

You are requested to attend a meeting of the Council to be held in The John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton on 11 September 2012 at 18:30.

Agenda

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

- 1 To report any apologies for absence.
- 2 To receive any communications.
- 3 Declaration of Interests
To receive declarations of personal or prejudicial interests, in accordance with the Code of Conduct.
- 4 To receive questions from Taunton Deane Electors under Standing Order 15.
- 5 To receive any petitions or deputations from Taunton Deane Electors under Standing Orders 16 and 17.
- 6 To receive the following recommendation from the Executive:-

Councillor Williams - Adoption of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy (attached).

Tonya Meers
Legal and Democratic Services Manager

03 October 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 L Lisgo, MBE (Deputy Mayor)
Councillor T Hall (Mayor of Taunton Deane)
Councillor J Adkins
Councillor J Allgrove
Councillor J Baker
Councillor A Beaven
Councillor C Bishop
Councillor R Bowrah, BEM
Councillor S Brooks
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 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 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

Usual Declarations of Interest by Councillors

Full Council

- **Members of Somerset County Council – Councillors Brooks, A Govier, Henley, Prior-Sankey, Mrs Waymouth, D Wedderkopp**
- **Employees of Somerset County Council – Councillors Mrs Hill, Mrs Smith and Stone**
- **Employee of Sedgemoor District Council – Councillor Slattery**
- **Employee of Job Centre Plus – Councillor Henley**
- **Employee of UK Hydrographic Office – Councillor Tooze**
- **Employee of Natural England – Councillor Wren**
- **Somerset Waste Board representatives – Councillor Hayward and Councillor Ross**
- **Director of Southwest One – Councillor Nottrodt**
- **Alternate Director of Southwest One – Councillor Ross**
- **Tone Leisure Board representatives – Councillors D Durdan and Stone**
- **Part-time Swimming Instructor at St James Street Pool – Councillor Swaine**
- **Employee of EDF Energy – Councillor Mullins**

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Council Meeting – 11 September 2012

Councillor Williams

Adoption of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy

The Executive has recently considered the proposed adoption of Taunton Deane's Core Strategy as part of the statutory development plan for the district.

The Core Strategy has been prepared over a number of years and sets out a long-term strategic vision and spatial policies to guide planning decisions in Taunton Deane up to 2028.

Earlier in the year, the Government's Planning Inspector considered issues that had been raised in representations and made verbally at the hearing sessions. This included the need for any 'Main Modifications', which he considered necessary in order for the plan to be considered 'sound' and recommended for adoption. In addition, a number of further consultations had been held to address the publication of new national planning policies such as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The Taunton Deane Core Strategy Inspector's Report was received on 3 July 2012. This report identified a number of Main Modifications which are outlined below:-

- Clarifications to Policy CP3 to define the geographical extent of town centres and the operation of the 500 m² threshold for impact assessment;
- Additional text following Policy CP4 to set out the process for advancing sites into the five-year housing land supply;
- Removal of a reference in Policy CP7 to an interim policy pending the introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule;
- Amendment to Policy SP1 relating to housing allocations in minor rural centres to allow greater flexibility;
- Numerical corrections to the housing provision figures in Policies SP4 and SS1;
- Removal of the requirement for the allocation of strategic housing sites within the identified 'broad locations' (Policies SS6 and 7) to await a Core Strategy Review in 2016 and substitution of reference to allocation in the Site Allocation and Development Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) by 2015; and
- Re-wording of Policy SS8 (Broad location for Taunton Strategic Employment)

to provide a clear criterion-based context for site identification in a future DPD.

In addition, a new Policy (CP1) has been introduced as a main modification to ensure that the plan properly reflected the presumption in favour of sustainable development introduced in the NPPF.

The incorporation of these changes means that the Plan can be considered sound and capable of adoption. A Core Strategy document for adoption has now been prepared.

Should Members resolve not to adopt the Plan, they need to know that there would be no up-to-date development plan to provide the framework for decision-making in Taunton Deane beyond the Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan. The Taunton Deane Local Plan which the Core Strategy supersedes is technically time-expired (it ran from 1991 – 2011) although a number of its policies have been saved by Secretary of State Direction.

In the circumstances, it is **recommended** that the Taunton Deane Core Strategy 2011-2028, incorporating the Inspector's recommended modifications, be formally adopted.

Taunton Deane Borough Council

At a meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council held in the John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton on 11 September 2012 at 6.30 pm.

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

1. Apologies

Councillors Mrs Govier, Mrs Herbert, Mrs Hill, Nottrodt, Prior-Sankey, Tooze and Watson.

2. Communications

Councillor Edwards made reference to the recent success of both Debbie Criddle and Lucy Shuker who had won medals at the Paralympic Games in London. He felt that it would be appropriate for the Council to mark in an appropriate way these achievements and sought the endorsement of the other Councillors present to do this. This was agreed.

3. Declaration of Interests

Councillors Brooks, A Govier, Prior-Sankey, Mrs Waymouth and D Wedderkopp declared personal interests as Members of Somerset County Council. Councillors 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. Councillor Hayward declared a personal interest as one of the Council's representatives on the Somerset Waste Board. Councillor Stone declared a prejudicial interest as a Tone Leisure Board representative. Councillor Swaine, declared a personal interest as a part-time swimming instructor. Councillor Mullins declared a personal interest as EDF Energy at Hinkley Point was his employer. Gill Slattery declared personal interests as a member of the Board of Governors at Somerset College.

4. Public Question Time

(i) Heather Davis said she had attended the Planning Committee last week to object to the planned – now approved – 41 acre site of solar panels situated adjacent to the nature reserve of Ash Priors wood and conservation village of Halse.

She had been shocked at the lack of discussion, nor any attempt by Councillors to establish the facts behind the many submissions made. Councillors also demonstrated the lack of thought that had been applied to such a large and policy challenging application.

The debate had not covered the definition of “sustainable development” which was at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework.

In reviewing the Core Strategy it was clear that there was no statement about the importance of agricultural land, how much there was, or how much would be given over to non agricultural developments. Given the role of agricultural land in absorbing carbon this highlighted a fundamental issue.

It was stated that Taunton Deane would be a leader in addressing the causes and impacts of climate change but later it was stated that the Council would follow building control national standards which currently developed houses at only level 2/3 of the Sustainable Development Code. Why not level 4 or 5 as used by other Councils?

Surely a leader would work with developers and energy suppliers to ensure all new builds had solar heating and / or photovoltaic panels on all roofs.

Mrs Davis asked Taunton Deane to change the Strategy statement to reflect the reality of the Council's actions or implement substantial changes in attitude and approach to justify stated intentions.

(ii) Sylvaine Shapland referred to the Core Strategy which correctly highlighted the shifting of weather patterns. In recent months these patterns had resulted in falling yields leading to dramatic rises in food prices.

Last Tuesday the United Nations had issued a press release urging countries in the developed world to produce more food from the agricultural land that they had, rather than growing crops for alternative energy such as bio diesel, in an effort to reduce imports of food and fend off looming worldwide food shortages and price rises.

She had objected to the solar development in Halse on the basis that such developments undermined the wealth of ordinary people through higher food and energy prices, whilst making the land owners and financiers rich.

On a piecemeal basis the Council was allowing the removal of prime high grade arable land, so depleting the nation's ability to feed itself. In the National Planning Policy Framework it stated that developments on three measures should be sustainable – social, environmental and economic.

The Core Strategy was at odds with the National Planning Policy Framework because it had created a presumption in planning that renewables trumped all else. Indeed it inferred/advocated the use of high grade arable land in section CP1.

The Core Strategy recognised the need for more than 17,000 new homes. More people meant more food required, but there was no more farmland

available, other than that which was being used for other things than producing food.

If a farmer presented a solar panel scheme that was for a grain store roof and/or to use land at the side of fields which were already set aside to encourage nature, then that would be reasonable. Rejecting large schemes and supporting this suggested type of approach would be leadership in carbon reduction, renewable energy and securing the nation's food supply.

Ms Shapland suggested that the Core Strategy policy should be changed to reflect a balanced approach to schemes in order that our ability to produce food was not reduced.

Most farmers did not embark on large schemes, because they cared about their role in society and their impact on the environment. They realised that these schemes were morally repugnant and an abuse of the land they farmed.

(iii) Mike Davis stated that following last week's decision an environmental charity had been engaged to take the decision to a Judicial Review.

As part of the case, the lack of balance in the proposed Core Strategy and positive endorsement of large scale solar developments, regardless of land types, would be highlighted.

It was felt that in the context of sustainability laid down in the National Planning Policy Framework, the Core Strategy was leading Planning Officers to disregard arguments put forward.

It was sad that the democratic processes decided to rush this application without fully understanding the technical issues raised in the submissions and omitting to inform local residents of the application.

At the meeting, it was clear that most Councillors had not read beyond the Planning Officer's summary. He understood that not one Councillor had visited the site. Detailed points had not been investigated by the Planning Officer and it appeared that the decision had already been made.

The impending Core Strategy was biased towards renewable energy at the expense of food production. The logical consequences had not been thought through. Policy was being used as a defence by Planning with the "sustainable" element of the National Planning Policy Framework being interpreted as renewable energy and reducing carbon generation.

The Core Strategy should ensure that one problem did not accentuate another. It was felt that, as worded, Policy CP1 opened the door for large scale solar farms.

So the question that the Core Strategy needed to address, but did not, was how do you maintain as much high yielding agricultural land as possible whilst reducing your carbon footprint and increasing renewables?

Before the Core Strategy was signed off as worded, Mr Davis hoped that Councillors would reflect on what he and his colleagues had said and consider Taunton Deane's essential role as a farming area in sustaining life.

In response, Councillor Edwards asked if copies of the three submissions could be forwarded so that a full written response to the points raised could be made.

5. **Recommendation to Council from the Executive**

Adoption of the Taunton Deane Core Strategy

The Executive had recently considered the proposed adoption of Taunton Deane's Core Strategy as part of the statutory development plan for the district.

The Core Strategy had been prepared over a number of years and set out a long-term strategic vision and spatial policies to guide planning decisions in Taunton Deane up to 2028.

Earlier in the year, the Government's Planning Inspector had considered issues that had been raised in representations and made verbally at the hearing sessions. This had included the need for any 'Main Modifications', which were considered necessary in order for the plan to be considered 'sound' and recommended for adoption. In addition, a number of further consultations had been held to address the publication of new national planning policies such as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The Taunton Deane Core Strategy Inspector's Report had been received on 3 July 2012 which had identified a number of Main Modifications which were outlined below:-

- Clarifications to Policy CP3 to define the geographical extent of town centres and the operation of the 500 m² threshold for impact assessment;
- Additional text following Policy CP4 to set out the process for advancing sites into the five-year housing land supply;
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- Amendment to Policy SP1 relating to housing allocations in minor rural centres to allow greater flexibility;
- Numerical corrections to the housing provision figures in Policies SP4 and SS1;
- Removal of the requirement for the allocation of strategic housing sites within the identified 'broad locations' (Policies SS6 and 7) to await a Core Strategy Review in 2016 and substitution of reference to allocation in the

Site Allocation and Development Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) by 2015; and

- Re-wording of Policy SS8 (Broad location for Taunton Strategic Employment) to provide a clear criterion-based context for site identification in a future DPD.

In addition, a new Policy (CP1) had been introduced as a main modification to ensure that the plan properly reflected the presumption in favour of sustainable development introduced in the NPPF.

The incorporation of these changes meant that the Core Strategy could be considered sound and capable of adoption.

Moved by Councillor Horsley, seconded by Councillor Coles that the proposed recommendation be amended by the addition of the following wording:-

“The continued need for the items below be recognised for the forthcoming Site Allocations Document to address the following:-

- (a) Putting in place Flood Alleviation schemes that will fulfil the requirements of the Environment Agency and identify the infrastructure risks and funding costs for Taunton Deane Borough Council;
- (b) Bringing forward further identifiable and deliverable housing sites to strengthen the five year supply of housing land and deliverable employment land in Taunton Deane as soon as possible; and

Strive to make the economic case for achieving housing and employment targets that are predicated on a much more realistic rate of growth at the next Core Strategy Review than the 2.8% of the current Core Strategy”.

The amendment was put and was carried.

The substantive Motion which is detailed below, was put and was carried:-

Resolved that:-

- (1) The Taunton Deane Core Strategy 2011-2028, incorporating the Inspector’s recommended modifications, be formally adopted;
- (2) The continued need for the items below be recognised for the forthcoming Site Allocations Document to address the following:-
 - (a) Putting in place Flood Alleviation schemes that would fulfil the requirements of the Environment Agency and identify the infrastructure risks and funding costs for Taunton Deane Borough Council;
 - (b) Bringing forward further identifiable and deliverable housing sites to strengthen the five year supply of housing land and deliverable employment land in Taunton Deane as soon as possible; and
- (3) Strive to make the economic case for achieving housing and employment

targets that were predicated on a much more realistic rate of growth at the next Core Strategy Review than the 2.8% of the current Core Strategy.

(Councillors Mrs Baker and Swaine left the meeting at 7.55 pm and 7.58 pm respectively.)

(The meeting ended at 8.03 pm.)