

You are requested to attend a meeting of the Council to be held in The John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton on 10 April 2012 at 18:30.

Agenda

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

- 1 To receive the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 9 February 2012 (attached).
- 2 To report any apologies for absence.
- 3 To receive any communications.
- 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 Full Council are set out in the attachment.
- 5 To receive questions from Taunton Deane Electors under Standing Order 15.
- 6 To receive any petitions or deputations from Taunton Deane Electors under Standing Orders 16 and 17.
- 7 Proposed Tone Leisure Loan for a High Ropes Project in Vivary Park, Taunton. Report of the Strategic Director (Shirlene Adam) (attached).
- 8 Part I - To deal with written questions to the Executive.
- 9 Part II - To receive reports from the following Members of the Executive:-
 - (a) Councillor John Williams - Leader of the Council;
 - (b) Councillor Jean Adkins - Housing Services;
 - (c) Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams - Corporate Resources;
 - (d) Councillor Mark Edwards - Planning, Transportation and Communications;
 - (e) Councillor Jane Warmington - Community Development;
 - (f) Councillor Norman Cavill - Economic Development, Asset Management, Arts and Tourism;
 - (g) Councillor Ken Hayward - Environmental Services and Climate Change;
 - (h) Councillor Catherine Herbert - Sport, Parks and Leisure.

Tonya Meers
Legal and Democratic Services Manager

10 September 2012

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 the Corporate Support Unit on 01823 356414 or email r.bryant@tauntondeane.gov.uk

Council Members:-

Councillor S Brooks (Chairman)
Councillor J Adkins
Councillor J Allgrove
Councillor J Baker
Councillor A Beaven
Councillor C Bishop
Councillor R Bowrah, BEM
Councillor N Cavill
Councillor S Coles
Councillor B Denington
Councillor D Durdan
Councillor K Durdan
Councillor M Edwards
Councillor H Farbahi
Councillor M Floyd
Councillor E Gaines
Councillor A Govier
Councillor J Govier
Councillor T Hall
Councillor K Hayward
Councillor R Henley
Councillor C Herbert
Councillor C Hill
Councillor M Hill
Councillor J Horsley
Councillor J Hunt
Councillor L James
Councillor R Lees
Councillor S Lees
Councillor L Lisgo, MBE
Councillor J Meikle, MBE
Councillor N Messenger
Councillor I Morrell
Councillor M Mullins
Councillor B Nottrodt
Councillor U Palmer
Councillor H Prior-Sankey
Councillor D Reed
Councillor J Reed
Councillor S Ross
Councillor T Slattery
Councillor G Slattery
Councillor F Smith
Councillor P Smith
Councillor V Stock-Williams
Councillor P Stone
Councillor B Swaine
Councillor P Tooze
Councillor J Warmington

Councillor P Watson
Councillor E Waymouth
Councillor D Webber
Councillor A Wedderkopp
Councillor D Wedderkopp
Councillor J Williams - Leader of the Council
Councillor G Wren

Taunton Deane Borough Council

At a meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council held in the John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton on 21 February 2012 at 6.30 pm.

Present The Mayor (Councillor Brooks)
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Hall)
Councillors Mrs Adkins, Mrs Allgrove, Mrs Baker, Beaven, Bishop, Bowrah, Cavill, Coles, Denington, D Durdan, Ms Durdan, Edwards, Farbahi, Mrs Floyd, Gaines, A Govier, Mrs Govier, Hayward, Henley, Mrs Herbert, C Hill, Mrs Hill, Horsley, Hunt, Miss James, R Lees, Mrs Lees, Ms Lisgo, Meikle, Mrs Messenger, Morrell, Mullins, Nottrodt, Ms Palmer, Prior-Sankey, D Reed, Mrs Reed, Ross, Mrs Smith, P Smith, Mrs Stock-Williams, Swaine, Tooze, Mrs Warmington, Watson, Mrs Waymouth, Ms Webber, A Wedderkopp, D Wedderkopp, Williams and Wren

Also present : Mrs Anne Elder, Chairman of the Standards Committee.

The meeting was preceded by a prayer offered by the Mayor's Chaplain, The Reverend David Fayle.

1. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council held on 13 December 2011, copies having been sent to each Member, were signed by the Mayor.

2. **Apologies**

Councillors Gill Slattery, T Slattery and Stone.

3. **Communications**

The Democratic Services Manager reported on two matters.

Firstly, that the Boundary Commission had issued its Draft Recommendations for Somerset Council. The relevant extract concerning Taunton Deane had been photocopied and circulated to each Member of the Council,

Secondly, that two communications from Ms Jan Cave, a former Taunton Deane Elector, had been received asking a number of questions in relation to a housing issue and the practice of a prayer being said at the beginning of Full Council meetings. Responses to these questions would be sought and these would be sent to Ms Cave.

4. **Declaration of Interests**

Councillors Brooks and D Wedderkopp declared personal interests as Members of Somerset County Council. Councillor A Govier declared personal interests both as a Member of the Somerset County Council and a NHS

Somerset Board Member. Councillor Henley declared personal interests both as a Member of the Somerset County Council and as an employee of Job Centre Plus. Councillor Prior-Sankey declared personal interests both as a Member of the Somerset County Council and as a tenant of a Council-owned garage. Councillors Mrs Hill, Mrs Smith and Stone declared personal interests as employees of Somerset County Council. Councillor Mrs Hill also declared a personal interest as a Council Tenant. Councillor Miss James declared a personal interest as an employee of Viridor. Councillor Wren declared personal interests as an employee of Natural England and as Clerk to Milverton Parish Council. Councillors Hayward and Ross declared personal interests as the Council's representatives on the Somerset Waste Board. Councillor Ross also declared a personal interest as the alternate Director of Southwest One. Councillor Nottrodt declared a personal interest as a Director of Southwest One. Councillors D Durdan declared a personal interest as a Tone Leisure Board representative. Councillor Tooze declared a personal interest as an employee of the UK Hydrographic Office. Councillor Swaine, as a part-time swimming instructor at St James Street Pool, declared a personal interest. Councillor Mullins declared a personal interest as EDF Energy at Hinkley Point was his employer. Councillor Ms Lisgo declared a personal interest as Chief Executive of Age UK Somerset Limited. Councillors Mrs Allgrove, Coles, R Lees and Mrs Lees declared prejudicial interests as "Blue Badge" holders. They all stated that they would leave the meeting if any discussion was likely to take place in connection with the proposals to introduce parking charges for drivers who were disabled.

5. Public Question Time

(1) Susan Comer-Jones of Take Art stated that in 2011/2012 the Council cut the small arts grants fund from £35,000 to £20,000. The proposed further cut for 2012/2013 would reduce this fund by a further £8,000. Over two years this represented a cut of 66%.

It was accepted that these were difficult times. However, the proposed cut for the next financial year felt like the arts were suffering disproportionately in relation to cuts across Taunton Deane as a whole despite the Secretary of State saying that the voluntary sector should not suffer in this way.

Ms Comer- Jones informed Councillors of the work across the district Take Art would be undertaking over the forthcoming months including working with the Hollies and Acorns Children's Centres in areas of deprivation in Taunton.

Take Art had had reorganised themselves in the face of the County Council cuts last year and would prioritise work in the districts that continued to provide funding at a level requisite to their historic funding patterns.

Cutting the arts budget further next year would be shortsighted and would further de-stabilise Take Art and other arts organisations in the area.

As such she asked Councillors to vote for the alternative budget which supported a reinstatement of the arts budget next year.

(2) Mr Philip Shepherd, representing Somerset Film, endorsed the points made by Ms Comer-Jones. He felt that the arts were fundamental to life – they created aspirations and taught people how to be tolerant.

He felt that although the sum of money the subject of the cuts was small, the ability to lever in further arts funding from other sources would be significantly affected. As such, he too supported the alternative budget which sought to retain the current level of funding for the arts.

In response to both these questions, Councillor Cavill confirmed that Taunton Deane did view cultural activities very highly and that communities needed a strong cultural background. Nevertheless, the Council was under severe financial pressure and reductions in spending had to be made. He promised though that he would look at ways of maximising contributions towards the arts from all possible sources.

(3) Mrs Dorothea Bradley asked the following questions:-

- (i) What were the reasons for selecting Monkton Heathfield with its Grade 1 land over Comeytrowe for an urban extension? How did this relate to Taunton's Transition Town Status?
- (ii) Why is the Council not considering identifying a site for a totally new settlement given:-
 - The new Localism Bill;
 - The evolving nature of the Core Strategy;
 - The Council's responsibility for the overall economic, social and environmental well being of Taunton Deane;
 - The Core Strategy Objectives of Inclusive Communities and Accessibility;
 - The problems of anonymity, identity and social interaction in large housing estates such we have created elsewhere; and
 - The success of Cotford St Luke in developing itself as a new community?
- (iii) Since 1997/1998 how many collective brain storming sessions, in particular on the Core Strategy and the future of Taunton Deane have been held with Councillors?
- (iv) What training were Councillors being given in promoting the Council and its policies given that the Councillors are the public face of Taunton Deane?
- (v) Over the last 10 years how many Councillors have attended the Planning Summer School run each year by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)?

Councillor Edwards responded as follows:-

- (i) The Urban Extension Study (Terence O'Rourke, 2004) undertook an initial strategic seiving exercise of the surrounding Taunton urban area and identified two potential areas to deliver the scale of housing needed to support the development of Taunton as a Principal Urban Area, as designated in Regional Planning Guidance (2001). These sites were Comeytrowe and Monkton Heathfield.

These two sites were assessed against a number of factors. Whilst Comeytrowe covered land of lower agricultural quality, Monkton Heathfield scored much better in terms of accessibility to employment and services, promotion of non-car modes of transport, attracting new employment and making the most effective use of land by comprehensively planning for infrastructure provision alongside the existing housing commitments.

The Taunton Sub Area Study (Baker Associates 2005) further refined the development of potential options for the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and the area around Monkton Heathfield identified in the published RSS.

As part of the Core Strategy, the Council had further incorporated and developed these options within its own Sustainability Appraisal.

All documents had undergone extensive stakeholder and public consultation.

- (ii) "New settlements" such as Cotford St Luke were no longer regarded as 'sustainable' as urban extensions. They would generally have a greater visual impact on the countryside compared with extending the urban area, would not provide a form of development that would reduce the need for private car use (they would still primarily look to Taunton for jobs, shops and leisure - as Cotford St Luke currently did) and they would not benefit from existing infrastructure - public transport, sewage infrastructure, schools, jobs and local services - all of which having cost and thus viability implications on a totally new settlement.
- (iii) I have no record of how many 'brainstorming' sessions there have been with Councillors on the Core Strategy. However, the process has been entirely iterative, be it through discussions with various Portfolio-holders, the Local Development Framework Steering Group and workshops to develop themes. Ultimately, the Core Strategy has, at certain milestones such as publication, passed through the Executive and Full Council.
- (iv) Councillors have the opportunity to attend a variety of training courses, events and briefings on a regular basis all aimed at increasing their depth of knowledge as to the work and policies of the Council.
- (v) In recent years neither Councillors nor officers have attended the RTPi Summer School.

- (4) Mr Richard Froggatt referred to the recent decision of the Executive to withdraw its support for Into Somerset. As a Board Member he felt that Into Somerset had exceeded expectations as to what it had delivered. What sort of message was being given to potential investors in the County by Taunton Deane's recent actions? He added that Into Somerset deserved support, not undermined.
- (5) Mr Gavin Eddy felt that Into Somerset was a good example of a public and private sector partnership. The lack of unity between all six Councils would, in his view, be divisive. He also felt that it was unfair for the Council to withdraw its funding particularly as Taunton, as the County Town, would continue to be promoted. He asked the Councillors to reconsider the position.

Councillor Cavill responded that Taunton Deane had supported Into Somerset financially since its inception. However, this investment had seen a poor return and the decision had therefore been taken to pull out of Into Somerset and invest in Taunton Deane ourselves. Discussions with Somerset County Council about parallel projects, such as marketing, had been held and these projects were likely to be continued with.

- (6) Brenda Weston asked about the Council's Leaders' latest proposal regarding this year's Council Tax.

She had understood that Councillor Williams' original announcement was not the result of a rebellious outburst, but was the outcome of careful deliberation, based on the advice of officers and compelling evidence that this would be in the wider and longer-term interests of our community.

- I would like to know whether I was mistaken in this assumption?
- I would also like to know, had the advice from officers changed?
- What new evidence had emerged in such a short space of time that was more compelling than that on which the original decision was made, and on what basis had this invalidated the Council Leader's previous deliberations and conclusions?
- Am I right in believing that freezing the Council Tax this year would result in greater financial pressures in future years – larger Council Tax increases and/or more severe service cuts?

In response, Councillor Williams stated that he had a double apology to make - to those that supported an increase and to those that did not support any increase.

He assured Ms Weston that neither decision was an easy one to make, but he had tried to take the most pragmatic route that would do least harm for the community and for the Council's future budget setting.

In answer to your specific points:-

- My original decision was taken based on clear advice from the officers that to accept the grant would be detrimental to our finances in future years.
- Officers offered this view but also advised that if we decided to accept the Government's Tax Freeze funding this ought to be used for one-off funding, not added to our base budget. This advice had not changed.
- It became apparent from the reaction of quite a number of Councillors across the Council that declining to take the funding being offered was not an agreeable way forward. Therefore before the decision was made at Executive, I accepted the need to reconsider.
- Yes, it is correct to say that freezing Council Tax increases financial pressures in future years but we have time to consider how we deal with it and, in the intervening period, we must all work together to ensure that impact is minimised. We have already experienced (with more to come) major changes and reductions in our central Government grant funding. In four years we are likely to lose 40% of our traditional grant funding streams so we have to seek alternative opportunities for funding sources.

This is mentioned because this year, we set out to achieve a balanced budget without major cuts to front line services, despite a budget gap rising to £2,100,000. I believe we have successfully achieved this and also planned forward for investment in our assets for the future. I assure you we will approach next year's budget setting with the same objectives in mind, to ensure efficient operation of the Council whilst delivering the front line services that were a statutory duty and those that were affordable that the community desired.

- (7) Mr Martin Aldred, the Chairman of the Halcon North Tenants and Residents' Association, referred to how the recent Council Tax increase was announced on the local TV news on one day and removed the following day! Why therefore can't Option 1 of the proposed regeneration of Halcon North be removed as over 70% of the people in the area have signed a petition and said "no" to this option?

The tenants were looking for a rolling regeneration scheme that improved the area but did not remove them from their homes, their extended families and their community. After living in limbo for nearly two years now, did the Council have any idea what it felt like to have your present and future taken away?

It was clear that this flawed regeneration option was causing stress and anxiety to many people in the community, including himself.

Many had put off jobs in our homes that needed to be done - what was the point if your home was going to be knocked down?

The Residents' Association was more than willing to work with the Council on a regeneration scheme that benefitted the community of Halcon North.

In Mr Aldred's opinion, a single Council employee had managed to mislead not only tenants, but Councillors too, by suggesting that the majority of tenants were happy to move out of their houses. This was despite the local Housing Officers being fully aware that the majority of the tenants were not happy with Option 1.

He asked again, on behalf of the tenants and residents of Halcon North, for the Council to remove Option 1 tonight, and give us back our lives our present and our future!

In reply, Councillor Mrs Adkins stated that she was not aware of a petition yet being submitted. She added that the Halcon Project had been conceived several years ago but such a large scheme was always going to take a long time to bring firm proposals forward.

Currently, the Council was considering ways of engaging with the local residents with a view to making the scheme more palatable. She warned however, that funding for anything other than Option1 was not available.

Councillor Mrs Adkins also denied that any officer had misled tenants and Councillors.

6. Motion – Proposed further funding for the Small Grants Fund

Moved by Councillor A Govier, seconded by Councillor Mrs Govier.

“This Council believes it is crucial, especially in these difficult economic times, to support and invest in the excellent work being done across Taunton Deane by voluntary and community sector organisations and to this end agrees to commit an additional sum of £10,300 to the Small Grants Fund which represents the salary savings accrued to the general fund as a result of the National day of Action held on 30 November 2011.”

The motion was put and was carried.

7. Written Questions to Members of the Executive

(i) From Councillor Horsley to Councillor Williams - Economic Matters and Project Taunton

Could the Leader of the Council explain why there was so little reference to either Project Taunton or Into Somerset in either his report or that of the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development? Whilst there were a few mentions of some of the delivery work that had been achieved over the past months – which was acknowledged and we were grateful for – why was there

so little about the future and how Taunton Deane was intending to promote and market itself in the future?

Would he agree with me that now we had withdrawn from Into Somerset we should have a real hard think how we promoted this district to attain the economic goals that had so far eluded us? Firepool was a non starter, we did not even have a five year supply of land to meet the National Planning Policy Guidelines and we were in danger of being at the beck and call of the National Housebuilders Federation in pre-empting our Core Strategy. There was no sign that we had begun to handle the chronic skill shortages that affected the district by attaining Skills Academies here and developing such creative centres as the Genesis one at Somerset College.

Finally, why had he failed to inform the Council of the moves afoot to lay down the Project Taunton administrative structures and replace it with a form that would widen the democratic deficit when there was more than ever a crying need to work co-operatively and consensually in achieving what we aspired to – namely a return to prosperity and increased employment for the people of Taunton Deane?

Where was the inspiration and the vision going to come from now we were moving to Phase 2 of the regeneration of Taunton Deane?

Reply - In respect of the Project Taunton regeneration works, the Delivery Team Report had only recently been circulated which covered all of the different aspects of the Project Taunton regeneration works and this could be circulated to the wider membership if so wished. As this was a comprehensive update in respect of the Project Taunton Team's work, I did not consider it necessary to include details within my report as well.

Although as a Council we agreed to withdraw from Into Somerset, we were presently working with the Somerset County Council as to how we could best go forward and ensure Taunton Deane was fully promoted. Initiatives were also in hand to ensure we worked with Project Taunton and our partners across the district to fully promote Taunton Deane as a welcoming place for investment.

I am unable to agree that Firepool was a non-starter. There was serious interest but we needed to ensure that the Inner Distributor Road was constructed at the earliest possible time. This will ensure the site was fully accessible and its benefits as a strategic employment site would become evident.

In respect of the requirement for a five year supply of land for housing building, I am unable to agree that we did not have sufficient. We did suffer a small shortfall but only recently we had taken forward an Interim Sites Policy which provided us with the required five year supply of land.

I must refute that we had failed to inform Council of the moves to change the Project Taunton administrative structures. Changes were necessitated by the need to make extensive budget savings and all this formed part of the Core

Council Review which had been clearly set out and agreed through the democratic process. It was fully consulted on with Elected Members and the Private Sector and its organisation retained the ability to move quickly to meet the demands of the Private Sector but with a reporting chain back through the democratic structure by way of the Project Taunton Steering Group.

(ii) From Councillor Farbahi to Councillor Williams - Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group

Could the Leader of the Council explain exactly what he was asking the Council to do in respect of the item in his report to Full Council concerning the Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group?

It was unclear where the “excitement” and the “challenges” were going to come from. Was he trying to ride on the back of some other institution’s idea and claim credit for it or was he genuinely going to devote this Council’s resources and capacity to addressing the question of areas of deprivation and poor housing? At the moment it read little more than “padding” for a rather thin report. Why did he not start by giving greater support to the Halcon Link Centre and the Priorswood Resources one if he wished to make a real impact on the local communities?

Reply - Far from riding on the back of some other institution’s idea and attempting to claim credit for it, the Council was attempting to work with an important new organisation, the Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group, to ensure we gained maximum benefit for our community in Taunton Deane.

The Chief Executive and I attended this preliminary meeting to better understand what it meant for our community and for us as a Council and I can only reiterate what I said in my report, we have “a long way to go to get this up and running but the prospects of all working together for the common good are both exciting and challenging”. I can only reiterate I believe it was very important we worked with this group to gain maximum benefit in the future.

In respect of the Halcon Link and Priorswood Resource Centres, it was felt we were making a real impact on the local communities as we invest a lot in kind by providing resources and £5,000 per annum under a three year Service Level Agreement - for which there had not been any request for an increase. By all means if you were aware of where extra funding might be required, please do let us know for consideration.

(iii) From Councillor Mrs Baker to Councillor Mrs Herbert - Swimming Parties and ‘Mini Madness’

Could Councillor Mrs Herbert report how many children’s swimming parties had been booked using the scooters and water walkers at Taunton and Wellington Pool? How long had these parties been available? I understand they were only available at Taunton Pool and because they were held there they could not be exclusively used for the party. Could Councillor Mrs Herbert find out whether these parties or similar could be held at St James Pool as well? This could be a way of generating income for the pool as it was losing

money due to many local schools leaving it and could fill in the gaps in the timetable.

Also, could Councillor Mrs Herbert ask Tone Leisure about the Mini Madness sessions that were held at the Blackbrook site? I have had complaints that the staff running it were closing it up to 20 minutes earlier than advertised on a regular basis, while still charging the full amount for parents and children to go. They are losing customers because of this.

Reply - Taunton Pool birthday parties using the water walkers and scooters had run from January 2012 - So far they had made four party bookings. (January x 1, February x 2 and March x 1). Each party had an average of 12 children.

So that we really maximised the equipment, the sea scooters were also transferred across to St James Street for the February half term; three sessions took place with 10 children on each course. We also have scheduled three sessions for the Easter holidays. Early indications show that this will sell out and extra sessions included onto the programme.

Wellington has run birthday parties since August 2011 and to date have catered for 10 x sea scooter parties and 5 x water walker parties (again minimum of 12 on each). The site manager is also planning to use the sea scooters for her Swimskool Programme.

Yes, the bouncy castle was let down 5-10 minutes before the end of the Mini Madness sessions to allow for change-overs but it did not finish 20 minutes early. The manager would keep an eye on this going forward.

(iv) From Councillor R Lees to Councillor Mrs Herbert - Britain in Bloom : National Finals

Did the Portfolio Holder agree with me that it was an extraordinary achievement of Taunton that they had reached again the National Britain in Bloom finals to be held in Guernsey on Saturday, 6 October 2012?

Did she further agree with me that in reaching this prestigious event we were paying back all our sponsors of roundabout displays and other sites throughout the district by demonstrating that Taunton was a wonderful town to live in and enjoyed some of the most pleasing landscapes and roadsides in the country?

Did she therefore recognise the significance of this marketing achievement and would she therefore ensure that Taunton Deane was represented, in Guernsey, on this occasion – Just as I did when we won Britain in Bloom when I was the portfolio holder?

Reply - Of course it was very good that we had been invited to participate in the National Britain in Bloom Competition this year. This was excellent for our sponsors, Deane DLO, the schools and all the voluntary groups whose hard work and dedication to their parks, gardens and allotments had brought Taunton success in Britain in Bloom.

Of course it would be lovely for us all to jolly over to Guernsey, but at a cost of approximately £300 per person for flights and accommodation only, it was felt that this was unaffordable in the current financial situation, and would not be positively received by the Council Tax payer.

However if the Mayors budget would stretch to it, then I am sure we would all be proud for him to represent us at the event.

(iv) From Councillors Coles and Farbahi to Councillor Edwards – Somerset Environmental Records Centre

It was noted that our Biodiversity Officer was working with the Somerset Environmental Records Centre (SERC) with a system of checking planning application sites against protected species records. How much was Taunton Deane receiving for this service on either a daily or hourly basis?

If there was no payment, would the Portfolio Holder take steps to ensure that the expertise we had in the Council was properly remunerated for these specialist services as we should be moving towards maximising income generation from whatever source?

Reply - Unfortunately it appeared Members had misunderstood. We did not receive any remuneration from SERC but in fact paid SERC via a 'service level agreement' for the information that we received. The information had species data that was not already available. Bioplan also highlighted planning applications that we might not have considered to be important with our own search criteria.

It was not about selling our expertise but benefitting from others - quite the opposite to the questioners understanding of the report and whilst not generating income, was certainly saving money for the authority.

(vi) From Councillor Coles to Councillor Edwards – Future control of Off Street Car Parks

Could the Portfolio Holder let us know what steps he had taken to ensure that we would be effectively monitoring the management and financial controls of our off street car parks when the staff were transferred to County Hall in June this year?

Was he concerned that there could be a lessening of the checking of the car parking (possibly, for example, less over time tickets being issued) if their new employers (Somerset County Council) asked them to give priority to on street parking matters? How would he be sure that we would be receiving the time devoted to our off street parking sites?

Reply - Could I remind Members that it was mainly the enforcement and notice processing activities that were subject to the new arrangements. All policy and tariff setting decisions remained with this Council, as did the off-street income stream. We had provided the County Council with the number

of enforcement hours we wanted to see in our car parks and that was what we would pay for, at an all-inclusive rate.

Our contract would be with the County Council itself and not with their Service Provider. The Service Provider's contract included robust and formal monitoring and reporting requirements on all aspects of business delivery, Key Performance Indicators to be met, hours spent where, numbers of Parking Control Notices issued and so on. These would be reflected in our agreement with the County Council. Our own Client Side would meet regularly with the County Council to review performance. It would also carry out some spot checking and scrutinise the reports provided. We would also be able to compare performance under the new arrangements with that over past years.

Any deviations, other than minor, from the specified enforcement levels would have to be agreed by our Client Side in advance. It was the Service Provider's responsibility to ensure he had sufficient resources to deliver. Like everyone else I am keen that we received the service we have asked for. At this point I have no reason to think that we will not.

(vii) From Councillor Mrs Lees to Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams – Southwest One

Would the Portfolio Holder care to comment on the comments made by the Leader of Somerset County Council made during the County Council meeting on Wednesday 15 February 2012 and reported on the County Gazette's website the same day?

To remind her, he said at least three times that Southwest One (SW1) was failing and that its procurement package had been a disaster. It was failing to deliver for the County Council, had lost £31million in the previous financial year and that it was going nowhere fast.

Did she also agree with him that like the County Council we should attempt to put out more and more of our services to the private sector where possible? What steps was she taking to unscramble this and take forward the problems or was she going to behave like an ostrich and bury her head in the sand about the future of the back office support we currently enjoyed from SW1?

Reply - As you are aware the Leader of Somerset County Council recently expressed significant concern about the effectiveness of SW1 for Somerset County Council. Additionally, I am aware that some of Taunton Deane's Members had expressed concern regarding the level of losses recently posted in SW1's accounts for 2010.

I think it is important therefore to clarify the position from this Authority's perspective.

The financial arrangements in our contract with SW1 were substantially different to those between the County Council and SW1. We received a cumulative 2.5% annual reduction in the amount we paid for the provision of

SW1 services. Over the lifetime of the 10 year contract this would amount to savings in excess of £5.7million.

The Procurement savings project, whilst being behind target, had delivered actual savings to date in excess of £1million. The current forecast by the Strategic Procurement Service indicated that savings totalling £5.8million were achievable by the end of the contract. This was still a significant saving. Obviously procurement was an area which had been and would continue to be very heavily impacted by the recession and consequent reduction in Council spending.

We must also not forget that partnering and sharing service delivery with larger organisations had brought us resilience in service delivery in many areas. Customer Services was a prime example of this and had seen significant service improvements.

There were issues with service delivery in some areas, but these were being addressed within the existing contractual arrangements.

SW1 had recently submitted its accounts for 2010 which showed a significant total loss of £31million. This sum included a pre-tax loss of £14.5million. The 2010 accounts also included a one-off item of £17million, which accounted for the remaining transition and transformation costs needed to create SW1 and implement major new systems, work which was substantially completed during 2010. This was obviously of concern. However, it needed to be clearly understood that this was SW1's and NOT the Council's loss and could not be passed onto us. Ultimately IBM, as the majority shareholder, would bear any losses.

SW1 had recognised that ongoing losses were not sustainable and were in the process of implementing changes to remedy the position. These changes would NOT impact on service delivery to this Authority or the other partners.

Whilst there were areas of concern with SW1 we had to balance these against the benefits that we were receiving from being in the partnership. It was felt that the partnership was not failing for us and it was believed we should continue to support and work with the partnership to maximise the benefits for this Authority and our partners.

Finally, Taunton Deane had no formal policy to outsource services. The Council had always approached this on a service by service basis and had employed the most appropriate means to deliver cost-effective services. SW1, the Somerset Waste Partnership and Tone Leisure were good examples of this.

(viii) From Councillor Coles to Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams – Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Would the Portfolio Holder care to comment on the article in the Financial Times on Friday, 17 February 2012 by the Managing Director of Capita, who provided the software for some 150 or more local authorities, that there was

no chance that the necessary adjustments would be ready for the handover of the Council Tax benefit operation under the Localism Act by April 2013.

Had she checked with the Welfare and Benefits Officer to ascertain whether there was going to be a problem for this Council and, if there was, what steps was she taking to overcome the significant disorganisation this would cause for Taunton Deane?

Was she also aware that the Government had now twice refused to delay the implementation of the transfer of this aspect of the Localism Bill in negotiations that had been taking place nationally?

Reply – SW1’s Revenues and Benefits software was not provided by Capita but by one of their competitors, Civica. Consequently Taunton Deane was not impacted in any way by Capita’s ability, or otherwise, to deliver the changes necessary to introduce a Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for their clients.

The Council had been provided with a written update from Civica which included the statement below:-

“The biggest piece of work however is the second set of changes, namely the abolition of Council Tax Benefit to be replaced by localised Council Tax Support from 1 April 2013.

Civica would like to advise customers that we disassociate ourselves from the views expressed in the recently leaked email from a competitor software house which was discussed in the House of Commons. Civica are fully aware of the scale of changes coming up and are actively taking steps to ensure the timely delivery of, not just the solution for Council Tax Support, but a range of utilities to assist customers in the preparation for their new support scheme.”

Taunton Deane was fully aware of the challenging deadline for implementing a new system to support Council Tax for those on limited means and had recently set up a project to ensure the smooth implementation of this and other changes brought about by Finance and Welfare reform.

The project was on the Change Members Steering Group’s agenda on 22 February 2012 and progress would be monitored through that group.

The portfolio holder was aware that there had been calls from certain quarters nationally for there to be a delay in implementing the new Council Tax Reduction Scheme but, so far, there had been a consistent message from Government that the timescale of 1 April 2013 would stand.

8. Recommendations to Council from the Executive

(a) Planning Obligations Interim Policy

The Taunton Deane Core Strategy, Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and Sustainability Appraisal had been submitted to the Secretary of State on 14

November 2011. The IDP provided details of the infrastructure that local service providers and the Council had identified as key to supporting growth in Taunton Deane.

Although the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) would provide the mechanism to collect developer contributions towards the provision of infrastructure identified in the future, until the CIL was adopted the Planning Obligations Interim Policy would provide a framework for developer contributions.

The IDP had identified that the level of infrastructure required to support development was unlikely to be funded fully from developer contributions. The interim policy had therefore identified a number of actions which would need to be taken in order that the growth outline in the Core Strategy was accompanied by sufficient infrastructure.

The IDP viability assessment indicated that with a £15,000 per dwelling contribution package, 25% affordable housing would be possible.

Consultation on the CIL draft charging schedule was anticipated for Spring 2012, with submission in the Summer, Examination in the Autumn and adoption during the Winter 2012/13. The CIL would apply to most new buildings and charges would be based on the size and type of development.

The Interim Policy related to the first phase of infrastructure requirements (from 2011 – 2016) identified in the IDP. Where the level of contribution adversely affected development viability, the Council would consider a reduced level of contribution, subject to an open book viability appraisal, so as not to affect the overall pace of development.

The Interim Policy had advantages over the usual Section 106 Agreement negotiations because it would speed up the process of getting planning permission and would create a level playing field where all developments were making infrastructure contributions on the same basis.

On the motion of Councillor Edwards, it was

Resolved that the Planning Obligations Interim Policy be adopted.

(b) Theme 5 of the Core Council Review – Legal and Democratic Services

Proposals had recently been considered concerning the creation of a new Corporate Support Unit for the Council which would be required to deliver:-

- a service that was resilient, flexible and responsive;
- different ways of working to ensure that stakeholders' needs were met and within resource capacity;

- a service that met the need of the key stakeholders, namely, the Leader of the Council, the Mayoralty, the Chief Executive, Directors, Theme 1 Managers and Councillors as a whole; and
- a minimum of £50,000 savings per annum.

To ensure the success of the new unit, officers would be nominated to certain areas in order to provide some consistency and responsibility. However all officers within the structure would be required to understand the different work-streams that the unit needed to support, including areas that had not previously been supported.

A number of officers had been put at risk of redundancy due to the proposed new structure whilst others had been slotted into new posts.

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

Resolved that:-

- (1) the proposed structure of the new Corporate Support Unit be approved; and
- (2) a Supplementary Budget allocation of up to £72,000 in 2011/2012, funded from reserves, relating to likely redundancy costs be also approved.

(c) Localism Act 2011 – Pay Policy Statements

Under Section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011, all Local Authorities were required to prepare a Pay Policy Statement for 2012/2013 and for each subsequent year thereafter.

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

The Statement was also required to:-

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

The draft of Taunton Deane's first Pay Policy Statement had been prepared to meet the minimum requirements of the Localism Act but it was not the final document as the formal guidance on the preparation of such Statements was

still awaited from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

The DCLG had indicated that the production of a provisional Pay Policy Statement would be acceptable as it could be treated as a “living document” – one that could be amended in the future, once the guidance was to hand.

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

Resolved that the draft Pay Policy Statement for 2012/2013 appended to these minutes, be approved.

(d) General Fund Revenue Estimates 2012/2013

The Executive had considered its final 2012/2013 budget proposals which had been prepared in the face of unprecedented financial challenges and uncertainty. It contained details on:-

- (i) the General Fund Revenue Budget proposals for 2011/2012, including the proposed Council Tax increase and the Prudential Indicators;
- (ii) draft figures on the predicted financial position of the Council for the following four years.

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee had also considered the draft budget proposals at its meeting on 26 January 2012.

The Council Tax calculation and formal tax setting resolution was to be considered separately. The proposed budget for Taunton Deane contained a proposed Council Tax Freeze for 2012/2013 which meant that the Band D Council Tax would remain at £135.19. The Band D taxpayer would, therefore, receive all the services provided by the Council in 2012/2013 at a cost of £2.59 per week.

It was a requirement for the Council to prepare not only budgets for the following financial year but to also provide indicative figures into future years. The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) provided an indication of the expected budget gap going forward into 2013/2014 and beyond and a summary of this position is reflected in the following table:-

	2012/13 £m	2013/14 £m	2014/15 £m	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m
Net Expenditure	11,342	12,561	14,145	15,042	15,728
<i>Financed By:</i>					
External Government Support	5,310	4,779	4,301	4,301	4,301
Council Tax Freeze Grant	277	137	137	0	0
Council Tax	5,755	5,740	5,913	6,091	6,275
Predicted Budget Gap	0	1,905	3,794	4,650	5,152

These figures included the following assumptions relating to funding:-

- Government Grant would be reduced by the following rates: 2012/2013 by 11.2%; 2013/2014 by 10%; and 2014/2015 by 10%. No change has been assumed for 2015/2016 onwards;
- The Council Tax Freeze Grant relating to 2011/2012 would be receivable for four years; and
- Council Tax would increase by 2.5% each year from 2013/2014.

The Proposed Budget for 2012/2013 would maintain reserves well above the acceptable minimum reserves position of £1,250,000 or £1,000,000 if funds were allocated to 'invest to save' initiatives, but the MTFP indicated that the Council would face significant financial pressures in the medium term as shown in the following table:-

General Reserves Forecast

	2012/13 £m	2013/14 £m	2014/15 £m	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m
Estimated Balance B/F	2,793	2,833	928	(2,866)	(7,516)
Transfers – Previous Years commitments	40	0	0	0	0
Predicted Budget Gap	0	(1,905)	(3,794)	(4,650)	(5,152)
Estimated Balance C/F	2,833	928	(2,866)	(7,516)	(12,668)

The estimated expenses chargeable to the non-parished area of Taunton in 2012/2013 amounted to £47,380, which represented a 0% increase in the special expenses per Band D equivalent of £2.92 per property per year in the Unparished Area.

As part of the Prudential Code for Capital Finance there was a requirement for Full Council to approve the indicators as set out in the report to the Executive. These were important as they detailed the expected borrowing requirement for both the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account. They also set

the operational boundaries for both the borrowing and investment levels and interest rate exposure for the Council.

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

The proposed Policy for 2012/2013 was for the calculation of MRP to be fundamentally the same as the current year.

The Council's Section 151 Officer had a duty to comment, as part of the budget setting process on the robustness of the budget and the adequacy of reserves. In her response, Shirlene Adam had stated that she believed the Council's reserves to be adequate and the budget estimates used in preparing the 2012/2013 budget to be as robust as possible.

Moved by Councillor Henley, seconded by Councillor Horsley that the budget proposals be amended as follows:-

(i) Voluntary Sector Grants – A proposal to retain the £30,000 budget to support the voluntary sector in 2012/2013;

(ii) Climate Change Budget – A proposal to retain the £10,000 budget for Climate Change initiatives for 2012/2013.

(iii) Subsidy to Somerset County Council Highways Grass Cuts – A proposal to retain Taunton Deane's subsidy for grass cutting rather than cutting the budget completely. This would add £17,000 to the budget.

(iv) Hanging Baskets - To maintain pride in the district and keep Taunton Deane competitive in the Britain in Bloom contests, reversal of the proposed £2,000 cut to the budget was recommended;

(v) Arts Development Grants - It was important that Taunton Deane was seen to promote creative and cultural organisations as part of the Economic Development programme. Reversal of the reduction of £8,000 from this budget was proposed.

(vi) Pest Control Fees – The proposed increase in fees to raise £4,000 could result in residents not engaging the rodent control services. It was proposed to halt the increase in fees.

(vii) Maintenance of Open Space – The proposed reduction in the budget of £64,000 would spoil the look of Taunton Deane and would have a particular affect on the maintenance of sports pitches. Retaining the existing budget was proposed;

(viii) New Income Source – Firepool – It was felt that approximately

£10,000 could be raised from one-off car parking and storage for vehicles on this redevelopment site.

(ix) Kids Swimming For A Quid – The sum of £40,000 was proposed to encourage young people to go swimming during the Olympic Year.

The mover and seconder of the amendment requested that a formal roll call of votes be taken and recorded in the Minutes in accordance with Standing Order 18(2).

The amendment was put and was lost with twenty Councillors voting in favour of the amendment and thirty three Councillors voting against, as follows:-

Yes	No
Councillor Mrs Baker	Councillor Mrs Adkins
Councillor Brooks	Councillor Mrs Allgrove
Councillor Coles	Councillor Beaven
Councillor Farbahi	Councillor Bishop
Councillor Mrs Floyd	Councillor Bowrah
Councillor Henley	Councillor Cavill
Councillor Mrs Hill	Councillor Denington
Councillor Horsley	Councillor D Durdan
Councillor Miss James	Councillor Ms Durdan
Councillor R Lees	Councillor Edwards
Councillor Mrs Lees	Councillor Gaines
Councillor Mrs Messenger	Councillor A Govier
Councillor Mullins	Councillor Mrs Govier
Councillor Prior-Sankey	Councillor Hall
Councillor Mrs Smith	Councillor Hayward
Councillor P Smith	Councillor Mrs Herbert
Councillor Swaine	Councillor C Hill
Councillor Tooze	Councillor Hunt
Councillor A Wedderkopp	Councillor Ms Lisgo
Councillor D Wedderkopp	Councillor Meikle
	Councillor Morrell
	Councillor Nottrodt
	Councillor Ms Palmer
	Councillor D Reed
	Councillor Mrs Reed
	Councillor Ross
	Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams
	Councillor Mrs Warmington
	Councillor Watson
	Councillor Mrs Waymouth
	Councillor Ms Webber
	Councillor Williams
	Councillor Wren

On the motion of Councillor Williams, it was

Resolved that the budget for General Fund services for 2012/2013 as outlined in the report to Full Council be agreed and that:-

- (a) the transfer of any under/overspend in the 2011/2012 General Fund Revenue Account Outturn to/from the General Fund Reserves be approved;
- (b) the Draft General Fund Revenue Budget 2012/2013, including a Basic Council Tax Requirement budget of £5,572,040 and Special Expenses of £47,380 be approved;
- (c) the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy with MRP calculated as follows, be approved:-
 - for supported borrowing, 4% on outstanding debt; and
 - for unsupported borrowing, the debt associated with the asset divided by the estimated useful life of the asset; and
 - for capital grants and contributions to third parties, 4% (or 1/25th) per year on a straight line basis;
- (d) the Prudential Indicators for 2012/2013 as set out in the appendix to these minutes be agreed;
- (e) the projected General Fund Reserve balance of £2,800,000 in 2012/2013, which was above the recommended minimum balance within the S151 Officer's Statement of Robustness, be noted; and
- (f) the forecast budget position within the Medium Term Financial Plan, as amended to reflect the proposed Council Tax Freeze in 2012/2013, be noted.

(Note – The version of the Prudential Indicators appended to the recommendation was incorrect. The version previously approved by the Executive is attached as an appendix to these minutes.)

(e) Capital Programme Budget Estimates 2012/2013

Consideration had also been given to the proposed General Fund (GF) and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programmes for the period 2012/2013 to 2016/2017.

Full Council had approved a Capital Programme for 2011/2012 General Fund schemes totalling £1,421,000 in February 2011. Slippage from the previous year and supplementary budget approvals during the year, including adding details of the Project Taunton schemes, had increased the Capital Programme to £8,660,000.

The Draft General Fund Capital Programme for 2012/2013 totalled £1,793,940.

One-off additional revenue funding of £164,250 had been included in the proposed budget to support emerging capital priorities. These included

remodelling The Deane House and potential works at Orchard Car Park, Taunton. Final spending on this would only be agreed when more information was available.

The funding position for General Fund capital priorities continued to rely on local resources, with ongoing reductions in external funding from the Government.

The Council approved the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme for 2011/2012 totalling £4,299,000, in February 2011. There were no changes to the approved budget so far this year.

The proposed Draft HRA Capital Programme 2012/2013 totalled £5,500,000. This did not include slippage from the current financial year, although currently no slippage had been forecast. Any slippage on the current year programme would be recommended for a Budget Carry Forward.

Work had been done to prepare for the move to HRA Self Financing and the 30 Year Business Plan included capital investment requirements over the long term - £7,320,000 per year from 2013/2014 to 2016/2017.

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee had considered the draft programme at its January meeting and had made no formal suggestions for any changes to be made.

The motion of Councillor Williams to approve the Capital Programme Budget Estimates for 2012/2013 was put and was lost. Members were unhappy with the proposed Revenue Contribution of £164,250 from the 2012/2013 Annual Budget being allocated towards a provision for 'Capital Priorities'.

The Section 151 Officer, Shirlene Adam, stated that there would be serious implications if the Council could not agree its Capital Programme for the forthcoming financial year.

The Mayor adjourned the meeting to allow the matter to be further considered.

When the meeting resumed, Ms Adam reported that the proposed provision for Capital Priorities could be removed from the Motion, with decisions as to how this money could be allocated being deferred until a future meeting.

On the motion of Councillor Williams, it was

Resolved that:-

- (a) the General Fund Capital Programme 2012/2013 Budget of £1,629,690 be approved; and
- (b) the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme budgets for 2012/2013 of £5,500,000 be also approved.

(During the consideration of the recommendations Members **resolved** that Standing Order 29(1) should be suspended to allow the meeting to continue for a further 30 minutes.)

(f) Council Tax Setting 2012/2013

The Localism Act 2011 had made significant changes to the Local Government Finance Act 1992, and now required the billing authority to calculate a Council Tax requirement for the year, not its Budget Requirement, as previously.

The Town and Parish Council Precepts for 2012/2013 totalled £529,689. The increase in the average Band D Council Tax for Town and Parish Councils was 3.14% and resulted in an average Band D Council Tax figure of £12.85 for 2012/2013.

Avon and Somerset Police Authority had met on 8 February 2012 and set its precept at £6,925,542.70, adjusted by a Collection Fund contribution of £209,624. This resulted in a Band D Council Tax of £168.03.

Somerset County Council had met on 15 February 2012 and set its precept at £204,297,500, adjusted by a Collection Fund contribution of £1,281,593. This equated to a 0% increase in Council Tax and resulted in the Band D Council Tax remaining at £168.03.

Devon and Somerset Fire Authority had met on 17 February 2012 and set its precept at £45,634,541, adjusted by a Collection Fund contribution of £89,536. This equated to a 3% increase in Council Tax and resulted in a Band D Council Tax of £73.92.

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

The estimated balance on the Council Tax Collection Fund was a surplus of £1,764,952. Taunton Deane's share of this amounted to £184,199, and this had been reflected in the General Fund Revenue Estimates.

On the motion of Councillor Williams, it was

Resolved that:-

(a) The following formal Council Tax Resolution for 2012/2013 be approved:-

(1) That it be noted that on 7 December 2011 the Council calculated the Council Tax Base for 2012/2013:-

(i) for the whole Council area as 41,216.39 [Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")]; and,

- (ii) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept related as in the attached Appendix B;
- (2) That the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2012/2013 (excluding Parish precepts) be calculated as £5,572,040;
- (3) That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2012/2013 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:-
- (i) £84,575,640 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimated for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils. (*Gross Expenditure including amount required for working balance*)
 - (ii) £78,473,910 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimated for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act. (*Gross Income including reserves to be used to meet Gross Expenditure*)
 - (iii) £6,101,730 being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeded the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act). (*Total Demand on Collection Fund.*)
 - (iv) £148.04 being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts). (*Council Tax at Band D for Borough Including Parish Precepts and Special Expenses*)
 - (v) £529,690 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as per the attached Appendix B). (*Parish Precepts and Special Expenses*).
 - (vi) £135.19 being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept related. (*Council Tax at Band D for Borough Excluding Parish Precepts and Special Expenses*);

(4) To note that Somerset County Council, Avon and Somerset Police

Authority and Devon and Somerset Fire Authority had issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated in the table in Appendix A;

- (5) That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby set the aggregate provisional amounts shown in the table in Appendix A as the amounts of Council Tax for 2012/2013 for each part of its area and for each category of dwelling;
- (6) Determine that the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2012/2013 was not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992; and

(b) Note that if the above formal Council Tax Resolution was approved the total Band D Council Tax would be as follows:-

	2011/12 £	2012/13 £	Increase %
Taunton Deane Borough Council	135.19	135.19	0.00%
Somerset County Council	1,027.30	1,027.30	0.00%
Avon & Somerset Police Authority	168.03	168.03	0.00%
Devon & Somerset Fire Authority	71.77	73.92	3.00%
Sub-Total*	1,402.29	1,404.44	0.15%
Town & Parish Council (average)	12.46	12.85	3.14%
Total *	1,414.75	1,417.29	0.18%

This report was produced after the Executive Meeting on 9 February 2012 to reflect the final decisions taken at the meeting. The figures have been updated to reflect the final budget proposals of the Executive.

Appendix

A

Valuation Bands

Council Tax Schedule 2012/13	Band A £	Band B £	Band C £	Band D £	Band E £	Band F £	Band G £	Band H £
Taunton Deane Borough Council	90.13	105.15	120.17	135.19	165.23	195.27	225.32	270.38
Somerset County Council *	684.87	799.01	913.16	1,027.30	1,255.59	1,483.88	1,712.17	2,054.60
Avon & Somerset Police Authority	112.02	130.69	149.36	168.03	205.37	242.71	280.05	336.06
Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority *	47.85	55.82	63.80	71.77	87.72	103.67	119.62	143.54
Parish / Town only (a)	8.57	9.99	11.42	12.85	15.71	18.56	21.42	25.70
Parish / Town & District (b)	98.69	115.14	131.59	148.04	180.94	213.84	246.73	296.08
Total (c)	943.43	1,100.66	1,257.90	283.23	1,729.62	2,044.09	2,358.57	2,830.28
<u>Parish:</u>								
Ash Priors	934.87	1,090.67	1,246.49	1,402.29	1,713.91	2,025.53	2,337.16	2,804.58
Ashbrittle	947.40	1,105.29	1,263.20	1,421.09	1,736.89	2,052.69	2,368.49	2,842.18
Bathealton	938.60	1,095.03	1,251.47	1,407.89	1,720.75	2,033.62	2,346.49	2,815.78
Bishops Hull	948.02	1,106.02	1,264.03	1,422.02	1,738.02	2,054.03	2,370.04	2,844.04
Bishops Lydeard/Cothelstone	949.85	1,108.15	1,266.46	1,424.76	1,741.37	2,057.99	2,374.61	2,849.52
Bradford on Tone	947.34	1,105.22	1,263.12	1,421.00	1,736.78	2,052.56	2,368.34	2,842.00
Burrowbridge	948.46	1,106.53	1,264.61	1,422.68	1,738.83	2,054.98	2,371.14	2,845.36

	946.62	1,104.38	1,262.16	1,419.92	1,735.46	2,051.00		2,839.84
North Curry	949.70	1,107.98	1,266.27	1,424.54	1,741.10	2,057.67	2,374.24	2,849.08
Norton Fitzwarren	952.80	1,111.58	1,270.39	1,429.18	1,746.78	2,064.37	2,381.98	2,858.36
Nynehead	952.13	1,110.81	1,269.50	1,428.18	1,745.55	2,062.93	2,380.31	2,856.36
Oake	944.87	1,102.34	1,259.82	1,417.29	1,732.24	2,047.20	2,362.16	2,834.58
Otterford	934.87	1,090.67	1,246.49	1,402.29	1,713.91	2,025.53	2,337.16	2,804.58
Pitminster	948.51	1,106.58	1,264.68	1,422.75	1,738.92	2,055.08	2,371.26	2,845.50
Ruishton/Thornfalcon	947.67	1,105.60	1,263.56	1,421.49	1,737.38	2,053.26	2,369.16	2,842.98
Sampfurd Arundel	958.90	1,118.71	1,278.53	1,438.34	1,757.97	2,077.60	2,397.24	2,876.68
Staplegrove	944.41	1,101.80	1,259.21	1,416.60	1,731.40	2,046.20	2,361.01	2,833.20
Stawley	947.29	1,105.16	1,263.05	1,420.92	1,736.68	2,052.44	2,368.21	2,841.84
Stoke St Gregory	947.00	1,104.83	1,262.67	1,420.49	1,736.15	2,051.82	2,367.49	2,840.98
Stoke St Mary	944.38	1,101.77	1,259.17	1,416.56	1,731.35	2,046.14	2,360.94	2,833.12
Taunton	936.82	1,092.94	1,249.09	1,405.21	1,717.48	2,029.75	2,342.03	2,810.42
Trull	943.91	1,101.22	1,258.54	1,415.85	1,730.48	2,045.12	2,359.76	2,831.70
Wellington	949.27	1,107.47	1,265.69	1,423.89	1,740.31	2,056.73	2,373.16	2,847.78
Wellington Without	946.26	1,103.95	1,261.67	1,419.37	1,734.79	2,050.20	2,365.63	2,838.74

West Bagborough	944.69	1,102.13	1,259.58	1,417.02	1,731.91	2,046.81	2,361.71	2,834.04
West Buckland	946.76	1,104.55	1,262.35	1,420.13	1,735.71	2,051.30	2,366.89	2,840.26
West Hatch	945.73	1,103.34	1,260.97	1,418.58	1,733.82	2,049.06	2,364.31	2,837.16
West Monkton	950.44	1,108.84	1,267.25	1,425.65	1,742.46	2,059.27	2,376.09	2,851.30
Wiveliscombe	948.75	1,106.86	1,265.00	1,423.11	1,739.36	2,055.60	2,371.86	2,846.22

This report was produced after the Executive Meeting on 9 February 2012 to reflect the final decisions taken at the meeting. The figures have been updated to reflect the final budget proposals of the Executive.

Appendix

B

TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL PRECEPTS

Parish/Town Council	2011/12			2012/13			Council Tax Increase
	Tax Base	Precept Levied	Council Tax Band D	Tax Base	Precept Levied	Council Tax Band D	
		£	(£)		£	(£)	
Ash Priors	78.84	-	-	84.83	-	-	0.00%
Ashbrittle	97.37	1,800	18.49	95.72	1,800	18.80	1.72%
Bathealton	88.08	500	5.68	89.28	500	5.60	-1.34%
Bishops Hull	1,075.48	22,000	20.46	1,114.92	22,000	19.73	-3.54%
Bishops Lydeard/Cothelstone	1,116.85	25,185	22.55	1,120.81	25,185	22.47	-0.35%
Bradford on Tone	290.50	5,500	18.93	293.94	5,500	18.71	-1.17%
Burrowbridge	205.44	4,000	19.47	205.99	4,200	20.39	4.72%
Cheddon Fitzpaine	639.63	7,000	10.94	643.53	10,203	15.85	44.87%
Chipstable	128.01	1,850	14.45	133.31	1,950	14.63	1.22%
Churchstanton	335.61	7,250	21.60	337.87	7,299	21.60	0.00%

Combe Florey	121.40	2,000	16.48	122.05	2,250	18.44	11.90%
Comeytrowe	2,092.08	25,000	11.95	2,111.95	25,000	11.84	-0.94%
Corfe	132.48	2,500	18.87	133.48	2,500	18.73	-0.75%
Cotford St Luke	800.55	15,000	18.74	821.67	16,000	19.47	3.92%
Creech St Michael	946.10	23,135	24.45	999.23	28,275	28.30	15.72%
Durston	59.57	600	10.07	59.10	600	10.15	0.79%
Fitzhead	123.27	2,995	24.30	122.29	2,995	24.49	0.81%
Halse	141.39	1,750	12.38	142.58	1,800	12.62	2.00%
Hatch Beauchamp	260.51	4,500	17.27	268.82	4,500	16.74	-3.09%
Kingston St Mary	452.76	6,000	13.25	463.52	6,000	12.94	-2.32%
Langford Budville	236.73	4,000	16.90	238.94	5,000	20.93	23.84%
Lydeard St Lawrence/Tolland	204.07	3,500	17.15	208.84	3,582	17.15	0.00%
Milverton	598.41	11,500	19.22	624.11	12,650	20.27	5.47%
Neroche	251.93	4,000	15.88	255.27	4,500	17.63	11.03%
North Curry	748.27	16,500	22.05	741.43	16,500	22.25	0.92%
Norton Fitzwarren	820.30	25,130	30.64	931.94	25,060	26.89	-12.22%

Nynehead	157.34	4,000	25.42	164.15	4,250	25.89	1.84%
Oake	333.62	4,750	14.24	333.34	5,000	15.00	5.35%
Otterford	170.04	-	-	174.06	-	-	0.00%
Pitminster	458.91	9,279	20.22	464.42	9,500	20.46	1.17%
Ruishton/Thornfalcon	614.50	12,000	19.53	624.94	12,000	19.20	-1.67%
Sampfard Arundel	132.51	4,600	34.72	127.60	4,600	36.05	3.84%
Staplegrove	713.43	10,000	14.02	748.42	10,710	14.31	2.09%
Stawley	130.08	2,400	18.45	128.82	2,400	18.63	0.98%
Stoke St Gregory	389.61	6,500	16.68	384.63	7,000	18.20	9.09%
Stoke St Mary	204.23	3,008	14.73	210.86	3,008	14.27	-3.15%
Taunton	16,033.53	46,820	2.92	16,226.62	47,380	2.92	-0.01%
Trull	1,029.79	14,000	13.59	1,032.39	14,000	13.56	-0.25%
Wellington	4,683.53	92,734	19.80	4,852.37	104,798	21.60	9.08%
Wellington Without	302.74	5,050	16.68	304.54	5,200	17.08	2.36%
West Bagborough	168.06	2,000	11.90	169.77	2,500	14.73	23.74%
West Buckland	444.62	8,000	17.99	448.31	8,000	17.84	-0.82%

West Hatch	141.96	2,330	16.41	143.00	2,330	16.29	-0.73%
West Monkton	1,116.84	31,599	28.29	1,184.22	27,664	23.36	-17.43%
Wiveliscombe	1,119.67	21,000	18.76	1,128.51	23,500	20.82	11.03%
TOTAL / AVERAGE	40,390.60	503,265	12.46	41,216.39	529,689	12.85	3.33%

(g) Housing Services and Community Development – Restructure Proposals

Proposals to change the staffing structure of Housing Services in preparation for issues likely to arise from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) self-financing and the associated new 30 year Business Plan had recently been considered in detail. Changes to the current Community Development Team had also been considered.

Over the past few years, the Council's Housing Service had embarked on a modernisation programme to make it more outward looking, performance focussed and working to place tenants at the heart of scrutiny and decision making. Although steady progress has been made there was still more to be done.

Preparations for self-financing were going well with a robust project team and plan in place. Stage 1 of this process had been achieved with the completion of a new 30 year Business Plan.

The move to HRA self-financing in April 2012, would involve the Council taking on £85,198,000 of national housing debt, based on the final settlement figures.

Whilst modelling had suggested self-financing would be a good deal for Taunton Deane, it placed a significant responsibility on the HRA to ensure that governance, performance management and financial management arrangements were as good as they could be.

In addition, projections for the repairs and maintenance work required on the Council's housing stock indicated the need for a significant lift in capital expenditure and changes to housing policy and potential legislation would place new and different requirements on the service in future years.

It was therefore proposed to alter Housing Services to position the structure in a way that supported the new Business Plan and the future investment needs of the service.

The full-year cost to the HRA of the new structure was likely to be £1,935,000, 11.9% of the total HRA cost of £16,242,000. The increase would be modelled into the 30-year HRA Business Plan.

The proposed re-structure would have a number of implications for existing staff, including one possible redundancy.

The proposals had also been considered by the Community Scrutiny Committee and the Tenants Services Management Board who were both supportive of the re-structure.

On the motion of Councillor Mrs Adkins, it was

Resolved that:-

- (1) the proposed restructuring of Housing Services and the Community Development Team, be approved; and
- (2) a Supplementary Budget allocation of up to £22,000 in 2011/2012, funded from Housing Revenue Account reserves, related to likely redundancy costs, be also approved.

(h) Housing Revenue Account Estimates 2012/2013

The Executive had given consideration to the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) estimates for the 2012/2013 Financial Year which showed a working balance of £1,312,070. It also includes details of the proposed increase in Average Weekly Rent for the year where a 7.45% increase had been recommended.

The 2011/2012 budget had been set using that year's data from the Government's Draft Subsidy Determination and in the expectation that HRA self financing would be introduced under the Localism Act.

With the move to a 'self-financing' model from 2012/2013 now happening, the Council's annual payment of 'negative subsidy' would end on 28 March 2012.

The final Settlement figures from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) had set the Council's debt at £85,198,000 which would be repaid in 18 years (by 2029/2030).

The proposed HRA Budget for the next financial year was therefore based on assumptions and estimates on expenditure requirements and income projections. These assumptions had been reflected in the final Business Plan for the HRA.

The negative subsidy system required Local Authorities to raise their 'average weekly rent' to meet the 'target' or 'formula' rent by the convergence date of 2015/2016, with a 'guideline rent' being the amount the DCLG assumed should be charged, but to avoid unaffordable increases in any one year must not exceed the 'limit rent'.

This Central Government rent policy has remained unchanged despite the move to self-financing and abolition of the subsidy system.

With the Retail Price Index for 2011 at 5.60%, increasing the actual average weekly rent paid by tenants by the amount set under the subsidy determination would make the rent paid higher than the guideline rent.

It was therefore proposed that the average weekly rent for dwellings for 2012/2013 should be set at the guideline rent of £73.68. This was an increase of 7.45% or £5.11 per week.

The Dwelling Rents formed the major element of income for the HRA. Each ½% rent increase was equivalent to approximately £105,000. If the average

rent was set lower than the current proposal, the loss of income would have to be met by reducing expenditure.

The budget for non-dwelling rents and charges for services and facilities was based on a 5.6% increase.

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee considered the 2011/2012 draft budget at its meeting on 26 January 2012 where no formal recommendations to change the HRA budget were made. The Tenants Services Management Board has also considered the report.

On the motion of Councillor Mrs Adkins, it was

Resolved that:-

- (1) The Average Weekly Rent increase of 7.45% be approved; and
- (2) The Housing Revenue Account budget for 2012/2013 be agreed.

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

The following reports were made to the Council on the main items of current and future business.

Due to Standing Order 28, Time Limits for all meetings, only sufficient time was available for the Leader of the Council to present his report and take questions from Members. The other Executive Councillor reports were submitted for information only.

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

Councillor Williams's report covered the following topics:-

- Budget Setting;
- Taunton's Retail and Parking;
- Broadband Issues;
- Town Centre Works;
- Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group; and
- Somerset County Council A303/A30/A358 Initiative.

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

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

- Customer Contact Centre;
- Legal and Democratic Services;
- Performance and Client Team;
- Revenues and Benefits; and

- Southwest One.

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

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

- Core Strategy Examination;
- Annual Monitoring Report;
- Planning Enforcement;
- Heritage – Sandhill Park;
- Landscape Team;
- County-wide Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) Project; and
- Communications.

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

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

- Police and Crime Panel;
- Community Policing Awards;
- Health;
- Priority Areas Strategy; and
- Grants Panel.

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

The report from Councillor Cavill covered:-

- Keeping Members informed;
- Stimulating Business Growth and Investment;
- Ensuring a Skilled and Entrepreneurial Workforce;
- Creating an Attractive Business Environment; and
- Taunton Tourist Information, Ticket and Travel Centre.

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

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

- Waste Management;
- Climate Change / Carbon Management; and
- Crematorium.

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

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

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

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

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

- Housing Property Services;
- Affordable Housing;
- Strategic Tenancy Policy;
- Estates Team and Anti-social Behaviour;
- Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership;
- Consultation;
- Self-Financing; and
- Housing Revenue Account 30 Year Business Plan.

10. **Kevin Toller**

Councillor Williams reported that Kevin Toller, one of the Strategic Directors, would shortly be leaving The Council's employment after more than 20 years service. On behalf of the Council, Councillor Williams thanked Kevin for his loyal service.

(Councillors D Durdan, Ms Durdan, A Govier, Mrs Govier, C Hill, Ms Palmer, D Reed, Mrs Smith, P Smith and Swaine all left the meeting at 9.54 pm.)

(The meeting ended at 10.07 pm.)

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Appendix

Pay Policy Statement – 2012/13

The Pay Policy Statement for Taunton Deane Borough Council will apply to the following posts which collectively will be referred to as 'chief officers' for the purpose of this statement and for this statement only:

- Chief Executive Officer (Head of Paid Service)
- Strategic Director posts including the role of Section 151 Officer
- Theme Managers including the role of Monitoring Officer
- A person for whom the head of the authority's paid service is directly responsible.
- A deputy chief officer who, as respects all or most of the duties of his post, is required to report directly or is directly accountable to one or more of the statutory or non-statutory chief officers.

Note: A person whose duties are solely secretarial or clerical or are otherwise in the nature of support services shall not be regarded as a non-statutory chief officer or a deputy chief officer.

1) The Level and Remuneration for each Chief Officer

Details of the level and remuneration for the identified chief officer posts is set out in Appendix 1.

Salary information is also published on the Council's website to comply with the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2011 and the Code of Practice on Data Transparency 2011. It should be noted that there are different reporting dates and standards for this information.

2) Remuneration of Chief Officers on Appointment

- a) Chief Executive, Strategic Directors, Theme Managers, Regeneration Manager and Commercial Manager Posts

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

b) All other chief officer posts

The salary for all other posts covered by this Pay Policy Statement will be set within the job evaluation scheme operated by the Council. All other elements of remuneration will follow either the National Joint Committee for Local Government Services' (NJC) National Agreement on Pay and Conditions or local policy approved by the Council.

3) Increases and additions to remuneration for each chief officer

a) Chief Executive and Strategic Director Posts

The Leader of the Council may recommend to Full Council within the remuneration package prior to appointment how salary progression and any annual pay reviews will be administered or calculated. Any further changes to the remuneration package will be subject to Full Council approval.

Any annual pay award for the Chief Executive will follow the JNC for Chief Executives national pay award.

Any annual pay award for Strategic Director posts will follow the JNC for Chief Officers national pay award.

b) Theme Managers, Regeneration Manager and Commercial Manager

The Leader of the Council may recommend to Full Council within the remuneration package prior to appointment how salary progression and any annual pay reviews will be administered or calculated. Any further changes to the remuneration package will be subject to Full Council approval.

Any annual pay award for these posts will follow the NJC for Local Authority Services national pay award.

c) All other Chief Officer posts

The salary for all other posts covered by this Pay Policy Statement will be set within the Single Status Salary Scheme previously approved by Full Council. Any annual pay award increases will follow the NJC settlement. Any other increases or additions outside the approved Single Status Salary scheme and not specifically allowed for in this Statement will be subject to approval by Full Council.

4) Use of Performance Related Pay for Chief Officers

No performance related pay scheme is currently operated for chief officers. Should any performance related pay schemes for chief officers be implemented they will be subject to approval in advance by Full Council.

5) Use of Bonuses for Chief Officers

Bonuses are not currently paid to chief officers. Bonuses to chief officers will only be paid if approved in advance by Full Council.

6) Use of Honoraria

The policy on the use of Honoraria is set out in the Council's Tartan Book (TDBC local terms and conditions of employment) and may be applied to any post.

7) Use of Market Supplements

Currently no market supplements are paid to chief officers. Approval must be obtained from Full Council before an award of a market supplement payment can be made to any chief officer post other than those covered by the approved Job Evaluation Scheme.

8) Payment of chief officers on their ceasing to hold office under or be employed by the authority

Any termination payments to chief officers on ceasing office will comply with the Redundancy and Severance Pay Policy current at that time which will have been approved by Full Council. No additional termination payments will be made without the approval of the Executive, this will include any Compromise Agreement settlements, which may be subject to a confidentiality clause. The current Taunton Deane Compensation Policy is attached in Appendix 2.

9) Remuneration of chief officers who return to Local Authority employment

Where the chief officer:

a) was a previously employed chief officer who left with a severance payment and applies to comeback as a chief officer.

Executive approval would be required to authorise re-employment within the authority of a previously employed chief officer who had left with a severance payment and is seeking re-employment within the severance payment payback period.

b) was previously employed by the same authority and has comeback as a chief officer under a contract for services.

The Executive will be required to approve any award of a 'contract for services' to a chief officer who has previously been employed by the authority.

c) are in receipt of a Local Government Pension Scheme Pension

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

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

10) Employer Pension Discretions

All posts are eligible to be in the Local Government Pension Scheme and employers contributions for 2012/13 are 17.3%. The employer pension discretions will be subject of approval by Full Council. The Pensions Discretions adopted by the authority are attached in Appendix D.

11) Publication of and access to information relating to remuneration of chief officers

The remuneration of employees earning over a salary of £58200 per annum (the minimum level required by the Code of Practice on

Data Transparency 2011) will be published on the Taunton Deane Borough Council website.

12) Lowest paid staff

The Council's lowest paid staff are defined as those on the lowest job evaluated grade within the authorities pay structure. Other than posts identified as chief officers within this Statement and recognised apprentices all posts within the Council have been subject to Job Evaluation to assess the value of job content and then, subject to that value, have been placed in the agreed Taunton Deane Borough Council pay scales (TDBC Grades A to L).

At present there are no posts evaluated within Grade A and therefore under the agreed pay structure the minimum starting salary for any staff member covered by the scheme will be the first incremental point of Grade B which is a full time equivalent salary of £12787.

Nationally the lowest pay point is National Spinal Column Point 4 (£12145).

13) Relationship between lowest pay and chief officer pay

The principle of using 'pay multiples' to track and review salary relationships has been, through the Review of Fair Pay in the Public Sector 2011 and the CLG's guidance on transparency, recommended as a way forward for local authorities.

The current multiplier between the lowest paid employee and highest paid chief officer is 8.66:1.

The current multiplier between the mean FTE salary and highest paid chief officer is 4.5:1.

Should either the multiplier between the annual salary paid to a full time employee on the lowest spine point and the annual salary paid to the highest paid chief officer be greater than 1:10 or the multiplier between the mean FTE salary and highest paid chief officer be greater than 1:5 then this will be reported by the Leader of the Council to Full Council for consideration.

14) Payments for Elections

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

made are identified above.

15) Notes

- i) All salary references are for full time equivalent salaries and pay multipliers are all calculated using FTE salaries without additional payments being included.
- ii) The statement excludes any posts seconded into Southwest One.

The Level and Remuneration for each Chief Officer

Post	Statutory Role	Terms and Conditions and JE Status	Salary	Salary Progression	Bonus or Performance related pay	Other Benefits	Pension Enhancement in Year
Chief Executive	Head of Paid Service	JNC Chief Executives – Out of JE	£90,708 - £100,786	Annual Increment subject to satisfactory performance.	No	Lease Car Payment of Professional Subscription Election Payments – Returning Officer Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No
Strategic Director	Section 151 Officer	JNC Chief Officers – Out of JE	£64,251 - £71,391	Annual Increment subject to satisfactory performance.	No	Honorarium Payment for S151 Role Lease Car Payment of Professional Subscription CMT Duty Roster Payments relating to LGPS Employer	No

						Contributions	
Strategic Director		JNC Chief Officers – Out of JE	£64,251 - £71,391	Annual Increment subject to satisfactory performance.	No	Cash Alternative to Lease Car Payment of Professional Subscription CMT Duty Roster Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No
Strategic Director		JNC Chief Officers – Out of JE	£64,251 - £71,391	Annual Increment subject to satisfactory performance.	No	Lease Car Payment of Professional Subscription CMT Duty Roster Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No
Legal and Democratic Manager	Monitoring Officer	NJC Local Authority Services – Out of JE	Below £58,200	Spot Salary	No	Payment of Professional Subscription CMT Duty Roster Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No
Strategy Manager		NJC Local Authority	Below £58,200	Annual Increment subject to	No	Payment of Professional	No

		Services – Out of JE		satisfactory performance.		Subscription CMT Duty Roster Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	
Performance and Client Manager		NJC Local Authority Services – Out of JE	Below £58,200	Annual Increment subject to satisfactory performance.	No	Lease Car Payment of Professional Subscription CMT Duty Roster Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No
Growth and Development Manager		NJC Local Authority Services – Out of JE	Below £58,200	Annual Increment subject to satisfactory performance.	No	Lease Car Payment of Professional Subscription CMT Duty Roster Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No
Community Services Manager		NJC Local Authority Services – Out of JE	Below £58,200	Annual Increment subject to satisfactory performance.	No	Payment of Professional Subscription CMT Duty Roster Payments	No

						relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	
Regeneration Manager		NJC Local Authority Services – Out of JE	Below £58,200	Annual Increment subject to satisfactory performance.	No	Lease Car Payment of Professional Subscription Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No
Commercial Manager		NJC Local Authority Services – Out of JE	Below £58,200	Annual Increment subject to satisfactory performance.	No	Payment of Professional Subscription Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No
Economic Development Manager		NJC Local Authority Services - In JE	Below £58200	Annual Increment subject to satisfactory performance.	No	Payment of Professional Subscription Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No
DLO Lead		NJC Local Authority Services - In JE	Below £58200	Annual Increment subject to satisfactory performance.	No	Payment of Professional Subscription Essential Car User Payments relating to LGPS	No

						Employer Contributions	
Corporate Support Lead – Theme 1		NJC Local Authority Services - In JE	Below £58200	Annual Increment subject to satisfactory performance.	No	Lease Car Payment of Professional Subscription Election Payments Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No
Electoral Services Manager		NJC Local Authority Services - In JE	Below £58200	Annual Increment subject to satisfactory performance.	No	Payment of Professional Subscription Election Payments – Deputy Returning Officer Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No
Legal Services Manager		NJC Local Authority Services - In JE	Below £58200	Annual Increment subject to satisfactory performance.	No	Payment of Professional Subscription Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No
Parish Liaison Officer		NJC Local Authority	Below £58200	Annual Increment subject to	No	Election Payments	No

		Services - In JE		satisfactory performance.		Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	
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1. The following policy on Compensation Payments applies to redundancies and early retirements on the grounds of efficiency of the service, which take effect after 31st March 2007.
2. The calculation of redundancy payments is on the basis of actual salary.
3. The Council exercises discretion under the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) Regulations 2006, to make compensatory payments to employees being made redundant based on a multiplier of three times the number of weeks an employee would be entitled to under the statutory redundancy formula, inclusive of any statutory redundancy payment, up to a maximum of 90 weeks' pay.
4. **The Council requires that the full cost of any redundancies is recovered within a period not exceeding five years or by the normal retirement age, whichever is sooner.**
5. **Employees who are eligible to be paid a compensation payment on being made redundant, and who are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme, are given the option of converting their compensation payment (excluding the statutory redundancy payment) into augmented pensionable service. Augmentation is not an option where the compensation payment (excluding the statutory redundancy payment) purchases more pensionable service than the maximum allowable at age 65.**
6. **No compensation payments are made to employees who are allowed to retire early on the grounds of interests of efficiency of the service, following a voluntary request from the employee.**

- | | |
|----|--|
| 7. | <p>Where early retirements in the interests of efficiency of the service are management instigated, the Council awards a lump sum compensation payment, which is based on the enhanced compensatory element (excluding the statutory redundancy payment) awarded on redundancy.
(For example: 2 x Stat Red = Interests of efficiency)</p> |
| 8. | <p>Employees who are eligible to be paid a compensation payment on early retirement in the interests of efficiency of the service and who are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme, are given the option of converting their compensation payment into augmented pensionable service.
<u>Augmentation is not an option where the compensation payment purchases more pensionable service than the maximum allowable at age 65.</u></p> |

Appendix

PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS

PRUDENTIAL INDICATOR	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
	outturn	estimate	estimate	estimate	estimate
Capital Expenditure					
General Fund	£4,884	£8,660	£1,847	£1,807	£2,014
HRA	£6,653	£4,300	£5,500	£7,316	£7,316
TOTAL	£11,537	£12,960	£7,347	£9,123	£9,330
Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream					
General Fund	0.74%	0.67%	0.86%	0.89%	1.79%
HRA	2.85%	3.33%	17.05%	17.01%	16.60%
Net borrowing projection					
brought forward 1 April	£7,786	£3,670	£4,990	£4,990	£6,392
Carried forward 31 March	£3,670	£4,990	£4,990	£6,392	£8,001
in year borrowing requirement	-£4,116	£1,320	£0	£1,402	£1,609
Capital Financing Requirement as at 31 March					
General Fund	£8,240	£9,369	£9,181	£10,372	£11,741
HRA	£14,451	£14,451	£100,151	£100,151	£100,151
TOTAL	£22,691	£23,820	£109,332	£110,523	£111,892
Incremental impact of capital investment decisions	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p
Increase in council tax (band D)	-1.36	5.47	-0.05	-0.05	0.19
Authorised limit for external debt -					
TOTAL	£40,000,000	£139,200,000	£139,200,000	£139,200,000	£141,200,000
Operational boundary for external debt -					
TOTAL	£30,000,000	£103,020,000	£103,020,000	£104,422,000	£106,031,000
Upper limit for fixed interest rate exposure					
Upper Limit for Fixed Interest Rate Exposure on Debt	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Upper Limit for Fixed Interest Rate Exposure on Investments	-100%	-100%	-100%	-100%	-100%
Upper limit for variable rate exposure					
Upper Limit for Variable Interest Rate Exposure on Debt	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%
Upper Limit for Variable Interest Rate Exposure on Investments	-50%	-50%	-50%	-50%	-50%
Maturity Structure of Fixed Rate Borrowing (Upper and lower limits)					
under 12 months	0% to 50%	0% to 50%	0% to 50%	0% to 50%	0% to 50%
12 months and within 24 months	0% to 50%	0% to 50%	0% to 50%	0% to 50%	0% to 50%
24 months and within 5 years	0% to 50%	0% to 50%	0% to 50%	0% to 50%	0% to 50%
5 years and within 10 years	0% to 50%	0% to 50%	0% to 50%	0% to 50%	0% to 50%
10 years and above	20% to 100%	20% to 100%	20% to 100%	20% to 100%	20% to 100%
Upper limit for total principal sums invested for over 364 days (per maturity date)					
	£2m or 20%	£3.5m or	£3.5m or	£3.5m or	£3.5m or

		20%	20%	20%	20%
Gross and Net Debt					
Outstanding Borrowing (at nominal value)	15,973,000	96,993,000	96,993,000	98,395,000	100,004,000
Other Long-term Liabilities (at nominal value)	45,417,000	45,417,000	45,417,000	45,417,000	45,417,000
Gross Debt	61,390,000	142,410,000	142,410,000	143,812,000	145,421,000
Less: Investments	12,300,000	6,000,000	6,000,000	6,000,000	6,000,000
Net Debt	49,090,000	136,410,000	136,410,000	137,812,000	139,421,000

Credit Risk

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

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

- Published credit ratings of the financial institution
- Sovereign support mechanisms
- Credit default swaps (where quoted)
- Share prices (where available)
- Economic Fundamentals
- Corporate developments, news, articles, markets sentiment and momentum
- Subjective overlay

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Full Council – 10 April 2012

Proposed Tone Leisure Loan for a High Ropes Project in Vivary Park, Taunton

Report of the Strategic Director

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

Executive Summary

The Council is recommended to approve a loan of £318,000 to Tone Leisure, for Tone Leisure to acquire a High Ropes facility in Taunton. Tone Leisure will own and operate the facility, and have prepared a detailed business case which has been shared with Council officers.

The Council has been approached to finance the investment, and are proposing to offer a loan that carries a 4% interest rate and is repayable over 66 months. The loan should be treated as capital expenditure, and the repayment of the loan principal will be recorded as capital receipts. These capital receipts will be set aside upon receipt to finance the loan, in line with accounting regulations and the Prudential Code.

1. Purpose and Background

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to secure the relevant budget and funding approvals to make a loan to Tone Leisure for the purposes of their installation of a High Ropes leisure facility in Vivary Park, Taunton.
- 1.2 High Ropes courses are becoming a growing leisure activity, recommended to be set in natural environments. The Vivary High Ropes course will provide two separate aerial trekking experiences - one at a lower level of 5 metres off ground level and a larger course at 9 metres height. Participants move from point to point via a series of aerial ropes and "stepping stones" in mid air. Participants are secured permanently via a harness to a steel rail/ rope overhead. The Course is certified and ROSPA accredited. The experience lasts 20 to 40 minutes depending on the selected course, and is instructor led.
- 1.3 The High Ropes experience has particular appeal to schools, groups, and corporate team building events, but also passers by in high footfall areas such as public parks and open spaces.
- 1.4 There are no other High Ropes courses within a 40 minute drive of Taunton - the nearest similar site being near to Cheddar. However, we believe the Vivary High Ropes course would be one of the largest in the South West and a real attraction to both Taunton and Vivary Park.

- 1.5 The High Ropes course has been designed, costed and planning has been approved.
- 1.6 Tone Leisure Senior Managers have reviewed various options for a High Ropes course in Taunton and identified the best location to be at Vivary Park, over the top of the mini golf course. Tone have identified a partner organisation with specialist knowledge to support the project who already operate two High Ropes courses and are partnering with other Leisure Trusts for similar developments. They are called "Closer to the Edge" and will work with Tone to develop programmes, operational practices, recruit and train staff.
- 1.7 The design has been completed with Closer to the Edge and JM Adventure, who have built many courses around the country. A business plan has been created based on the results of a recently built course in the Midlands, but taken at 60% lower than their business plan to ensure prudence.

2. Tone Leisure's Project Details

- 2.1 The project investment is set at £318,000, of which £300K is for the High Ropes course, equipment and storage, with the remainder allocated to remodel some areas of the current café/ hut/ pro-shop. Staff costs, maintenance costs and Closer to the Edge support costs are factored into a business plan.
- 2.2 Income is projected at £157,960 in year one, building to £273,350 by year three. The first year profile of visitors is extended to an average of 300 visits per week for 40 weeks of the year. These 12,000 visits in year one grows to 22,000 by year three. The Midlands High Ropes course, which opened in August 2011, is exceeding 1000 visits per week during peak weeks. The expected catchment for such a High Ropes course is 30 to 40 minute drive time, and with the majority of the visitors being aged 5 to 16 years of age, the projected market is 64,000 within this catchment (based on school figures for the region – Yeovil to Minehead).
- 2.3 The full business case has been scrutinized by Southwest One Taunton Deane Finance Advisory and Taunton Deane Legal Services. Risks have been highlighted however the business case will be managed within Tone Leisure and risks will be mitigated through the terms of the loan agreement.

3. Loan Details

- 3.1 The proposal is for the Council to offer a loan to Tone Leisure that provides value to the taxpayer and to Tone Leisure. As such, the loan proposed will be classed as a "soft loan" which essentially means that the Council is offering a loan with an interest rate that is marginally below the rate Tone Leisure can obtain from a financial institution i.e. below the market rate. The margin of 'discount' is small.
- 3.2 The proposed loan is for £318,000, to be repaid over a period of 5½ years (66 months), with a fixed interest rate of 4%. The total interest on the loan will be approximately £40,000.
- 3.3 The loan will be repaid in ten instalments, with the first instalment falling due after 12 months with the remaining nine instalments to be made at six-monthly intervals.

- 3.4 The Council's Legal Services have prepared a loan agreement which has been agreed by officers of the Council and Tone Leisure. This is ready to be signed once the relevant approvals are in place.

4. Loan Approval and Funding

- 4.1 The project investment is for items which, if the Council undertook the scheme, would be treated as capital expenditure. Under Regulation 25 (1)(b) of Statutory Instrument 2003/3146 *The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003* the advance of the loan will need to be treated as capital expenditure. In addition, the regulations require the Council to treat the loan principal repayment as capital receipts.

- 4.2 As this loan is treated as capital expenditure the Council needs to approve the budget as a Supplementary increase to the General Fund Capital Programme. In doing so the Council needs to also approve the funding of the loan.

- 4.3 The funding options are:-

- a. To finance it through "borrowing" and therefore by levying Minimum Revenue Provision – "MRP" – (capital debt repayment provision) against the General Fund over a number of years; this would impact on General Reserves.
- b. Not to finance the expenditure at inception of the loan, and adopt a policy to apply the capital receipts from the loan repayments to finance the original expenditure. As the loan is to be advanced on an Equal Instalments of Principal (EIP) basis, then the Council can demonstrate that it is making a "prudent provision" each year (as required by the CIPFA "Prudential Code").

- 4.4 The recommended option is 'b'. This means that the loan arrangement does not impact on General Reserve balances. Instead the capital receipts arising from the loan repayment instalments will be used to 'finance' the original loan. In the very unlikely event that Tone Leisure defaulted on the loan, the Council would be required to finance the outstanding balance of un-financed capital expenditure by making either MRP or setting aside other uncommitted capital resources. However, protection against any default has been included within the terms of the loan agreement, and risk of default is considered to be remote.

5. Finance Comments

- 5.1 The financial accounting arrangements for this loan arrangement are quite technical. The key requirements to comply with the capital finance and accounting regulations and the Prudential Code will be met by adopting the recommendations in this report.

6. Legal Comments

- 6.1 The Council has power under the well-being provision in the Local Government Act 2000 to incur expenditure, give financial assistance to any person for the promotion or improvement of the economic, environmental or social well being of an area and this loan. In addition the general power of competence as set out in the Localism Act 2011 would also be applicable.

6.2 The High Ropes course has a life expectancy of 20 years, and the Council will need to be aware that Tone Leisure's lease ends in nine years, therefore, should the lease not continue, an agreed "Book value" to be transferred to the incoming contractor would be required in advance of the final funding and contractual arrangements. Alternatively, the Council could agree to extend the lease to cover this period should it feel that it is in their interests to do so.

7. Links to Corporate Aims

7.1 Whilst this does not have a direct link with a Corporate Aim it does support and encourage visitors to Taunton which can only have benefit for the town community

8. Environmental and Community Safety Implications

8.1 There has been a flood risk assessment and the planning process has ensured environmental concerns have been taken into account.

9. Equalities Impact

9.1 Tone proactively provide services accessible to everyone, irrespective of disability, gender race, sexuality, age, religion or any other condition or group which place individuals at disadvantage. The High Ropes course offers opportunities for the whole community and will be actively promoted as such. There will be special hoist equipment to enable disabled visitors to experience the course

10. Risk Management

10.1 As with any investment, this loan is not "risk free". The key risks are:-

Risk	Mitigation
Interest rate risk	The interest is a fixed rate, and has been set with due reference to the market. Treasury Management policy, supported with advice from Treasury Management Advisors, to ensure the overall debt and investment portfolio provides optimum security and returns.
Payment default by Tone Leisure	The loan agreement will need to contain provisions to cover this eventuality.

10.2 Tone Leisure have completed a risk assessment as part of their decision making process and will continue to manage this through the project implementation

11. Partnership Implications

11.1 This decision supports our partnership relationship with Tone Leisure.

12. Recommendations

12.1 To approve the issuing of a loan of up to £318,000 to Tone Leisure for the purpose of installing a High Ropes facility in Vivary Park, Taunton;

- 12.2 To approve a Supplementary Budget of £318,000 to be added to the Council's 2012/2013 General Fund Capital Programme for the purposes of the loan to Tone Leisure;
- 12.3 To approve a policy to apply the capital receipts arising from the loan principal repayments to finance the original expenditure; and
- 12.4 To note the requirement, in the event of loan repayment default, to finance any outstanding balance of un-financed capital expenditure by making either Minimum Revenue Provision from the General Fund or to set aside other uncommitted capital resources.

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Council Meeting – 10 April 2012

Report of Councillor John Williams – Leader of the Council

1. All Change

- 1.1 The start of the new financial year sees tremendous change, with reductions in our Corporate Management Team and the Corporate Support Unit. This is a reduction of capacity at the very head of our organisation which has been necessary to meet the challenges of a shrinking budget. It does mean that as Members we have to consider the capacity of our Management Team and be clear in our priorities. This means that some issues will have to take their place in the queue or we have to agree not to pursue something through lack of capacity to deal with as the first priority must be delivering our statutory duties.
- 1.2 Whilst on this subject I would like to take the opportunity to record my sincere thanks to those that have left us and for the hard work and commitment they have given this Council over many years. On behalf of the Council my best wishes for the future and every success whatever you choose to do.
- 1.3 I have recognised above that as Members we must accept that life will have to change and expectations adjusted to suit the resources we now have. But, we also need to express our thanks to our officers that remain who have helped and guided us through the difficult process of restructuring and who, no doubt, will have to carry an increased load if we are to achieve our ambitious plans for Taunton Deane.

2. Taunton BID Process

- 2.1 At the time of writing this the ballot of town centre businesses has closed but I am not aware of the result. I can only remain hopeful that it will be positive because, as reported at earlier meetings, the trading conditions in Taunton remain better than many other locations, this has to be the place for what it has to offer.
- 2.2 Retailers and the Town Centre Company are an important part of this offer to attract visitors to the town and maintain its vibrancy. If the BID initiative is rejected by business, unfortunately as a Council we are in no position to step in and replace the resources or the finance to promote Taunton thus helping it maintain its pre-eminent position as a place to visit and shop.

3. Southwest One

- 3.1 The accounts for the Company have recently been published which show a substantial loss but I would like to reassure all Members this does not impact upon the taxpayers of Taunton Deane and that SW1 still continues to deliver its services and contracted savings for the benefit of the community we serve. Without the savings derived from this service our budget setting process would have been even more difficult than it was.
- 3.2 It is public knowledge that anticipated procurement savings have not been achieved and this is of concern. Useful procurement savings are being achieved but not at the level anticipated.
- 3.3 The Board of SW1 has taken a long hard look at its operations and has developed a new business model to improve the trading deficit and wipe it out over a number of years. We have supported them in the implementation of this plan and wish them well in its success as it is certainly in the interests of all partners that their plans are delivered.
- 3.4 I also take this opportunity of extending the thanks of this Council to our representative on the Board, Councillor Bruce Nottrodt, who I know has worked long and hard with his colleagues to deliver a satisfactory and, most importantly, a deliverable plan for improvement. Your commitment and hard work is appreciated.

4. Broadband Enhancement

- 4.1 By now work should have been completed on the installation of fibre optic cable across Taunton to provide a "Superfast" service to businesses and homes on the Taunton Exchange. I am awaiting a report on progress from BT and hopefully will be able to update Members at the meeting.
- 4.2 At the last meeting I made an appeal for the community and businesses to sign up to a campaign "Keep up to Speed: Get Connected". This is to show potential private sector investors the likely level of support so, if not already done, I urge everybody to sign up and circulate to all your friends and associates. Registration can be on line www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk or by telephone 0844 463887. The deadline for this has been extended - please do not wait, register your interest now - it is non-binding so only an expression of interest.
- 4.3 In respect of "Connecting Devon and Somerset" I set out again for ease of reference the key dates for the future:-
 - National Broadband Suppliers Framework established May 2012;

- Award of Devon and Somerset Broadband Contract - September 2012;
 - Work to start and schedule of works announced January/February 2013; and
 - Superfast Broadband to 85% of the area by 2015.
- 4.4 So by next January/February if the above timetable is kept we should be in a position to inform our communities when they may expect an enhanced service in their area.

5. Northern Inner Distributor Road (NIDR) and other road issues

- 5.1 The date for the Inquiry into the Compulsory Purchase Order process has now been fixed for 15 May 2012 for four days. However an Inquiry in May will not allow the works to commence in July unless Somerset County Council get a very quick response from the Inspector.
- 5.2 From past experience it is normally anything up to six months before an Inspectors report is issued and the Department for Transport (DfT) conclude whether to confirm the orders. This makes September as probably the earliest we are likely to be able to commence but could potentially bring this forward if DfT conclude the process earlier than anticipated.
- 5.3 The importance of this road cannot be overstated as it opens up the enormous development sites of Firepool for mainly employment and the old East Goods Yard for residential. It should also open the way for construction of the new Boulevard from the railway station down to the riverside providing that all important direct link to the riverside footpath leading to the town centre.
- 5.3 Somerset County Council's initiative to gain Central Government funding/support for upgrade of A303/A30/A358 and joint meetings with other Highways Authorities along its route and Government Ministers to make the case.
- 5.4 A response from the County Council to my question on progress has recently been received:-

“MPs attended a meeting in London and were broadly supportive although there was some concern from Wiltshire about potential detrimental impacts on communities if more traffic is generated by the improvements, and also regarding impacts during construction. Most MPs felt that the environmentally sensitive areas at Stonehenge and the Blackdown Hills would remain challenging issues and this was a helpful reminder that there will be many challenges to be overcome in seeking to promote a scheme. Nonetheless most agreed the time is absolutely right to be seeking to make a case for the scheme again. The budget statement references to new approaches to private

financing for strategic road schemes are very timely as you have noted, and when we see the Minister we will be floating the idea of a joint feasibility study into private financing options for the A303 improvements. We are thinking of pitching this as a national pilot so it will be interesting to see the response as the Government clearly wants to do some work on this issue in the next few months.”

- 5.5 I regard it as crucial that we support the County Council in any way we are able to promote the second route into the West Country as it must include improvements to the A358 and Junction 25 of the M5 which, as we are all aware, is critical to the future economy of Taunton Deane.

6. Core Strategy

- 6.1 I will leave it to my colleague, Mark Edwards, to go into detail on this in his later report but I offer my congratulations to all those involved in what appears to have been a successful plan preparation and presentation. We now have the Inspectors Draft Report following the Examination in February and the issues raised are not crucial and in no way alter or impact upon the general thrust of the plan. The items raised are already out for six weeks public consultation so all being well we are well on track for adoption of this key plan by July 2012 at the latest.

- 6.2 Why is this plan so critical for the Borough? It defines where planned development should take place and so protects all other areas from unwanted development in unsustainable locations. We will all have seen details of publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which places great importance on the protection offered by an Adopted Local Plan. This should provide our communities with that protection now as a material consideration and eventually as the adopted Local Plan.

7. Housing - Reinvigorating Right to Buy and One for One Replacement

- 7.1 During March 2012 the Department for Communities and Local Government published an information paper on the above containing information for Local Authorities as to how the above is to be implemented. Subject to Parliament these changes take effect as from the 2 April 2012.

- 7.2 I will be asking for a briefing paper on this from officers which I will ask to be circulated but from my understanding the discount rates remain the same but the cap on discount has been raised to £75,000. We can then use up to 30% of the net receipt from sales to fund a one for one “new home for affordable rent”. The implications of these changes will have to be carefully considered as although they require replacement housing it will bring opportunities but also many challenges!

- 7.3 There are complex rules governing what can or cannot be set against the “right to buy” receipt so arriving at the calculation for “net receipt” but as I see it by limiting the use of the right to buy receipts to 30% funding of the replacement property, the balance is then made up by borrowing funds against the affordable rent income stream or the injection of Council funds or assets such as land value.

8. Economic Development, Taunton Deane

- 8.1 It was the wish of Councillors that we did not continue subscribing to In2 Somerset but that we should ensure we, as an authority, take an active role in promoting the whole of Taunton Deane.
- 8.2 Work has commenced on this with a paper considered by the Project Taunton Steering Group about how the Project Taunton Team with our Economic Development Team can best promote us on a much wider scale and use/incorporate the interested parties in the private sector to maximise this promotion. It is recognised we must promote Taunton Deane holistically as a great place to live, work and play and that this must be to a national and international audience.
- 8.3 As part of this initiative we have re-engaged Fresh, a PR and Communications company and Members may recall that they were responsible for the earlier successful branding / promotion of Project Taunton. They are now commissioned to assist in developing a programme of promotion that will reach out to would be investors with a view to at least getting Taunton on the “list” of would be locations for investment. We need to capture a slice of all that business that is travelling up and down the motorway that at present is not giving sufficient weight to Taunton Deane as being the great place to re-locate that we are.
- 8.4 As these promotional plans develop they will be brought to Members for information and comment and it is our aim to achieve a “go live” date of the end of May 2012. We do recognize that we are in the midst of a national and international recession and that we must do all possible to attract whatever business is looking to expand or re-locate to Taunton Deane and our emerging Core Strategy together with the Firepool site and Junction 26 should now provide us with the choice of sites that has hitherto been missing.
- 8.5 This will also enable us to focus on inward investment associated with the proposed enormous development at Hinkley Point, the ready availability of suitable employment land and an ample supply of quality housing has to be a major plus point when talking to businesses seeking a base.

Councillor John Williams

Council Meeting – 10 April 2012

Report of Councillor Mrs Jean Adkins – Housing Services

1. Housing Property Services

- 1.1 I am happy to report that the Gas Servicing and Maintenance contract has been awarded to Ahlco and commences on 2 April 2012. Contact numbers for tenants requiring repairs remain the same for the present.
- 1.2 The Air Source Heat Pump installations have commenced and are expected to be completed in three months.
- 1.3 Seddons have been awarded the contract for new bathrooms and fitting will start on 16 April 2012.
- 1.4 We are currently sending out questionnaires to tenants who do not have gas central heating, starting with those still on solid fuel. We aim to install approximately 200 new systems this year and will prioritise larger 4/5 bed homes and then 3 bed family homes. Tenants where gas is not available will be asked for their preference to remain on solid fuel or switch to other alternatives.
- 1.5 Following a restructure, Tim Haynes is taking up the post of Property Manager (Contracts) and will therefore manage the above and we are recruiting to the post of Property Manager (Maintenance). The closing date is 10 April 2012.

2. Affordable Housing Development Partnership

- 2.1 The Council received some strong expressions of interest from six potential partners.
- 2.2 One of the potential partners has since withdrawn their interest and it has therefore been decided to appoint the remaining five organisations, who all meet the required criteria, as approved development partners.
- 2.3 The names of the development partners will be announced shortly.

3. Affordable Housing Target

- 3.1 This years target of 200 homes looks likely to be exceeded, which is extremely good news since we shall benefit from the additional New Homes Bonus as well as providing homes.

- 3.2 The target for 2012/2013 will again be 200 homes based on pipeline schemes and anticipated completion dates. We aim to set higher targets in future years based on projected housebuilding at a rate of 25% affordable housing.

4. Estates Team and Anti-social Behaviour

- 4.1 A long-standing case at Rockwell Green has recently been resolved.
- 4.2 Stephen Clark will shortly be moving from the Anti-Social Behaviour Team to join the Tenant Empowerment Team. I wish him well in his new post.

5. Homelessness and Rough- Sleeping

- 5.1 Sadly, but in line with national trends, there has been an upward trend in numbers. This is reflected in the monthly statistics which Members receive from Homefinder Somerset. We continue to work very closely with Taunton Association for the Homeless.
- 5.2 We are working across the County with the other districts to produce the new Homelessness Strategy. We have also, as part of a larger region, including the rest of Somerset, North Somerset, Bath and North East Somerset and Bristol attracted significant funding to have a more consistent approach across the County to focus on reducing the number of rough sleepers in the area.

6. Jubilee gardens, Priorswood Place

- 6.1 A licence has been granted to the North Taunton Partnership to establish a garden with grant funding from an outside source. Work is about to commence on this community project and I wish them every success.

7. Self-Financing

- 7.1 The final settlement was made on 28 March 2012, as previously reported. Happily the interest rate on the Public Works Loan Board financing which we took up with advice from our Treasury Management advisers was at a slightly lower interest rate than forecast.

8. Social Housing Fraud Consultation

- 8.1 The Tenant Services Management Board recently considered a draft response to this consultation and were highly supportive of a tough stance being taken, as am I.

8.2 The legislation, if passed, will criminalise tenancy fraud allowing us to take criminal proceedings against those who make fraudulent applications or sub-let for profit as well as civil proceedings.

Councillor Jean Adkins

Council Meeting - 10 April 2012

Report of Councillor Mrs Vivienne Stock-Williams - Corporate Resources

1. Customer Contact Centre

Customer Service

- 1.1 Southwest One (SW1) Customer Contact Centre maintained its successful service delivery during February 2012 with KPIs being delivered in excess of requirements. Customer satisfaction, whilst not reported within this quarter, continues to remain high with levels for the year to date running at 96.94% - the final annual figure will be provided in the March 2012 client report.
- 1.2 In addition, the team started to pilot a customer satisfaction programme for face-to-face services in January 2012. For the period January and February, there were a total of 27 cards returned with an overall satisfaction rating of 96.23%. The telephony process for TDBC is still a manual survey, but analysis work has shown that this method actually produces a higher return rate than the automated process. SW1 Contact Centre is currently liaising with the Taunton Deane Client Team to determine how this work can be moved forward on a permanent basis.

Service Delivery

Statistical Information:

Service Line	Reporting Authority	KPI No	Performance Measure	Frequency of Reporting	2011/2012 Target	Feb-12
Customer Contact	TDBC	1	% of calls answered in 20 secs	Monthly	80%	83%
Customer Contact	TDBC	2	% of calls resolved at first point of contact	Monthly	91%	95%
Customer Contact	TDBC	3	% of external customers rating the Customer Contact service as Very Good/Good	Annually (monitored quarterly)	73.5%	
Customer Contact	TDBC	4	Abandoned call rate - less than 5%	Monthly	<5%	4.22%

- 1.3 A total of 3,295 enquiries have been dealt with at The Deane House Main, Housing and Planning Receptions during February 2012 and 1,913 people visited Wellington Community Office – 1,247 to make enquiries including TIC

and 666 to make a payment through the kiosk. The team dealt with 323 letter and email enquiries during this period in addition to more than 1900 garden waste renewal applications. There were no complaints about the service.

- 1.4 The team continues to liaise with ICT to determine the Contact Centre's telephony requirements for the future and it is anticipated this work will be finalised by the end of May 2012.

2. Legal and Democratic Services

2.1 Corporate Support Unit

- 2.1.1 The recruitment process is now under way. Several internal applicants will be interviewed during the week commencing 9 April 2012. It is hoped that the posts will be filled very soon and the Unit will be fully operational quite quickly.

2.2 Changes to the Standards Regime

- 2.2.1 Regulations on this part of the Localism Act are still awaited. At this stage, it is still anticipated that the changes will take effect on 1 July 2012. It will, therefore, be necessary for a great deal of work to be done in a short space of time in order to bring the changes into effect.

3. Performance and Client Team

3.1 Client Team

- 3.1.1 We are approaching the start of the new financial year. Consequently, the priority for the Client Team has been around agreeing new performance targets for SW1 for 2012/2013 and Service Development Plans for each service area. Target setting is now complete across most service lines, although there are some issues to resolve with HR, which the Retained HR Officer is taking forward. There is an agreed approach and understanding with SW1 with regard to Service Development Plans and, with the exception of ICT, these are now in their final draft waiting for sign off.
- 3.1.2 In general, services within SW1 continue to function well. However, the Client Team are continuing to work with SW1 to progress service improvements in the ICT and Finance services.
- 3.1.3 A more flexible solution has been developed to overcome the problems some Members are experiencing with accessing their e-mails. For most Members, this will require a minor change to the way they access their e-mail. These changes will be rolled out in the early summer with a full explanation.
- 3.1.4 Somerset County Council (SCC) is in the process of implementing the changes it has agreed with SW1 to its contract. This will involve the return to SCC of the Design and Print service and the HR and Finance Advisory Services. SW1 have met with the Client Team to explain in detail how they will be restructuring to accommodate these changes and have outlined how

they will continue to deliver these services to the Council. We should see no detrimental impact on service delivery.

- 3.1.5 The team continue to work closely with Tone Leisure to monitor service delivery and to progress individual issues. The work to maintain and improve the lifts at Station Road Pool is now complete. The maintenance plan for the new financial year has been agreed with Tone Leisure. Members will be asked to make a decision at Full Council in April 2012 with regard to a loan provision by Taunton Deane for a High Ropes scheme in Vivary Park. Briefing sessions are being held in advance of the meeting.

3.2 Corporate Performance

- 3.2.1 The Quarter 3 performance report has recently been through the Corporate Scrutiny and Executive cycle.
- 3.2.2 The Corporate Governance Committee undertook an exercise at their meeting on 12 March 2012 to identify key strategic risks. These will be considered by Corporate Management Team in the next review and update of the Corporate Risk Register and will be taken to the next Corporate Governance Committee.
- 3.2.3 Service Planning for 2012/2013 continues in each Theme, and Theme Managers will be discussing the key priorities for their service areas with Portfolio Holders.
- 3.2.4 The Corporate Performance Lead will be working with the Project Taunton Team from April 2012 to provide support with Performance, Risk and Project Management

3.3 Private Sector Housing Partnership

- 3.3.1 From April 2012, the Performance and Client Team will take over responsibility from the Strategy Team for the client monitoring of the Private Sector Housing Partnership. A detailed handover process is currently being undertaken.

3.4 Retained Finance and Corporate Insurance

- 3.4.1 The Retained Finance Officer continues to focus on maintaining the day-to-day delivery of the retained finance functions and in providing support to the S151 Officer.
- 3.4.2 The Council's new Corporate Debt Management Policy has now been agreed by Members and is in the process of being rolled out across the Authority.
- 3.4.3 The Retained Finance Officer is overseeing the borrowing of funds totalling £86,000,000 to fund the Housing Revenue Account reform.
- 3.4.4 The insurance function is currently being provided for us by Somerset County Council's insurance team, as our Insurance Officer is on maternity leave. This arrangement continues to work well.

3.5 Retained HR

- 3.5.1 The retained HR function continues to support CMT and Theme Managers with the remaining elements of the Theme 5 restructure, the restructure of the Housing Service and the 2012/2013 Budget proposals.
- 3.5.2 Recent amendments to the Appeals Policy have been approved by the Executive, in addition to the Pay Policy Statement being approved by Council. This latter document has been published in accordance with the Local Government Transparency Regulations.

4. Revenues and Benefits

4.1 Council Tax and Business Rates

- 4.1.1 Annual billing of Council Tax and Business Rates and the up-rating of benefit calculations took place during March 2012. 49,620 Council Tax bills were despatched to the value of nearly £59,000,000 and 3,730 Business Rate bills totalling £49,500,000.
- 4.1.2 At the time of writing, in-year collection of Council Tax stands at 98.19% and Business Rate collection is 99.19% - meaning that annual targets have been exceeded. It is hoped the final results at 31 March 2012 will exceed what was achieved last year. The team's speed of processing benefit claims, currently standing at 9.21 days, is also set to exceed the target for 2011/2012.
- 4.1.3 A benefit recipient was prosecuted in March 2012 for her failure to declare a change in her circumstances. We argued our case successfully and the Court imposed a community order of 120 hours unpaid work and awarded £100 towards costs.

4.2 Council Tax Support

- 4.2.1 The Revenues and Benefits Service is engaging with other Somerset authorities in planning for localised Council Tax Support to be introduced in April 2013. We hope to provide a briefing session for Members on the changes that will result from Welfare Reform in the next few weeks.

5. Southwest One (SW1)

5.1 Procurement

- 5.1.1 The shortfall in delivered savings through the Procurement Transformation project remains a significant concern and issue for the Authority. However, we are monitoring the position closely and ensuring that regular reports are being made to Members by the Strategic Procurement Service (SPS).
- 5.1.2 Progress is, however, being made. The gas servicing contract has recently been re-let, which should deliver significant savings. Work is ongoing in

respect of DLO stores, and planned and routine property maintenance, in addition to other initiatives.

5.2 SAP Re-launch and Patching

- 5.2.1 The key elements of the system have been launched and are working.
- 5.2.2 The performance review (PREDS) functionality has been piloted within part of the Council. This has identified the need to make two changes to the system, which are currently with SW1 IT service to resolve. Once these changes have been made, in order to make the process more user-friendly, we will be in a position to roll out SAP PRED across the organisation.
- 5.2.3 This leaves the sickness, E-recruitment, overtime, leave and some aspects of Business Intelligence Reporting elements of the system which are not currently in use. Work is ongoing with SW1 and our partners to change the way E-recruitment and Sickness functions operate and until these changes are made we will not launch. Overtime is delayed until Taunton Deane reviews its overtime policy as part of the budget savings project, as our rules will need to be programmed into SAP.

6. Shadow Health And Wellbeing Board

6.1 Health and Wellbeing Event

- 6.1.1 This event took place on 1 March 2012 in Taunton and brought together a range of partners and agencies with an interest in Health and Wellbeing and included representatives from the GP Federation, patient participation groups, NHS Somerset, Children Centres, officers and Councillors from both the District and County Council as well as representatives from a range of other agencies. The event was designed both to inform people of the major changes taking place as a result of the Health and Social Care Bill and also to offer the opportunity to influence the emerging Somerset Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- 6.1.2 Feedback from this well attended event was passed on to the Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board (SHWB) to help influence their Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Another positive outcome was the commitment for follow-up events that would focus on closer working between agencies to tackle health issues in Taunton Deane communities.
- 6.1.3 Interest has subsequently been invited from attendees to become involved in an ongoing health and wellbeing group to help co-ordinate activities in Taunton Deane and align services to address health and wellbeing issues where possible.

6.2 Public Health Transition Plan

- 6.2.1 At its recent meeting, members of the SHWB considered a comprehensive report on the Somerset Public Health Transition Plan. This was well received

and the recommendations supported.

6.2.2 Key proposed changes are:-

- a) Responsibility for strategic planning and commissioning of NHS services to transfer to the NHS Commissioning Board and Clinical Commissioning Group.
- b) Local authorities are to be given a statutory duty and a ring fenced budget to improve and protect the health and wellbeing of their populations.

6.2.3 There are a number of critical tasks for the Primary Care Trust cluster and the local authority to undertake to ensure a robust transition. These include the need:-

- a) to ensure maintenance of an effective delivery of the Public Health function during 2012/2013;
- b) establish ongoing robust arrangements from 2013/2014, within the local authority and other receiver organisations.

6.3 Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy

6.3.1 The meeting also endorsed the three emerging priorities: outcome 1) Support people to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing; outcome 2) Families and communities are resilient; outcome 3) Somerset people are able to live independently. These emerging priorities were discussed in depth at stakeholder consultation events held in all five districts.

6.4 Troubled Families

6.4.1 The HWB Officers Group met again in March 2012 and is considering how the work of the SHWB could be aligned with Troubled Families work. This work is aimed at tackling the 2% of families who have the highest levels of contact with a range of public sector bodies. At the subsequent SHWB meeting, members signed up to further work planned in relation to troubled families, as this is clearly a priority area for all public agencies.

6.5 Future direction

6.5.1 It was agreed that the SHWB Chairman would write to all five districts to confirm full membership status for each with immediate effect.

Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams

Full Council – 10 April 2012

Report of Councillor Mark Edwards - Planning, Transportation and Communications

I wanted to start my report by highlighting the retirement of Ralph Willoughby-Foster. Ralph retired from his post as Planning Policy Advisor on Friday, 30 March 2012. He has been with the Borough Council since 1980 in a variety of roles with responsibility for preparing a range of Planning policy documents not least his central role in steering the Core Strategy to the stage it is now in. We wish him well in his retirement and thank him for all his good work over the past 30 plus years.

1. Core Strategy

- 1.1 Following the Core Strategy Examination in February, the Inspector has published a list of recommended 'main changes' to the Plan, which are currently advertised for additional representations. The closing date for representations (comments) from interested parties is 25 April 2012. He will consider responses prior to either reopening the Examination or recommending adoption of the Core Strategy.
- 1.2 Officers consider it highly unlikely that the Examination will be reopened as there were no significant changes, so it is hoped that the Core Strategy will be adopted by Full Council in July 2012, as originally intended.
- 1.3 The Government published the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on 30 March 2012, which favours a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' as a starting point.
- 1.4 It is vital therefore that an authority has 'up to date' plans to guide sustainable development otherwise planning permissions may be granted in otherwise poor locations where plans are absent or out of date. The adoption of the Core Strategy will be of invaluable assistance in this regard.

2. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 2.1 On 27 March 2012, the Government released the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in its final form. This document will be used to guide planning policy and decision making across the country. It replaces all previous Planning Policy Guidance/Statements into a single document of under 60 pages.
- 2.2 The Government took on board (all or in part) 30 of the 35

recommendations made at the draft stage by the Commons Communities and Local Government Select Committee, reaffirming the primacy of the 'Plan led' approach to decision making.

- 2.3 This confirms the position I have held throughout and that I have just eluded to previously that it was vital we continued with the Core Strategy and despite some authorities either halting theirs due to the abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategy the NPPF has given the clearest steer with regards the future of local plan making.
- 2.4 Whilst strongly supporting sustainable economic growth, the published version strikes a more balanced approach towards growth alongside environmental and social considerations. In particular, through reintroducing reference to the intrinsic value of all the countryside, a major concern raised by national bodies such as the National Trust and CPRE at the draft stage.

3. Neighbourhood Planning

- 3.1 We were successful in the bids for front-runner funding to assist with Neighbourhood Planning. The initial areas that have been successful are Wiviliscombe, Wellington and Trull (in relation to its Broad Location for growth status within the Core Strategy) for which we have been awarded £60,000 of central Government Funding.
- 3.2 The funding will assist us in working with the communities to prepare these plans, which include a referendum and examination by an Inspector. We are presently assessing the best way forward for these plans and as other areas have indicated an interest in preparing their own plans we need to make sure that we learn from these front runners and prepare the plans in a relevant and economically sustainable way. Members will get more details as the processes are progressed.

4. Community Infrastructure Levy

- 4.1 We are well advanced with the initial charging fees and will be bringing a paper to Scrutiny in May, with the charging schedule then going for consultation and examination.
- 4.2 This is quite a complex process, which needs to be carefully balanced making an assessment of viability versus the need for infrastructure for future growth.
- 4.3 We are on track to get the Community Infrastructure Levy in place by the year-end although we do have our interim policy in place if required.

5. Heritage

Tone Works

- 5.1 The Planning Committee has resolved to grant planning permission and listed building consent (subject to a Section 106 Agreement), which will secure partial regeneration of the Grade 2* listed complex of mill buildings, north of the River Tone, in Wellington.
- 5.2 This is a significant move forward in finding sustainable reuse of the buildings, which have been largely unoccupied and at risk since 2000. Of particular note is the fact that Fox Brothers will be returning part of its weaving operation to the site, which otherwise would have been located to the north of the country.

Sandhill Park

- 5.3 Following the devastating fire, a fully sheeted scaffold over the main part of the house, should be erected within the next six weeks. This will enable a more detailed and safe inspection of the fabric to be undertaken and the implementation of works to help dry the structure out. A comprehensive set of measures to protect the building from further unauthorised access/ vandalism has been drawn up and these will be implemented at the appropriate time.
- 5.4 Since the fire, relevant parties have been in close and frequent contact, with a view to revisiting and progressing a scheme which will secure the long-term future of this important Grade 2 * listed building.

6. Landscape Team

- 6.1 The Landscape Team has continued to deal with a high level of planning consultations with landscape responses running at 21 per month and nature conservation responses running at about 10 per month taking an average of 5 days per consultation.
- 6.2 The team has dealt with 138 tree applications and notifications and served six Tree Preservation Orders. David Galley, Landscape Support Officer, has been working at Mid Devon District Council covering their tree officer during maternity leave as well as helping West Somerset District Council on tree matters when required.
- 6.3 Partnerships with the two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the Quantock and Blackdown Hills as well as the Somerset Waterways Advisory Committee and Somerset Environment Records Centre continue to provide great value for money in maintaining and enhancing their landscape, heritage and wildlife features.
- 6.4 The Higher Level Stewardship grant (nearly £30,000 over ten years) granted in 2011 for management work at Ash Common Local Nature Reserve (LNR) has allowed the team to carry out significant enhancements such as cutting back of birch trees encroaching on the open areas, management of woodland, as well as improvements to access and the car parks.

- 6.5 Working with the Crown Estate, plans are now in place to help manage habitats and access at Gadds Valley one of our newer Local Nature Reserves (LNR).
- 6.6 The old boardwalk at the Wellington Basins has been revamped along with some habitat management. A peppercorn lease agreement has now been agreed with the Environment Agency for the new Westford Community Woodland near Rockwell Green. Access to the community woodland will be improved over the next few months.

7. Parking County-wide Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) Project

- 7.1 In my last report to Council I advised that tenders had been received for this project. I can now say that Somerset County Council has awarded the contract to NSL. This company is already providing enforcement and notice processing services in a number of Local Authority areas including Oxfordshire, Hertfordshire, Brighton and Hove, Salford, Enfield and Ealing. Work has started in earnest to have the new service ready for implementation on 11 June 2012.
- 7.2 I am pleased to say that Jon Pallett, our Parking Services Manager, has been appointed to that role at the County Council. I take this in no small way as a reflection on the way this Council has operated CPE since 2001.
- 7.3 I would also take this opportunity to remind Members that we continue to own our car parks and receive the revenue from them. All decisions about tariffs remain with us.

8. Communications

- 8.1 The Olympic Torch Relay in May continues to demand time as the event draws nearer and the amount of information to disseminate grows greater.
- 8.2 The route has been announced, along with our Council-nominated Torchbearers – Police Sergeant Andy Murphy and Judy Gaden.
- 8.3 Communications is working closely with LOCOG and with neighbouring authorities hosting the Torch.
- 8.4 The major announcements on 19 March 2012 saw regional and local coverage on TV, radio, online and in the print media. Thanks are due to the Torchbearers and Paralympian Deb Criddle for their time and close co-operation.

- 8.5 Deane Dispatch's April edition is about to go to press and will look at issues around fly-tipping while the May edition will concentrate on the Torch Relay – local events, arrangements and the evening celebration.
- 8.6 Recent news releases have ranged from the exciting archaeological finds at Castle Green to the Council's planned house-building programme with the establishment of the development fund, food scores and, of course, the Torch Relay.

Councillor Mark Edwards

Council Meeting – 10 April 2012

Report of Councillor Mrs Jane Warmington – Community Leadership

1. Police and Crime Panel

- 1.1 The Joint Select Committee of Local Authority Council Leaders is meeting on 23 April 2012 at Portishead to establish a Shadow Police and Crime Panel (PCP) by this summer which, in the first instance, can only comprise ten elected Members, one from each local authority in the area. It is this group of ten that will then decide the wider co-opted membership of the PCP up to a maximum of twenty.
- 1.2 The Select Committee may also advise the Shadow PCP on co-opting further Members, the term of office of Members, resignation and removal of Members, any re-appointments and support arrangements for the Panel.

2. Community Policing Awards

- 2.1 The Portfolio Holder attended this award ceremony on behalf of the Leader of Council to see Taunton pick up five of the six awards from the Somerset West Policing District in the Avon and Somerset Community Policing Awards. A photograph appeared in the Somerset County Gazette.

3. Health

- 3.1 Following NHS Somerset production of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for the County (further details can be found on the SINE website: <http://www.sine.org.uk/isna-2022/>), the Strategy Manager and the NHS Trust organised a Health and Wellbeing event which all Councillors and a range of organisations were invited to on 1 March 2012.
- 3.2 This event updated people on the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board, the health issues in Taunton Deane and projects that are currently in place to address these. These were well presented and well received. Seventy five attended and those who were there were able to contribute and influence the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

4. Priority Areas Strategy

Taunton East and North Taunton

- 4.1 Work on the action plans is continuing with partners refining the ideas (over 500 gathered throughout the consultation process) into a manageable and deliverable set of working projects which they will then lead on.
- 4.2 These fall into three categories: Strategic Projects which have an impact beyond North Taunton and Taunton East such as the Troubled Families Programme.
- 4.3 Local Major Projects which focus on North Taunton and/or Taunton East such as those relating to education, enterprise and development, volunteering.
- 4.4 Quick Win Projects which are smaller scale where an activity can start soon such as reducing litter, providing a needle exchange and tackling dog mess.
- 4.5 There has been some slippage in the Action Plans coming before Community Scrutiny due to staff absence. This is now expected in early May. Their feedback will be used to refine the plans which will then be considered for approval during summer 2012.

Troubled Families

- 4.6 This has moved on from the initial joint Somerset County Council/ Taunton Deane bid (under Community Budgets) as the Government wants to roll out a programme across the whole country.
- 4.7 A report has been produced to go before the Taunton Deane Partnership for approval, looking at scope, model, identification of families, setting up of a working group, governance and outcomes. There is a support grant of £20,000 to help with this. The Lead Officer is Vikki Hearn.

Tell Us Once

- 4.8 This service is already making a difference. As a rule of thumb, the next of kin would ordinarily need to tell seven different public sector organisations about a death. Therefore we can estimate that this reduces the number of contacts and has a significant cost saving to the public sector. www.somerset.gov.uk/tellusonce. Housing has been added and should now 'be live' (requested from customer feedback).
- 4.9 Work is ongoing to see if we are able to inform other District and County Council services (Wiltshire has achieved this). It is likely to be more challenging in Somerset with the two tier system and outsourced customer contact, but still worth pursuing.

5. Community Development Team

New Youth Club

- 5.1 The new Taunton North Youth and Sports Club is holding an open evening on 13 April 2012 (Community Hall, Selworthy Road, Priorswood, Taunton) with its first session on 17 April (Youth Club on Wednesday and Friday evenings, Boxing Club on Tuesday and Thursday evenings).
- 5.2 The refurbishment has been supported by our Community Development Team, Somerset County Council Youth and Community Team and the local Policing Team.

Viridor Green Community Park, Taunton

- 5.3 This large play park (next to ASDA) opened in early in March. It is incredible. Future activities are planned on site. It is already very popular. Huge thanks again to all those involved in transforming this piece of rough ground into this wonderful community asset.

New Holiday Breakfast Club

- 5.4 Residents and agencies in Halcon have joined together to create a new holiday breakfast club for local families. At present the breakfast clubs run through the local schools during term-time, leaving a gap the new club hopes to fill.
- 5.5 Starting over Easter, the club will operate at the Baptist Church Hall in Crossways on 2 April and 13 initially from 8.30 to 9.30am (though there is some thought this may be a little early!). It will offer 40 places to children and parents and will try and match demand.
- 5.6 During the summer it expects to run every Monday and Friday morning, giving people the chance to have a healthy breakfast as well as being able to read, play games or take part in quizzes.
- 5.7 The project has been supported by grants from ASDA, Vista and Somerset Primary Care Trust, whilst Taunton Deane, Halcon Baptist Church, the Link Partnership, Circles Nursery, Halcon Primary School and Somerset County Council Out of School Hours Team have been part of the steering group with local residents.

Jubilee Garden, Priorswood

- 5.8 Work has started on the Jubilee Garden for the North Taunton Partnership which is on schedule to open over the Jubilee weekend in June.

Holiday Activity Days

- 5.9 Both the Link Partnership (Thursdays) and the North Taunton Partnership (Tuesdays) have organised their holiday activity days (one day a week across Easter and the summer holidays) with a host of different things to do for local families. Details may be found from both centres, posters or on their websites.

6. Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Panel

- 6.1 The setting up of the new Grants Panel is coming before the Community Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 3 April 2012 and onto the Executive on 11 April 2012.
- 6.2 As the majority of youth and community activities happen over the summer and early autumn, waiting to use the grant panel process and allocating funds towards the end of the year would be too late for most of the projects.
- 6.3 Therefore, the existing process will need to be used for the forthcoming financial year.
- 6.4 The Youth Improvement Fund (YIF) and the VCS small grants fund will be advertised from 1 April 2012 for a six week period.

Councillor Jane Warmington

Council Meeting – 10 April 2012

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

1. Theme 1 Stimulating Business Growth and Investment

1.1 Business Liaison

The team undertakes a proactive programme of visits to larger local businesses with the aim of assisting businesses to realise their growth and investment plans. During the year to date the team has visited around 30 businesses.

New organisations met on a 1:1 basis during the past two months and currently being supported include:

- Porter Dodson
- Lewtec, Taunton
- Taunton School
- Foxmoor Business Park, Wellington
- On Yer Bike, Wellington
- Sainsburys, Taunton
- Morrisons Taunton
- 7 Cycles, Taunton
- Olio & Farina, Taunton
- Virgin Active Health Clubs, Taunton
- South West Internet
- West Somerset Railway
- Somerset Tourism Association

1.2 Rural Post Offices

Website for rural retailers

Slow on uptake for www's for rural retailers. Have re-sent a letter and followed up with calls. Have four booked to receive the training which will be run on the 10 April 2012 in the computer suite at Oake Village Hall. Disappointing but many, despite best efforts, do not see the value!

1.3 Business Events

Wellington Business Event

Very successful event, delivered alongside Wellington Chamber of Commerce on 23 February 2012. 25 stands by business support agencies. £650 sponsorship secured from Porter Dodson. Approximately 80 businesses attended. Will work with Federation of Small Businesses to repeat the event in Taunton over the Summer.

Taunton Deane Tourism Conference

Held at the Tacchi Morris Arts Centre on the morning of 22 February. Conference, networking and information/brochure exchange. Well attended by local visitor attractions. Highlighted the need for additional signage as many of these accommodations were also tourist attractions in their own right. A successful event – intend to repeat on an annual basis at different venues.

1.4 Support for Rural Business Projects

LARC (Local Action for Rural Communities): Levels and Moors and Western areas LARC open for new applications for business projects; Blackdown Hills fully committed. Applications that have been received so far are being appraised. Through discussions with the LARC Managers none of the applications really impact on the Taunton Deane area too much.

1.5 Small Business Grant

Three further applications have been received asking for funding, which will shortly be considered.

1.6 Stimulating Enterprise amongst Young People

The Council has contracted once again with BIS – Business Initiative in Schools – to offer learning and support to young people in Taunton schools to create new businesses. Members will recall that last year the initiative gave Taunton the accolade of being the Regional Winner of the UK Enterprising Town Competition.

2. Theme 2 Ensuring a Skilled and Entrepreneurial workforce

2.1 Support for major Redundancy Announcements

Working with Job Centre Plus (JCP) and other Somerset Districts to agree a protocol for interface with organizations that have announced a major redundancy programme. Providing a unified interface with the organization we can offer:-

- Support for job seekers (through JCP). Preparing a flyer that sets out all the different sources of support available to job seekers in Taunton Deane, including Job Clubs;
- Advice to the company on property disposal; and

- Coordination with the company on media interface and keeping Members informed.

2.2 Fredericks Somerset

One application from Taunton Deane went to the panel at the February meeting. It was felt by the Board that the applicant could do with some training in the field before they felt ready to invest funding into the business but all felt it was definitely a worthwhile project. Contact will be made as to the possibility of the Council helping through the business passport we will be offering.

3. Theme 3 Creating an Attractive Business Environment

3.1 Taunton Town Centre Company and BID Programme

The Council, at Member and officer level through the Economic Development Team, is an active member of the Town Centre Company (TTCCo), working closely on specific events (such as the Tour of Britain and the Olympic Torch Relay) as well as coordinating the provision of town centre services.

The ballot closed on 31 March 2012, and it is to be hoped that the result is positive. The continued success of the TTCCo is essential to the continued well-being of town centre businesses.

Town centre signage: the finger posts should be ready for collection by mid-April and the monoliths approximately 1 week later. They will then be ready for installation, which is being done by RJ Spiller.

3.2 Floodlighting

The Executive resolved in October to transfer floodlighting on third party properties, mostly churches, to the property owner. Officers have written to those owners inviting them to take ownership of the installations from 1 April 2012.

To the end of March 33 of the 38 Churches have either signed up to the transfer, or agreed to discuss it. Two have declined.

3.3 Portas Pilot bids

Officers have been working with separate Town Teams in Taunton and Wellington to draft and submit bids to the new Mary Portas Programme. The Taunton bid focuses on the High Street, looking to increase year round activities

and to encourage footfall all the way along the street. The Wellington bid focuses on the opportunity to regenerate the Corn Hill and to reassert Wellington as a Food Town.

4. Taunton Tourist Information, Ticket and Travel Centre (TIC) update

(i) Visitor numbers and spend

There has been a slight decrease in the number of customers coming through the door but it is hoped that this will improve as we move in to the main summer season.

(ii) Promotional activities

The TIC and events web pages continue to be among the most popular Council web pages visited and used. The TIC team have now completed their spring-clean and have refreshed the office adding all of the new 2012 promotional material. An updated Taunton Heritage Trail leaflet and a new simple accommodation listing for Taunton Deane have been produced for the season ahead.

(iii) New activities planned

The Tourist Information Lead is working with the Civic Officer to promote and raise the profile of Diamond Jubilee events taking place in the area and has created a page on the main website for the DLO Parks Department listing all the events taking place within our parks.

The TIC will be the main public contact point for the Olympic Torch Relay events taking place in town and will be the distribution/collection point for the evening celebration tickets. There will be a mobile TIC in the town on Monday, 21 May 2012.

A new accessible kiosk pc has just been installed within the TIC for the general public which will allow customers to view planning applications, relevant tourism sites and other pages from our website.

(iv) Hestercombe Gardens

Hestercombe Gardens Trust will be taking over Hestercombe House - a fantastic opportunity to further improve what is one of our major tourist attractions. Whilst this will give the Trust a serious capital asset, there is also a considerable amount of work to be done. The first part of renovation is expected to cost in the order of £3.6million, a lottery application is being

prepared. If successful, plus the existing funds, there will be a shortfall of £400,000.

The total scheme when completed is expected to include a number of small business units at the rear of the property.

The TIC Team continue to work closely with the Economic Development Unit, Taunton Town Centre Company and other organisations to raise the profile of Taunton Deane.

5. Asset Management

- 5.1 Agreement has been reached on the split of proceeds from the sale of the Taunton Youth and Community Centre site. The sale of this property can now proceed.
- 5.2 River Tone and COACH have been awarded a £40,000 capital grant by Taunton Deane. This will enable them to seek full planning consent with the necessary reports.
- 5.3 Mount Street Nursery Site: The flooding issues have been addressed in a way to enable development to take place with a smaller number of units, without significant reduction in value.
- 5.4 The team has been working with the DLO group on possible relocation sites, and will be meeting again shortly. It does however look as though the Frobisher Way site will not be suitable, which should mean we will be able to put it back on the market.
- 5.5 The removal of the Chestnut Tree in the Canon Street Car Park, Taunton and reinstatement of car park spaces has been delayed due to the necessity of compliance with Ancient Monument regulations.

Councillor Norman Cavill

Council Meeting – 10 April 2012

Report of Councillor Ken Hayward – Environmental Services

1. Environmental Health

Somerset - Flexible Warrant Scheme

- 1.1 The scheme evolved out of the Workwell scheme introduced by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to increase partnership working between Local Authorities and the HSE. However, following various HSE restructures, a new Government and changing priorities, the HSE have now pulled out of the scheme and have left it to Local Authorities (LA's) should they wish to progress with the scheme.
- 1.2 The objective of the scheme is to:-
 - increase the flexibility and responsiveness of health and safety regulators to situations of significant risk;
 - increase communication between health and safety regulators;
 - facilitate the collective use of resources.
- 1.3 Nominated officers from the five Somerset LA's that form the Somerset Health Safety and Food Group will be authorised under the scheme to carry out health and safety enforcement in other Somerset LA areas, for example an EHO from Sedgemoor District Council could be called to assist with the initial stages of a fatal accident occurring in Taunton Deane.
- 1.4 The launch of the scheme took place in the John Meikle Room on 28 March 2012 with officers from all five Somerset Authorities attending. The morning involved various presentations and a training session.

Prosecution

- 1.5 The case against Bridge Charcoal Grill was heard in Magistrates Court on 23 March 2012 for four food offences on two separate occasions. The owner pleaded guilty to all four offences and was fined £2500 for the first two offences, £3000 for the next two offences with costs of £1190 plus victim surcharge of £15 totalling £6705.
- 1.6 Officers had worked with the owners of the business following previous visits to help them to improve hygiene standards, however following the latest food hygiene inspection, standards had failed to improve and officers had no further option other than to progress enforcement action. It has taken almost a year to bring this case to Court and a considerable amount of work by the case officer and Legal Services.

Other Matters

- 1.7 The Council is currently considering an application for the Cosmo Festival to be repeated at Taunton Race Course over the weekend of the Queen's Jubilee. The licence application is being heard before the Licensing Sub Committee on 4 April 2012.
- 1.8 A Building Act Notice has been served on the owner of an overflowing septic tank/soakaway system in the Wellington area. It appears that the soakaway has failed and a new one needs to be built together with a new pumping system. Environmental Health have served a new notice requiring the tank to be emptied every three days as an interim measure. Works on a more permanent solution were required to be carried out by Friday, 30 March. At the time of writing this report it is not known if the works have been carried out, but together with officers I am closely monitoring the situation.
- 1.9 The Blackdown Hills Cheese Company has been granted full approval to produce dairy products.

Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI).

- 1.10 The annual return was completed on time – the first full return under the new Private Water Supply Regulations.
- 1.11 Taunton Deane has been selected by the DWI to trial and evaluate the new Risk Assessment tool before it is launched nationally this summer. The Council has extensive experience in risk assessing private water supplies and a selection of local supplies was visited in conjunction with a DWI inspector to trial the new risk assessment tool. The trial has enabled Taunton Deane to directly contribute to the development and improvement of this new risk assessment tool and will be participating in presenting the tool in London at the CIEH this summer.
- 1.12 Fly tipping continues to be a problem. As the months go by I am more and more convinced that the problem has little to do with any change of opening hours at the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC). The nature of some of the incidents, and their locations (often out in the country) lead me to believe that the perpetrators have absolutely no intention of going anywhere near any HWRC. I have therefore launched a campaign to try and eradicate the problem or at least to reverse the trend. We have printed more signs - to be allocated with the assistance from Deane DLO to tipping hot spots. We have also made a feature of the issue in the Deane Despatch.
- 1.13 Festival of Light – Nights of Light was held in Somerset Square on Thursday, 22 March from 18:00 – 20:00. The event is the first to be held in Somerset Square. The event involved a jazz band parading up and down the River Tone on the Future Perfect Boat before moving on land. There were fire jugglers and a piece of art outside The Brewhouse. It is estimated around 150 – 200 people attended the event.
- 1.14 The Licensing Team have attended multi agency meetings regarding the Elton John concert which is to be held at Somerset County Cricket Club on the 3 June 2012. The concert will be covered by the premises licence held by the Cricket Club.

- 1.15 The Licensing Team continues to strengthen links with partner agencies and work with them to assist people in holding appropriate events and activities within Taunton Deane. Currently the team is working to increase the opportunities within Taunton for street trading particularly within areas of public open space such as Goodland Gardens and Somerset Square. Application numbers are steady with an increase in Licensing Act applications which we anticipate may be for businesses preparing for this summer's events – the Olympic Torch and the Jubilee.

2. Climate Change / Carbon Management

Toyota Prius registered as a taxi

- 2.1 A Toyota Prius has been registered for use as a taxi in the Taunton Deane area. The Prius is fitted with an electric and a petrol engine and can achieve up to 70 miles per gallon.
- 2.2 The Toyota Prius has lesser harmful CO₂, nitrogen oxide and soot emissions than a petrol or diesel car of similar size. CO₂ emissions are 104g/km and nitrogen oxide are ten-times than that of a standard petrol car. Experience has shown that when used as a taxi the Prius can save up to 10 tonnes of CO₂ emissions per year which means it emits only half as much CO₂ as a comparable diesel car.
- 2.3 Experience with the Prius will be reported back to the Taxi Forum for other companies to follow the good example.

Recycled Paper to be used for office printing

- 2.4 Theme Managers at Taunton Deane have agreed to corporately move from virgin paper (currently used) to using recycled paper for office printing. The recycled paper carries a small premium (of 15%) however this can be negated if staff are encouraged and shown how to consume less paper. Paul Harding – in his capacity as a Green Champion – has produced some printing tips and posters for this purpose. Volunteers within the themes will pass these on to help spread the word.
- 2.5 The additional costs for recycled paper are £1.80 per box. The Council uses about 1200 boxes per year. Carbon savings are 2.4 kg/CO₂ per box. This means that for an additional cost of about £2,000 per year – that can be offset through staff making paper savings – the Council will reduce its annual carbon emissions by 14 tonnes. This is equivalent to the annual carbon emissions of more than two average houses per year (6 tonnes CO₂ per house average).

Progress update on solar PV installation on Taunton Pool

- 2.6 Installation of 36kW solar PV array on Taunton Pool is due this summer. A time line for the project has been drawn up to ensure the project is delivered on time.

By 16 March deadline, 25 companies had submitted an Expression of Interest to do the job. Officers from Taunton Deane and Southwest One have produced

a tender shortlist from those submissions. The tender was released on 30 March 2012.

Draft Carbon Management Plan for 2012/13

- 2.7 The Draft CMP will be finalised at the next Carbon Management Steering Group on 5 April 2012. To be adopted by Executive in April / May.

New boilers for Blackbrook Pavilion

- 2.8 The boilers at Blackbrook Pavilion need replacement in 2012/2013. Options to be considered include:-
- Replacing like-for-like (i.e. old gas boilers with new gas boiler);
 - Replacing old boilers with a combination of gas boilers and solar thermal panels;
 - Replacing old boilers with CHP (Combined Heat and Power) plant;
 - Replacing old boilers with biomass boiler

Over the next weeks we will ask companies for quotes on the above options and will prepare a business case.

Progress on Climate Change and Local Resilience Strategy

- 2.9 Some progress has been made on benchmarking of actions in the Taunton Deane area : The Transport Working Group is operational; other working groups are about to be set up. A Workshop organised by Transition Taunton on 24 March will bring together local voluntary groups. The deadline for benchmarking phase is June 2012.

LEAF (TDBC cooperating with Transition Taunton)

- 2.10 Transition Taunton and Deane Energy Savers run a project with the aim to increase the uptake of loft and cavity wall insulation in Taunton. Transition Taunton will use about £60,000 Government funding that they have won for this. The Council assists them by acting as their banker. We have not had any feedback from Transition on the success of the project yet, but I hope to bring a verbal update to Full Council.

3. Waste Management

- 3.1 The Somerset Waste Board met on 30 March 2012. It approved the Annual Internal Audit Plan for 2012-2013, and the Waste Prevention Strategy for Somerset 2012-2013. Regards the latter, the main purpose of the Partnership continues to be to help bring about behaviour change with the aim of reducing the amount of waste arisings in Somerset – the Waste Hierarchy:



With Landfill tax rising from £40 to £48 per tonne from 1 April 2012, it is imperative that we divert as much as possible away from landfill.

Value Added Tax

- 3.2 Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs (HMRC) has ruled that VAT is chargeable on the gate charges the Partnership has imposed at four of its HWRC's. However, there will be no increase in the £2 charge as it was set to accommodate VAT should it be ruled chargeable. However it does bring additional pressure on balancing the disposal budget. Although a new budgetary imposition, it is probably not insurmountable for 2012/2013, provided that the volume forecasts are broadly borne out.
- 3.3 The HMRC has further ruled that the contributions that Partners make into the Somerset Waste Partnership are not deemed a VATable supply, where previously it was assumed to be VATable. This ruling will potentially have wide-reaching financial repercussions in relation to the District Council VAT Partial Exemption Calculations.
- 3.4 This is a complex issue, and it was clear from officers at the meeting that the extent to which this may affect District Councils for this and other partnerships is open to interpretation, and so think that it would be inappropriate for me to try to explain the implications in this report. Financial Officers in each of the District Authorities are aware of the issue and are looking closely at exactly how it might affect us. Once they have digested the information they will no doubt share it with us all.

4. Deane DLO Update

I am aware that Members do not normally get to see the DLO Staff Newsletter, and so the following is largely taken from that publication.

Voids Team Creation

- 4.1 Since the creation of the area working model we have been undergoing continuous reviews to identify practices that are working well and those that can be improved.
- 4.2 As part of the continuous improvement of DLO services we are now in a position to implement a dedicated voids team managed by Roy Porter. This team will bring together many of the skills needed to deliver the voids property

repairs in order to reduce the amount of days properties are vacant. This reduction is a particular priority of the Housing Client and one where we can make a real difference to those in need of Council housing.

- 4.3 The DLO has worked hard to improve the turn around times and this effort is already bearing fruit; the creation of a dedicated team will allow further improvements and help us sustain a high quality service. Currently the voids turn around time for Taunton Deane is just over 18 days, this is a vast improvement from the 32 days that was being taken earlier in the financial year. Through an independent survey this figure now places us amongst the top 25% nationally.
- 4.4 The creation of this team will see some existing staff move from their current Area into this team; those affected have been contacted separately. The go live date for this team is 1March 2012.

BT Fleet Updates

- 4.5 The transfer of our fleet maintenance has been a general success. There are some areas where improvements are required and we are working with BT to make appropriate alterations to the service. They have increased their staffing at the Priorswood site, Taunton to accommodate the increased workload that we are providing.
- 4.6 This also links with the upcoming leased fleet replacement programme which has now been approved for 2012/2013. The younger the vehicles are within the fleet the more fuel efficient they are likely to be and the less they will be prone to breakdown.

Uniform

- 4.7 A preferred supplier has now been selected for the workforce uniform. This followed an intensive procurement process which did cause some delays beyond the expected timetable. We are moving to a new colour for all staff in order to represent a new start for the DLO. The uniform colour will consist of black trousers and grey shirts/sweatshirts. The selected uniform style is not dissimilar to the current uniform.
- 4.8 We will shortly be using samples to "size" all employees; once this has been completed there will be a roll out of all uniform over a tight period. All employees will be required to wear the uniform that is provided as it not only demonstrates our brand to tenants, ensuring their security when allowing trades staff into their homes, but also identifies us to external businesses, partners and other potential customers.
- 4.9 As part of the uniform roll out there will be an audit of staff identification (ID) cards. As a professional organisation all staff will be expected to display their ID cards; if their role determines that it is not safe for them to be displayed they must still be carried at all times.

Depot Relocation

- 4.10 We are in the process of identifying the size requirements of any new depot and are being challenged to reduce the amount of equipment and materials that we hold in storage. It stands to reason that the smaller the size we can achieve the less it will cost. Currently there is not a great deal of suitable alternative property on the market, but we are being open minded in considering all possible options and for the time being the search will continue.
- 4.11 Councillors John Williams, Norman Cavill and I are shortly meeting with officers to see how this relocation process, which is an essential part of the DLO Transformation Project, can be moved forward.

IT software

- 4.12 A project team has recently been set up to identify a suitable IT system to replace the system currently being used at the depot. This system will allow for automated transfer of jobs directly to employees using a device such as a smart phone or PDA. Whilst this automation will not be suitable for all work areas, the new job creation software will. The aim of this is to get a better understanding of our workload and analysis of our performance.
- 4.13 A series of 10 workshops is taking place in order to gather information on current working practices and to look at ways of improving manual administration systems that are already in place. Visits are also taking place to view systems that are being suggested in order to find an IT company that can provide what we need within the budget that is available.

Waste Transfer Station

- 4.14 As part of our commitment to review all processes, and as a result of difficulties in relocation opportunities, we have decided to remove the waste transfer station from the depot. In practice this means that all waste will now go directly to the Viridor site in Priorswood from 1 April onwards.

Vehicle Tracking

- 4.15 Since the implementation of vehicle tracking we have been able to look more closely at the way our fleet is used. This has allowed us to reduce the number of vehicles in our fleet quite considerably. We do not have information on fuel use for a before and after comparison yet, but our expectation is that this will have reduced not only due to fewer vehicles being operated but also due to changes in driver behaviour.

Summary

- 4.16 Overall the DLO is in a much better position having completed a number of the key elements of the transformation plan and, perhaps most importantly, demonstrated that keeping the DLO in-house is proving to be a good decision.
- 4.17 We are still waiting for the final out-turn figures, but I am delighted to tell Members that we are well ahead of projected savings. Well done to everyone!

Councillor Ken Hayward

Council Meeting - 10 April 2012

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

1. Parks

- 1.1 I think you will all agree that the parks have been looking glorious in the beautiful sunshine we have had lately. No doubt it will be snowing by the time you read this!
- 1.2 I was pleased to support Wellington and District Sports Federation and Wellington Action Group for Dogs with the installation of signs reinforcing the dog ban at Wellington Playing field. The field is widely used by numerous local adult and junior sports teams and it is important that the field is kept clean.

2. Community Leisure and Play

- 2.1 I thought I would take this opportunity to share with you all the schemes we have helped in the last 12 months with our Capital Grant Schemes.

Capital Grant Scheme awarded this financial year and ongoing from previous years for community halls and sports clubs. Budget £46,000 per annum.

Project	TDBC Grant	Project Cost	Project Description	Leverage excluding applicants own funds
Stoke St Mary Village Hall	£4,165.	£12,500	Insulation, energy efficient lighting and double glazed window to replay louvre window	£6,000
Bishops Lydeard Village Hall	£10,000	£30,000	Kitchen extension	£14,000
Ash Priors Village Hall	£7,500	£40,000	Creation of car park to stop parking on narrow lane	£24,400
Fitzhead Tithe Barn	£6,660	£26,643	Roof upgrade and insulation	£13,483
West Bagborough Village Hall	£28,750	£115,000	Extension and refurbishment	£62,110
Langford Budville Village	£35,000	£560,000	A hall for the village which did not have	£414,855

Hall			one	
Wiveliscombe Rugby Club	£24,750	£75,000	Extension	£32,616
Milverton Village Hall	£3,310	£10,029	New boiler and heating	£3,360
Taunton Bowling Club	£10,000	£103,000	Disabled access	£22,000
Total	£130,135	£972,172		£592,824

Capital Grant Schemes awarded this financial year and ongoing from previous years for the Parish Play Area Grant Scheme. Budget £20,000 per annum.

Project	TDBC Grant	Project Cost	Project Description	Leverage excluding applicants own funds
Ruishton	£3,492	£8,777	New swings	£2,785
West Buckland	£3,448	£7,178	New slide	Balance met in full by Parish Council
Otterford	£2,634	£5,268	Grass safety matting	Balance met in full by Parish Council
Stawley	£2,175	£4,350	Hard surfaced area for youth and young children's play area	Balance from own funds
Norton Fitzwarren	£768	£1,555	BMX track	£537
Total	£12,517	£27,128		£3,322

3. Tone Leisure (Taunton Deane) Limited Activities

Community, Sports and Health Development

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

Health Development

3.2 Older People

3.2.1 Tone held a Seated Badminton session at Parmin Close Active Living Centre (ALC), Taunton for approximately 15 participants.

- 3.2.2 The Falls Instructors have completed six months of Falls Prevention at Abbeyfield in Taunton and Lodge Close sheltered housing in Wellington.
- 3.2.3 Tone has launched a new Falls Prevention class to start in Priorswood in April to follow on from the six months Tone have run at Abbeyfield and Lodge Close. Tone gave mini health MOTs at Parmin Close, Staplegrove, Rockwell Green, Wellington and Oake ALCs and approximately 36 participants have taken advantage of this offer.
- 3.2.4 Tone has trained 15 new volunteers to deliver Flexercise in homes and ALCs and they are all now actively delivering Flexercise.
- 3.3 Children's Centres
 - 3.3.1 James Quirk continues to deliver sessions at The Hollies Children's Centre, Taunton that incorporate The Hollies, Acorns and Hillside Children's Centres.
 - 3.3.2 Tone are continuing to promote signposting services in the district, including sexual health and smoking cessation to the young parents in all three Children's Centres that Tone is working with.
- 3.4 Weight Management
 - 3.4.1 The Community Pounds project in Priorswood, Taunton is going very well with approximately 50 people signed up and taking part in various physical activity opportunities and weight loss. Tone have delivered a community weight management programme that saw six people lose a cumulative total of 17kg in six weeks. The success of this has encouraged Tone to launch another weight management course in North Taunton in April.
- 3.5 NHS Health Checks
 - 3.5.1 Tone is working closely in partnership with Victoria Gate Surgery, Taunton to promote the activities that Tone offer through Health Checks and to offer Halcon residents NHS Health Checks on a fortnightly basis in the community. These Health Checks are also being offered on a fortnightly basis to the residents of Priorswood.
- 3.6 Deprived Communities Work
 - 3.6.1 The Development Team attended the opening of the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) and play area next to ASDA in March 2012 and delivered basketball and hockey sessions for the youngsters. Tone are working with the Police to deliver a football and activity day in Hamilton Park, Taunton in May.
- 3.7 Sportivate
 - 3.7.1 Tone Leisure is currently delivering sports projects for 14-25 year olds that will encourage long term access to physical activity. Sportivate funding is enabling the cost of sessions to be reduced and on some

sessions participants attending regularly can claim vouchers to be used for further physical activity within Tone.

3.7.2 In conjunction with SASP (Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership), Sportivate are funding a ONE membership offer where young people can purchase one month's membership and get a second month free. This enables young people to have access to a wide range of sports and fitness opportunities, including swimming, golf, fitness classes, gym sessions, climbing and racquet sports.

3.7.3 PING (an innovative form of table tennis) is continuing to run at Wellsprings Leisure Centre, Taunton with Climbing, Feel Good Factory sessions, and Cardio-Tennis running at Blackbrook Pavilion, Taunton after Easter.

Facility News

3.8 Taunton Pool

3.8.1 After months of planning and working alongside Taunton Deane Borough Council, Tone are pleased to announce that the lift service is back in action. Renovation took just under a month and the lift is now in full operation.

3.8.2 Birthday Parties have been highly successful at Taunton Pool and many children (and adults) seem to be enjoying this facility. Both Sea Scooters and Water Walkers have become popular and, with the support of Food 4 You, Tone has been able to offer 'TONE' party bags to help replenish the energy used in the water.

3.9 Wellington Sports Centre

3.9.1 The Sports Hall floor was resealed on 19 March 2012 and Tone have already received positive feedback from regular teams and block bookers.

3.9.2 The Z3 Lottery funded project is now into its third year of the project and Tone have secured an additional 'out of session' schools booking that will continue to operate until the end of the summer term.

3.9.3 The centre also delivered another great Roller Fever session in February 2012, with some fantastic feedback. Tone will continue to offer additional sessions throughout the year. The next fun packed evening has already been booked for July.

3.9.4 No Strings Badminton sessions are due to be launched at the beginning of May after the successful recruitment of an innovative Co-ordinator.

3.10 Blackbrook Pavilion

3.10.1 Blackbrook Pavilion is hosting a number of large sporting events over the next four months; the first took place on Sunday, 25 March - the Sport Relief Mile, with well over 500 people taking part. Other events coming up include 'Run 4 Amy' on Saturday, 16 June and a schools Olympic Sports Day for over 800 local children.

3.10.2 Blackbrook have had continued response to Mini Madness: a Bouncy Castle and Craft session for children under school age. Tone have two sessions a week with over 30 children attending each one. It has given parents an opportunity to meet other parents and encourage their children to interact with others.

3.11 Tennis Centre

3.11.1 Tone are currently operating a coaching programme at three satellite clubs, Wellington, Taunton Vale and Wiveliscombe. In the summer term there are provisional plans to operate in two additional clubs around Taunton.

3.11.2 In addition, Tone are currently running two after school clubs at St. George's and Trinity, Taunton with plans to go into another three primary schools in the summer term.

3.11.3 All the outreach programmes act as starting points for children and adults to try tennis and they also feed into the programme at Taunton Tennis Club if they want to develop their tennis further.

3.12 Wellsprings Leisure Centre

3.12.1 Functional fitness is coming to Wellsprings Leisure Centre. Tone have continued to invest in its facilities with a new, modern and inspiring functional fitness area located on the first floor. This will allow a number of small group sessions and enable members to participate in sessions like Kettlebell to ViPR. An open weekend has been scheduled for after the Easter holidays.

3.12.2 Wellsprings Leisure Centre has linked with the Rugby Football Union to bring Touch Rugby to local community venues. Wellsprings is one of only two leisure centres selected in the South West to run these regular sessions. The sessions start on Wednesday, 18 April 2012 at 6 pm and are open to everyone over the age of 16.

3.13 Events

- Jimmy Carr is coming to Wellsprings in November and ticket sales are strong, with nearly 40% of available seats already purchased.
- Robin Windsor and Kristina Rihanoff from the BBC's Strictly Come Dancing have been booked for Tone's Strictly Dance event at the end of June 2012.

Councillor Catherine Herbert.

Taunton Deane Borough Council

At a meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council held in the John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton on 10 April 2012 at 6.30 pm.

Present The Mayor (Councillor Brooks)
 The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Hall)
 Councillors Mrs Adkins, Mrs Allgrove, Mrs Baker, Beaven, Bishop,
 Bowrah, Cavill, Coles, Denington, D Durdan, Ms Durdan, Edwards,
 Farbahi, Mrs Floyd, Gaines, A Govier, Hayward, Henley, Mrs Herbert,
 C Hill, Mrs Hill, Horsley, Hunt, R Lees, Ms Lisgo, Meikle, Morrell,
 Mullins, Nottrodt, Ms Palmer, Prior-Sankey, D Reed, Gill Slattery,
 T Slattery, Mrs Smith, P Smith, Mrs Stock-Williams, Stone, Swaine,
 Tooze, Mrs Warmington, Watson, Mrs Waymouth, Ms Webber,
 A Wedderkopp, D Wedderkopp, Williams and Wren

Also present : Mrs Anne Elder, Chairman of the Standards Committee.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council held on 21 February 2012, copies having been sent to each Member, were signed by the Mayor.

The Democratic Services Manager reported that the Prudential Indicators attached as an Appendix to the recommendation to the last meeting of the Council concerning the General Fund Revenue Estimates 2012/2013 had been the incorrect version. The correct copy had been appended to the minutes.

2. Apologies

Councillors Mrs Govier, Miss James, Mrs Lees, Mrs Messenger, Mrs Reed and Ross.

3. Declaration of Interests

Councillors Brooks, A Govier, Prior-Sankey and D Wedderkopp declared personal interests as Members of Somerset County Council. Councillor Henley declared personal interests both as a Member of the Somerset County Council and as an employee of Job Centre Plus. Councillor Mrs Waymouth declared personal interests both as a Member of Somerset County Council and in respect of her involvement with Taunton School. Councillors Mrs Hill, Mrs Smith and Stone declared personal interests as employees of Somerset County Council. Councillor Wren declared personal interests as an employee of Natural England and as Clerk to Milverton Parish Council. Councillors Hayward declared a personal interest as one of the Council's representatives on the Somerset Waste Board. Councillor Nottrodt declared a personal interest as a Director of Southwest One. Councillors D Durdan and Stone declared prejudicial interests as Tone Leisure Board representatives and left the meeting during the discussion of agenda item No.7. Councillor Tooze

declared a personal interest as an employee of the UK Hydrographic Office. Councillor Swaine, as a part-time swimming instructor at St James Street Pool, declared a personal interest. Councillor Mullins declared a personal interest as EDF Energy at Hinkley Point was his employer. Gill Slattery declared a personal interest as a member of the Board of Governors at Somerset College.

5. **Public Question Time**

(1) Vicki Phillips representing the Taunton – Lisieux Civic Link asked Councillors if they knew what Lisieux had to do with Taunton?

She asked because it was only about a year ago she learned that Lisieux was a town in northern France which had been twinned with Taunton for 57 years. Every year, a small group of people from each town met up to ensure this historical link was continued.

Last year a visit to France was made – a trip which was full of friendship and history that it was felt this should be passed on to future generations. In May the French group will again be visiting Taunton.

The reason for bringing this matter to the attention of the Council was that this historical Civic twinning needed more people to keep it going. More hosts were desperately needed to accommodate the French visitors and more interest from local residents generally about the twinning was required before the link was broken.

Mrs Phillips stated that surely part of the role of being a Councillor was to try and maintain historical links that promoted Taunton. She therefore asked what the Council would do to ensure the twinning carried on?

In response the Leader of the Council, Councillor Williams, thanked Mrs Phillips for her questions. He acknowledged that the twinning link between the two towns was longstanding and hoped Councillors would provide more support for the annual visits between the towns.

(2) Mr Martin Aldred asked the following questions concerning the proposed redevelopment of Halcon North:-

(a) With regard to the Council's web portal document reference TA187, was it correct that the tenants and residents of Halcon North could be left in limbo until 2017-2022?

(b) Why have requests to meet with the Leader of the Council to discuss the proposed redevelopment not, so far, met with success?

(c) Many people in the area did not have a stable home life and the threat of losing their homes was not helping in any way. Would the Council please work with the Tenants and Residents Association to make the lives of these people more secure?

Mr Aldred then handed in a petition containing almost 400 signatures against the Council's redevelopment proposals. He went on to say that he intended

to continue attending Council meetings to ask questions until a full and satisfactory outcome for the community of Halcon North was achieved.

In response, Councillor Mrs Adkins reported that she was not aware of the document TA187 referred to by Mr Aldred. The other questions asked were noted.

6. Proposed Tone Leisure Loan for a High Ropes Project in Vivary Park, Taunton

Considered report previously circulated, which sought the relevant budget and funding approvals to make a loan to Tone Leisure for the installation of a High Ropes leisure facility in Vivary Park, Taunton over the top of the mini golf course.

High Ropes courses were becoming a growing leisure activity, recommended to be set in natural environments. The Vivary High Ropes course would provide two separate aerial trekking experiences at differing heights. Participants were secured permanently via a harness to a steel rail/rope overhead and were led by an instructor. The course was likely to be one of the largest in the South West and a real attraction to both Taunton and Vivary Park.

Tone Leisure would be working with a partner organisation called “Closer to the Edge” to develop programmes, operational practices and recruit and train staff. The design of the course had been completed with Closer to the Edge and JM Adventure, who had built many courses around the country.

The project investment was set at £318,000, of which £300,000 was for the High Ropes course, equipment and storage, with the remainder allocated to remodel some areas of the current café/ hut/ pro-shop. Staff costs, maintenance costs and Closer to the Edge support costs had been factored into a business plan.

Income was projected at £157,960 in year one, building to £273,350 by year three. The first year profile of visitors had been extended to an average of 300 visits per week for 40 weeks of the year. These 12,000 visits in year one would grow to 22,000 by year three.

Reported that the full business case had been scrutinized by Southwest One Taunton Deane Finance Advisory and Taunton Deane Legal Services. Although a number of risks had been highlighted these would be mitigated through the terms of the loan agreement.

The proposal was for the Council to offer a loan to Tone Leisure that provided value to the taxpayer and to Tone Leisure. As such, the loan proposed would be classed as a “soft loan” which essentially meant that the Council would be offering a loan with an interest rate that was marginally below the rate Tone Leisure could obtain from a financial institution.

The proposed loan was for £318,000, to be repaid over a period of 5½ years (66 months), with a fixed interest rate of 4%. The total interest on the loan would be approximately £40,000.

The loan would be repaid in ten instalments, with the first instalment falling due after 12 months with the remaining nine instalments to be made at six-monthly intervals.

Noted that the project investment was for items which, if the Council had undertaken the scheme, would be treated as capital expenditure. As such, the Council needed to approve the budget as a Supplementary increase to the General Fund Capital Programme. In doing so the Council needed to also approve the funding of the loan.

Further reported that the funding options were:-

- (a) To finance it through “borrowing” and therefore by levying Minimum Revenue Provision (capital debt repayment provision) against the General Fund over a number of years. This would impact on General Reserves; or
- (b) Not to finance the expenditure at inception of the loan and adopt a policy to apply the capital receipts from the loan repayments to finance the original expenditure. As the loan was to be advanced on an Equal Instalments of Principal basis, then the Council could demonstrate that it was making a “prudent provision” each year.

The recommended option was (b). This meant that the loan arrangement did not impact on General Reserve balances. Instead the capital receipts arising from the loan repayment instalments would be used to ‘finance’ the original loan.

In the very unlikely event that Tone Leisure defaulted on the loan, the Council would be required to finance the outstanding balance of un-financed capital expenditure by making either Minimum Revenue Provision or setting aside other uncommitted capital resources. However, protection against any default had been included within the terms of the loan agreement, and risk of default was considered to be remote.

Resolved that:-

- (1) The issuing of a loan of up to £318,000 to Tone Leisure for the purpose of installing a High Ropes facility in Vivary Park, Taunton be approved;
- (2) A Supplementary Budget of £318,000 to be added to the Council’s 2012/2013 General Fund Capital Programme for the purposes of the loan to Tone Leisure be approved;
- (3) A policy be approved to apply the capital receipts arising from the loan principal repayments to finance the original expenditure; and
- (4) The requirement, in the event of loan repayment default, to finance any

outstanding balance of un-financed capital expenditure by making either Minimum Revenue Provision from the General Fund or to set aside other uncommitted capital resources be noted.

6. **Written Questions to Members of the Executive**

(i) From Councillor Horsley to Councillor Williams – 2011/2012 Budget

I was delighted to read in the Financial and Performance for the third quarter of the current year 2011/2012 that the likely overspend for this year had been contained at £313,000 when the prognostication after Quarter 1 was that this was going to be over £600,000.

However I wish to know why you used the figure of £600,000 as the likely overspend for the current year during the budget debates leading to its adoption at Full Council, on 21 February 2012.

Less than two weeks later at the Corporate Scrutiny Committee and then again on 14 March 2012 at the Executive, the Financial and Performance figures confirmed the overspend had been contained at £313,000.

Was this a genuine error banding around the figure of £600,000 or was it deliberate skulduggery on the part of the ruling group to create fear to get passed their budget with so many cuts in services from which the public are going to suffer in the forthcoming months?

Reply - The latest budget monitoring position for 2011/2012 was clearly set out in the report to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 23 February 2012. Appendix B of this report sets out the headline forecast position of the General Fund. We of course will not know the actual position until May / June this year once the accounts have been prepared.

The forecast at Quarter 1 showed a projected overspend of £805,000. This was revised down to a projected overspend of £316,000 at Quarter 2 and is now forecast at £313,000 in our Quarter 3 reports. This “bottom line” position is made up of many individual variances – some of which will continue this year and in future years, and some will not.

The budget for 2012/2013 is set using our best estimates of those items that will continue in future years (for example the estimated shortfall in car parking income amounts to £530,000 alone for reasons that have been well rehearsed previously), therefore the clear and prudent advice was that £600,000 was the best estimate at the time.

As regards whether it was an error or not, we will not know this until possibly June 2012 but it certainly was not skulduggery!

(ii) From Councillor Henley to Councillor Williams – The current local economic situation

Would the Leader of the Council care to comment on the double whammy impact that the closure of Debenhams Back Office with the loss of 250 jobs in Taunton Deane is going to have on the local economy alongside the failure of the Town Centre Company and the BID Board to win approval for their second five year Business Plan for the Taunton Centre?

Will he admit that the current administration have been complacent and not helped proactively enough in overcoming the economic downturn? Will he agree with me that the Council's support for the Town Centre Company has been little more than lip service over the past few years and not much more than tokenism?

When will he recognise that the combination of the cuts that this council alongside the much greater ones taken by Somerset County Council are reducing consumer demand and impoverishing the local business community leading to more vacancies both in jobs and in shop lettings? Has he spoken to the Leader of Somerset County Council about the impact that job losses from the public sector is having on the spending power in the local economy?

What is his strategy to encourage Taunton Deane to overcome this gloomy background and to bring about even the semblance of some economic recovery? Where are the jobs going to come from which are so desperately needed if we are to meet fulfill some of the objectives of the Core Strategy and the Local Plan?

Reply - Since their possible redundancy announcement I would not wish to prejudge the outcome of any consultation process but we have contacted Debenhams and will try to work with them to mitigate any loss of the jobs.

The loss of the Business Improvement District vote (BID 2) has to be extremely disappointing and we will do all we can to work with the Taunton Town Centre Company (TTCCo) to mitigate the impact of the loss of funding. However it has to be recognised that we cannot step in and replace the resources or funding the traders have rejected, albeit by a very narrow margin. We will continue working with the TTCCO to try and find the best solution.

Members will be aware that £20,000 per year has been given by the Council to the TTCCo. In addition to that we have recently given them additional funding to assist with BID 2. The February Executive agreed to an additional £5000 being allocated from our Business Growth Initiatives budget to enable a ballot to be held on behalf of the TTCCo. We have also assisted the TTCCo in many other ways, for example the Shop Taunton campaign where we joined forces with the Somerset County Gazette and the TTCCo to offer prizes of £1000 worth of free parking. Car window stickers were used, and those that won one of the awards for shopping in Taunton received six vouchers allowing a day's free parking. So successful was this that it was repeated on 29 and 30 October. This also enabled the Shop Taunton supporters promotion of their business published free of charge in the Gazette on 27 October.

It is a gloomy picture throughout the Country so, far from being complacent, we are trying to buck that trend and have had considerable achievements despite the recession such as:-

- Completion of the Goodlands Gardens, Taunton refurbishment in February;
- Viridor's investment in Firepool, Taunton due to open this Summer;
- Crest Nicholson starting their new houses at the back of Firepool in June;
- Completion of Castle Green, Taunton in July; and
- The refurbishment of the High Street, Taunton which was currently under way.

We have ambitious plans to encourage more footfall in Taunton Town Centre through one off events, such as the Olympic Torch Relay and longer term plans for a new weekly produce market on Somerset Square, regular events and activities on Castle Green, and improving the weekly Farmer's market on the High Street. Details will be presented to Members as and when they are worked up.

In the Summer we will roll out our new inward investment marketing campaign, which aligns Project Taunton with the Economic Development Team's Deane-wide marketing activities, looking at refreshed web presence, and things such as media campaigns.

We are also working with Jeremy Browne MP and Councillor Farbahi on the Ambassador's Event on 21May 2012 to try to open up trading doors with South Korea. We are most grateful for Councillor Farbahi's efforts in this respect.

In respect of the impact of Somerset County Council changes this is an issue for Councillor Henley to take up direct as a County Councillor. It is not for this Council to comment as only they know the position they face.

(iii) From Councillor Morrell to Councillor Cavill – Relocation of Taunton Police Station and Project Taunton

- (a) What was the current status with respect to the relocation of Taunton Police Station to The Deane House?
- (b) When might elected Members obtain an update from officers on the relocation of the Police Station Project?
- (c) Have Project Taunton had a Project Plan in place, and if so, I would be grateful if copies were provided to Elected Members within five working days; and
- (d) When would The Council have an opportunity to review the forward Project Plan for Project Taunton?

Reply – In respect of questions (a) and (b), the Executive has previously authorised a detailed and costed Feasibility Study to be carried out by Southwest One into the potential for relocating the town centre Police presence to The Deane House. This study has recently been received and is the subject of comprehensive examination by our officers and Avon and Somerset Constabulary's Project Team. Once these are complete, the recommendations will be brought before Scrutiny and the Executive during the Summer.

With regard to questions (c) and (d), the new Growth and Regeneration Team was being established and a combined "Project Plan" will be ready for discussion later in the year. The work of the current Project Taunton Team is the subject of regular review by the Project Taunton Advisory Board and the Taunton Deane Project Taunton Steering Group.

As was recently requested, the Project Taunton report to the Steering Group has been circulated to Councillors and, in future, is planned to be placed in the Weekly Bulletin after the Steering Group's meeting.

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

The following reports were made to the Council on the main items of current and future business.

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

Councillor Williams's report covered the following topics:-

- All Change;
- Taunton Business Improvement District (BID) Process;
- Southwest One;
- Broadband Enhancement;
- Northern Inner Distributor Road (NIDR) and other road issues;
- Core Strategy;
- Housing – Reinvigorating Right to Buy and One for One Replacement;
- Economic Development, Taunton Deane.

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

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

- Housing Property Services;
- Affordable Housing Development Partnership;
- Affordable Housing Target;
- Estates Team and Anti-social Behaviour;
- Homelessness and Rough-Sleeping;
- Jubilee Gardens, Priorswood Place, Taunton;
- Self-Financing;

- Social Housing Fraud Consultation.

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

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

- Customer Contact Centre;
- Legal and Democratic Services;
- Performance and Client Team;
- Revenues and Benefits;
- Southwest One; and
- Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board.

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

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

- Core Strategy;
- National Planning Policy Framework;
- Neighbourhood Planning;
- Community Infrastructure Levy;
- Heritage – Tone Works and Sandhill Park;
- Landscape Team;
- County-wide Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) Project; and
- Communications.

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

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

- Police and Crime Panel;
- Community Policing Awards;
- Health;
- Priority Areas Strategy;
- Community Development Team and
- Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Panel.

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

The report from Councillor Cavill covered:-

- Stimulating Business Growth and Investment;
- Ensuring a Skilled and Entrepreneurial Workforce;
- Creating an Attractive Business Environment;

- Taunton Tourist Information, Ticket and Travel Centre; and
- Asset Management.

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

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

- Environmental Health;
- Climate Change / Carbon Management;
- Waste Management; and
- Deane DLO Update.

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

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

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

(Councillors A Govier and Stone left the meeting at 8.23 pm and 8.47 pm respectively. Councillors Mrs Smith and P Smith left the meeting at 8.54 pm. Councillors D Durdan, Ms Durdan and C Hill all left the meeting at 8.55 pm. Councillors Ms Webber and Wren left the meeting at 8.57 pm.)

(The meeting ended at 9.13 pm.)