery and staff;
- Being mindful of business continuity of front line services, in particular in relation to staff put “at risk”;
- The Housing Revenue Account ring fence that prohibited many housing related teams from being able to contribute to General Fund savings; and
- To make substantial savings where possible.

The diverse nature of the services in the theme meant that a range of external pressures and issues had to be taken into account.

The Community Services theme would be led by a single Theme Manager who would have direct line management responsibilities for four new lead officers for Housing Services, Community Development, Community Protection and Business Support. Detailed proposals for Theme 4 were submitted.

Reported that the formal consultation process generated comments from the Corporate Scrutiny Committee, staff and UNISON. As a result, the following changes to Theme 4 proposals had been made:-

- Building Control had been moved to the Growth and Development Theme.
- Planning Enforcement had also been moved to the Growth and Development Theme.

This, however, had created a position of increased isolation for the remaining small Licensing service in the Community Protection part of the structure. Additionally concern had been expressed by Members in relation to the decline in resources in the Licensing service.

Consequently a new structure for the Licensing Service was proposed that included a new post of Licensing Manager and re-shaping the rest of the team to make three Licensing officers. This was considered to be a more viable team and service for the future. Capacity in this team would be increased from 3 FTE in the original proposal to 4, including the addition of a dedicated manager for this busy and high profile

service. The additional cost involved in this change had mainly been met by the removal of a further part time (0.6 FTE) Senior Environmental Health Officer from the Food and Health and Safety Team following a recent staff resignation.

- Tenant Empowerment. Additional posts had been added into the Housing Services Structure, funded by the Housing Revenue Account.
- Community Development – an additional Community Development Officer post had been added to this team.

The projected annual savings for Theme 4 were approximately £200,000.

Reported that at this stage it was very difficult to accurately assess the full impact on services and customers from these proposals. Attempts had been made to follow the informal direction provided by the Executive, focussing on new ways of working and Council priorities, keeping day to day services running effectively and ensuring the Council's statutory and other duties could continue to be fulfilled.

However, the proposals did include a significant reduction in management capacity and some reduction in front line resource that would have a clear impact that would have to be effectively managed into the future.

Most notably there had been reductions in capacity in the existing Environmental Health and Housing Options Teams, which would result in increased tensions in these services with potential failure to meet inspection programmes or to provide the same level of service as was currently provided.

Generally with the Thematic Working approach, it was proposed to make a small addition to job descriptions of posts in the new structure to reflect the aims and objectives of the review. The addition did not constitute a material or significant enough change to warrant a re-evaluation of these posts.

Significant consultation had taken place with the UNISON Change Forum and a Staff Care and Support Plan had been developed.

Staff affected by the proposals had been notified as being at risk of redundancy and details of these posts were submitted together with the 'ring fencing' arrangements that would apply.

Recruitment to all new posts in Themes 2 and 4 would be completed where possible by the end of March 2010. A review of accommodation would be commissioned if the proposals were approved by Full Council.

The ongoing General Fund (GF) savings by the proposals for Themes 2 and 4 would be approximately £450,000 per annum. This entire sum would be contributed towards the Council's budget gap position for 2010/2011 onwards.

The net revenue cost to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was £130,000, but managers were working on savings plans to offset this cost.

The one-off costs to the GF associated with Theme 2 and 4 proposals would not be known with certainty until the recruitment process was completed. Analysis of potential outcomes had been undertaken, indicating that the one-off costs to the GF Reserves would, depending on the recruitment outcomes, be in the range of £134,000 (best case) to £592,000 (worst case). The more likely outcome was somewhere in the middle.

It was vital that the Council's GF Reserves were in a sufficiently healthy position to support this review. Noted that the windfall VAT receipt of £649,119 (Minute No 97 refers) would be transferred into the GF Reserve. It was recommended that a sum of £592,000 be ring-fenced to fund the one-off costs of this proposal. Any surplus would be automatically returned to GF Reserves in late March 2010.

Similarly, the one-off costs of these proposals on the HRA Reserves would not be known with certainty until recruitment had been completed. Financial modelling indicated the one off costs to the HRA being in the range £0 - £127,000. It was recommended that a sum of £127,000 be ring-fenced from the HRA Reserves to fund the one-off costs of this proposal again with any surplus being automatically returned to HRA Reserves.

The proposals preceded the longer term proposals coming out of the Pioneer Somerset Programme and the Core Council would work in a way to shape the further development of Pioneer Somerset proposals and respond to these as they emerged.

Further reported that the formal consultation period on the first phase of this proposal had run from 24 September until 24 October 2009. Points made during the consultation process, and the response to these, were submitted. The process of developing the Theme 2 and 4 proposals also involved informal consultation and dialogue with staff and Members over a considerable period of time.

The UNISON representative, Phillip Bisatt, circulated a representation on behalf of the union. He added that UNISON, whilst recognising the difficult financial position the Council faced, was pleased that many of the points made at scrutiny had been taken into account.

Noted that Full Council had previously requested a review of political management arrangements alongside the Core Council Review. It was likely proposals would come before Members after Christmas with the aim of achieving implementation in the next Municipal Year.

Resolved that:-

- (1) The comments of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee and those received from staff and UNISON during the formal consultation

process, as detailed in the report, be noted; and

- (2) Full Council be recommended to approve:-
- (a) The detailed proposals for Themes 2 and 4 of the Core Council Review, as described in the report.
 - (b) That a sum of £592,000 is ring-fenced from the General Fund (GF) Reserves to fund the one off costs of Theme 2 and 4 proposals. Any earmarked fund remaining at the end of this phase to be returned to the GF Reserve at the end of March 2010.
 - (c) That a sum of £127,000 is ring-fenced from Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Reserves to fund the one off costs of Theme 2 and 4 proposals. Any earmarked fund remaining at the end of this phase to be returned to the HRA Reserve at the end of March 2010.
 - (d) That political management arrangements be reviewed separately with Members with the aim of achieving implementation in the new Municipal Year (2010).
 - (e) The phasing arrangements for the remaining Themes of the Core Council Review, as set out in the report.

99. **Executive Forward Plan**

Submitted for information the Forward Plan of the Executive over the next few months.

Resolved that the Forward Plan be noted.

(The meeting ended at 8.23 p.m.)