

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 9 April 2013 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 meetings of the Council held on 26 February 2013 and 4 March 2013 (attached).
- 2 To report any apologies for absence.
- 3 To receive any communications.
- 4 Declaration of Interests
To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or personal or prejudicial interests, in accordance with the Code of Conduct. The usual declarations made at meetings of Full Council are shown on 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 Theatre and Arts Policy for Community Engagement in Taunton's Cultural Quarter - To consider the attached Motion proposed by Councillor Steve Ross and seconded by Councillor Eddie Gaines.
- 8 Potential Purchase of the Brewhouse Theatre and Options for the Future. Report of the Strategic Director (Brendan Cleere) (attached).
- 9 Proposed Improvements to Creech Castle Junction, Taunton. Report of the Regeneration and Delivery Manager (Mark Green) (attached).
- 10 Part I - To deal with written questions to, and receive the following recommendation from, the Executive:-

Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams - Recommendation relating to Financial and Performance Monitoring – Quarter 3 2012/2013 – Proposed Carry Forwards.
- 11 Part II - To receive reports from the following Members of the Executive:-

- (a) Councillor John Williams - Leader of the Council;
- (b) Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams - Corporate Resources;
- (c) Councillor Mark Edwards - Planning, Transportation and Communications;
- (d) Councillor Jane Warmington - Community Development;
- (e) Councillor Norman Cavill - Economic Development, Asset Management, Arts and Tourism;
- (f) Councillor Ken Hayward - Environmental Services and Climate Change;
- (g) Councillor Catherine Herbert - Sports, Parks and Leisure;
- (h) Councillor Jean Adkins - Housing Services.

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

- 12 The Brewhouse Theatre, Taunton - Confidential Appendix (attached).

Tonya Meers
Legal and Democratic Services Manager

26 June 2013

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 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 26 February 2013 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, Coles, Denington, D Durdan, Miss Durdan, Edwards, Farbahi, Mrs Floyd, Gaines, Hayward, Henley, Mrs Herbert, C Hill, Mrs Hill, Horsley, Hunt, Miss James, R Lees, Mrs Lees, Meikle, Mrs Messenger, Morrell, Nottrodt, Ms Palmer, Prior-Sankey, D Reed, Mrs Reed, Ross, 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

1. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council held on 24 January 2013, copies having been sent to each Member, were signed by the Mayor.

2. **Apologies**

Councillors Cavill, A Govier, Mrs Govier and Mullins.

3. **Declaration of Interests**

Councillors Brooks, Henley, Prior-Sankey, Mrs Waymouth and D Wedderkopp declared personal interests as Members of Somerset County Council. Councillor Henley also declared a personal interest as an employee of Job Centre Plus. Councillors Mrs Hill, Mrs Smith and Stone declared personal interests as employees of Somerset County Council. Councillor Tooze declared a personal interest as an employee of the UK Hydrographic Office. 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 and Stone declared prejudicial interests as Tone Leisure Board representatives. Councillor Swaine declared a personal interest as a part-time swimming instructor. Councillor Gill Slattery declared personal interests as a member of the Board of Governors at Somerset College and a Patron of the Supporters of Taunton Women's Aid. Councillor Farbahi declared a personal interest as a local owner of land in Taunton Deane.

4. **Public Question Time**

(i) On behalf of the Wayfarers Pantomime Society, Taunton Amateur Operatic Society and the Gang Show who had all been seriously affected by the Brewhouse Theatre closure, Ms Hilary Marshall asked the following questions:-

1. Bearing in mind the closure of the Brewhouse Theatre and the effect it would have on the local community groups, would it be possible to open the theatre so that Taunton Amateur Operatic Society, The Gang Show and Rotary could use the building for their productions as a gesture of goodwill on behalf of the Council and the Administrators?
2. Bearing in mind that the local community groups are creditors of the Brewhouse, would it be possible for the first quarter of the grant usually made to the Brewhouse to be used to pay the community groups what they are owed?
3. Could Taunton Deane Borough Council put pressure on the administrator of the Brewhouse not to sell the assets and contents separately? If the sales were carried out separately, the building would be impossible to use for its proper purpose in any foreseeable future and very expensive to replace.

(ii) Mr Paul Partington asked:-

1. Did Taunton Deane Borough Council accept it had a duty to prepare a sustainable Community Strategy to promote or improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Borough and the people who live in it?
2. Where did the Brewhouse Theatre fit into this Strategy?
3. Did Taunton Deane Borough Council accept that due to underfunding the Brewhouse Theatre had been struggling for years to survive?
4. When did Taunton Deane Borough Council first become aware that the Brewhouse Theatre was likely to close?
5. Could Taunton Deane Borough Council state for every £1 invested in the Brewhouse what the economic benefit to the local economy was?
6. The closure of the Brewhouse Theatre had resulted in 20 full time and 35 part time jobs being lost. Did Taunton Deane Borough Council know what other jobs and suppliers/businesses had been affected as a consequence of the closure?

(iii) Mrs Dorothea Bradley firstly thanked Robert Miles and staff for all that they have achieved with a non viable 350 seat theatre. She went on to ask why Taunton Deane had not picked up the weaknesses in the business plan sooner?

Robert Miles had built up an audience catchment of over 700,000; a sufficient number to give Taunton "regional status". This crisis now gave us the chance to rethink how we could best cater not only for theatre but also art, music and the education appertaining thereto. It was also an opportunity for Taunton to promote itself in the C21st.

- Was Taunton Deane prepared to engage with this opportunity?
 - With the extensive musical activities on offer, should we concentrate on a concert/town hall?
 - With interesting drama taking place away from theatres, should Taunton have its own producing company?
 - Was the Brewhouse Theatre and Arts Centre with its two separate functions actually a 60's concept?
 - Were the feasibility studies done around seven years ago still valid or now partially obsolete?
 - Surely Taunton merited not an amateur-run super village hall but a regional venue to realise and express its potential status?
 - It was up to all of us, so please could we start by doing some serious brain storming on the future?
- (iv) Elizabeth Murray commented that many young people regularly used the Brewhouse Theatre. It would be very sad if a way could not be found to re-open the venue. What could Taunton Deane offer towards the re-opening of the theatre?
- (v) Steve Altria reported that 80 people had been rehearsing towards the Gang Show which was four weeks away from its scheduled performance. Was there any way in which the show could be staged at the Brewhouse?
- (vi) Gary Herbert said that although he had seen the closure of the theatre coming he asked the Council to work towards bringing the Brewhouse back into operation.
- (vii) Connie Morley said the closure of the Brewhouse was a tragedy. She felt that whilst any re-opening as a community based theatre would be welcomed, she was unsure whether the local amateur groups would want to use it instead of their usual venues. A commercial venture was needed at the Brewhouse to continue to attract commercial theatre groups and acts. She added that if possible the team that had run the theatre should, if possible, be retained as they were a real benefit to the County Town. The Administrators appointed must be prevented from selling off the fixtures and fittings otherwise it would prove very difficult to re-open.
- (viii) Steven Carter reported that his company was owed £16,500 by the theatre. How would they get their money back?
- (ix) Robert Miles, the former Director of the Theatre, stated that if Taunton Deane had funded the Brewhouse at the same level as South Somerset District Council funded the Octagon Theatre in Yeovil it would still be open. He added that there always seemed to be an air of suspicion about the theatre and a suggestion of bad management. He refuted that and said the total opposite applied. He felt a great mistake had been made letting the theatre fail. Personally he cared very much

for Taunton and all those people who had supported the theatre in the past.

- (x) Kelly Smith asked how we were now going to attract performers and artistes to Taunton Deane?
- (xi) Jackie Mullen said she had been involved with the Gang Show for over 20 years. She hoped some way would be found for the show to proceed which was important for all the young people involved.
- (xii) Katie, also from the Gang Show, said those involved enjoyed the experience of working alongside professionals.
- (xiii) Libby, a local actress who had performed regularly at the Brewhouse, said that the image of Taunton would be affected by not having a theatre. Without a regional theatre, there was nothing to keep people like her in the area.

In response, Councillor Williams made reference to the letter he had prepared which had been widely circulated, the text of which was as follows:-

“Taunton Deane Borough Council has been a strong supporter of The Brewhouse since the theatre’s launch more than 30 years ago.

The trustees of the theatre – an independent charity - decided to appoint administrators on 21 February 2013 due to the gravity of its financial situation.

The Borough Council was unable to offer further financial support to The Brewhouse, due to the amount required creating significant financial risk and uncertainty that any rescue would be successful. It has neither the money nor the specialist expertise to take on such a venture.

Over recent years the Council has awarded an annual grant of £152,000 to The Brewhouse. This is one of the single biggest grants awarded to any organisation in the Borough, which the Council expected to continue for the foreseeable future, emphasising the importance of the theatre to the cultural life of Taunton Deane. The grant remained at that level for a number of years, despite the continuing squeeze on public finances and a one-off additional sum of £50,000 was also awarded in 2009, to help the Brewhouse develop a sustainable business plan. The annual grant of £152,000 remains protected in the Council’s budget towards any successor venture and the Council is also allocating a one-off sum of £35,000, to help protect the property and facilitate the development of a sustainable way forward for the venue.

I believe this demonstrates the Council’s continuing commitment to high quality arts provision in Taunton and we will work with Arts Council England (ACE) and others in the cultural and creative sector, to try to find ways forward for the Brewhouse as a financially viable hub for arts and culture locally. This is likely to take time but it is vital to ensure that any future venture can be successful.”

In addition to this letter, Councillor Williams stated that he was saddened by the closure but added that Taunton Deane was committed to a performing arts venue in the town.

Now that Administrators had been appointed, the Council could not 'step in'. Even if it could, Taunton Deane had no expertise or the resources to run a theatre. The Council would work with the Administrator though to try and achieve a positive outcome and to ensure the fixtures and fittings remain intact.

With regard to some of the points raised by members of the public, Councillor Williams replied as follows:-

- The scale of the financial problems at the Brewhouse were only made known to the Council in the New Year; and
- Disappointed at the comments of the former Director of the theatre. Taunton Deane could not sustain the higher level of funding which was originally provided towards the running costs of the Brewhouse. However, despite the Council losing 30% of its income over the past couple of years as a result of Government cuts, the Council chose not to reduce the funding to the Brewhouse any further.

5. Proposed Suspension of Standing Orders

Councillor Morrell, seconded by Councillor Beaven, moved under Standing Order 29(1) that Standing Orders be suspended to allow him to present a Motion to Council relating to a suggestion that part of the Members' Allowances be contributed towards funding to bring about the re-opening of the Brewhouse Theatre.

The motion to suspend Standing Orders was put and was lost.

6. Recommendations to Council from the Executive

(a) General Fund Revenue Estimates 2013/2014

The Executive had considered its final 2013/2014 budget proposals which recognised the continuing financial challenge faced by the Council beyond the next financial year and the need for the strategic review of services that would be driven forward through the implementation of the new Corporate Business Plan.

The budget contained details on:-

- (i) the General Fund Revenue Budget proposals for 2013/2014, including the proposed Council Tax rate;
- (ii) draft figures on the predicted financial position of the Council for the

following four years.

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee had considered the draft budget proposals at its meeting on 24 January 2013. One specific amendment in relation to the Unparished Area Fund had been requested, where it was suggested that the fund should not be split into specific ring-fenced 'pots' and that all expenditure should be subject to the bidding process through the Unparished Area Panel.

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 2013/2014 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 2013/2014 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 2014/2015 and beyond and a summary of this position was reflected in the following table:-

	2013/14 £k	2014/15 £k	2015/16 £k	2016/17 £k	2017/18 £k
Net Expenditure	11,464	11,994	12,724	13,237	13,594
<i>Financed By:</i>					
Retained Business Rates	(2,264)	(2,337)	(2,396)	(2,457)	(2,519)
Revenue Support Grant	(3,556)	(2,731)	(2,047)	(1,610)	(1,260)
Tax Freeze Grant	(57)	(57)	0	0	0
Council Tax	(5,587)	(5,676)	(5,791)	(5,908)	(6,027)
Predicted Budget Gap	0	1,193	2,490	3,262	3,788

These estimates included the following main assumptions relating to funding:-

- Revenue Support Grant for 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 was as set out in the provisional Finance Settlement. Retained Business Rates for 2013/2014 would be based on the NNDR1 for the year. Estimated Business Rates funding in subsequent years was projected to increase in line with inflation. Net funding from the two elements combined was estimated to reduce by in the region of 10% year-on-year for the subsequent three years. In addition it was assumed that the £137,000 Freeze Grant relating to 2011/2012 would be removed in 2015/2016; and
- Council Tax would increase by 0% in 2013/2014, then by 2% per year thereafter.

It was proposed that the minimum acceptable reserves position should be increased to £1,500,000 (from £1,250,000), or £1,250,000 if funds were allocated to 'invest to save' initiatives. The Draft Budget for 2013/2014 would maintain reserves well above this minimum, but the MTFP showed that the Council was expected to face significant financial pressures in the medium term as shown in the following table:-

General Reserves Forecast

	2013/14 £k	2014/15 £k	2015/16 £k	2016/17 £k	2017/18 £k
Estimated Balance B/F	3,079	3,079	1,886	(604)	(3,866)
Predicted Budget Gap	0	(1,193)	(2,490)	(3,262)	(3,788)
Estimated Balance C/F	3,079	1,886	(604)	(3,866)	(7,654)

The estimated expenses chargeable to the non-parished area of Taunton in 2013/2014 amounted to £41,220, which represented a 0% increase in the special expenses per Band D equivalent of £2.92 per property per year in the Unparished Area.

The amount of funding had reduced from the previous year as a result of the Council Tax Support scheme and the related reduction in the tax base. At its recent meeting, Full Council approved an allocation of £6,500 from the Council Tax Support Grant Funding to the Unparished Area which increased the budget for the new financial year to £47,720.

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 2013/2014 was for the calculation of MRP to be 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 2013/2014 budget to be as robust as possible.

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

(i) Open Spaces – A proposal to reinstate the proposed Savings Plan reduction of £4,000 for hanging baskets and a further £25,000 to be allocated to identify a policy/strategy to introduce an organised grass cutting programme in 2014/2015 which achieved the balance between competing demands of cost reductions, the perception of "tidiness" and the desire to encourage wildflowers and associated wildlife;

(ii) Tree Planting – The allocation of an additional £10,000 to replace trees that have had to be removed because of disease; and

(iii) Art Development Grants – The restoration of the £7,515 which was withdrawn last year from Take Art, Action Track, SPAEDA, Somerset Art Works and Somerset Film.

The amendment was put and was lost.

Moved by Councillor Ross, seconded by Councillor Gaines, that the budget proposals be amended as follows:-

(i) Council Tax – A proposal to raise Council Tax by 3.5% to bring in additional income of £1766,340. This would mean the Tax Freeze Grant of £57,000 would be lost;

(ii) New Homes Bonus – It was proposed that £2,000,000 should be placed in a ‘Sustainability Fund’ to ensure that Taunton Deane was a liveable and likeable place, a home and a destination and a place of enterprise, learning and leisure. In addition, a further £375,000 to be allocated for both “re-presenting” and “representing” Taunton Deane. The former would be a form of ‘Spring Clean’ to achieve quality of place; the latter ‘to hold our heads high’ and celebrate our ambience, culture and history, the people and the place;

(iii) Savings Plans - To reinstate the following budget savings:-

- Hanging Baskets - £4,000;
- Christmas Lighting - £10,000;
- Nature Reserves - £2,000.

To fund this additional £16,000, it was proposed not to proceed with the plan to set up a new reserve for Extreme Weather;

(iv) Additional Spending – With the net additional income from the Council Tax increase, additional projects were proposed as set out in the following table:-

Financial Summary of New Spending

	£	£
Community Fruit and Vegetable Gardens	10,000	
Greening the Deane – Vehicle Livery	5,000	
Greening the Deane - Conference	4,340	
Supporting An Innovative Culture	5,000	
Celebrating the Deane	5,000	
Distinguishing the Deane	2,000	
Deane Helpline	20,000	
Protecting our Community	18,000	
Shared Services	50,000	
		<hr/>
		119,340

The amendment was put and was lost.

On the motion of Councillor Williams, it was

Resolved that the budget for General Fund services for 2013/2014 as outlined in the report to Full Council be agreed and that:-

- (a) The Section 151 Officer's Statement of Robustness, which applied to the whole budget including General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Budget proposals be noted and that the recommended increase to minimum acceptable level of reserves to £1,500,000, or £1,250,000 if funds were allocated to invest to save initiatives, be approved;
- (b) The Draft General Fund Revenue Budget 2013/2014, including a Basic Council Tax Requirement budget of £5,039,960 and Special Expenses of £41,220 be approved;
- (c) The transfer of any under/overspend in the 2012/2013 General Revenue Account Outturn to/from the General Fund Reserves be approved;
- (d) The Service Options set out in the report be approved and the Equalities Impact Assessments provided in the report and appendices be considered as part of the budget decision process;
- (e) 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; and
- (f) The General Reserves position and Medium Term Financial Plan projections, and the continuing financial challenge to address the Budget Gap for future years be noted.

(b) Capital Programme Budget Estimates 2013/2014

Consideration had also been given to the proposed General Fund (GF) and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programmes for the period 2013/2014 to 2017/2018.

Full Council had approved a Capital Programme for 2012/2013 General Fund schemes last February. In December 2012 the Government provided a further allocation of £95,850 Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding to the Council for the current financial year. It was recommended that this sum be allocated as a Supplementary Estimate, increasing the approved 2012/2013 Capital Budget for DFGs to £792,730.

The Draft General Fund Capital Programme totalled £3,393,000 within an indicative five year programme totalling £7,337,000. It was proposed that

£3,553,000 was budgeted to be spent in 2013/2014 with the remainder in the following three years.

In future years the funding of General Fund capital priorities would rely upon a variety of sources including Capital Receipts, Grant Funding, Capital Contributions, Revenue Budgets or Reserves and through Borrowing. The Council had approved the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme for 2012/2013 totalling £5,500,000, in February 2012. There were no changes to the approved budget so far this year.

The HRA Capital Programme totalled £19,572,000 within a five year programme totalling £50,168,200 which reflected the priorities set out in the updated 30-Year HRA Business Plan. It was proposed that £14,805,000 was budgeted to be spent in 2013/2014 with the remainder in the following two years.

The continuing capital maintenance and improvement would be fully funded from the Major Repairs Reserve and the Social Housing Development Programme Capital Budget would be funded through a combination of:-

- Revenue Contributions – from the Social Housing Development Fund;
- Capital Receipts – from Right to Buy and other HRA asset sales; and
- Borrowing.

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee had considered the draft programme and had made no formal suggestions for any changes to the programme. The Tenants Services Management Board had also considered the draft Housing Capital Programme.

On the motion of Councillor Williams, it was:-

Resolved that:-

- (a) A Supplementary Estimate of £95,850 in the 2012/2013 Capital Programme for Disabled Facilities Grants, to be funded by additional Government grant received in December 2012 be approved;
- (b) The General Fund Capital Programme Budget of £3,930,000 be approved. Of this amount, £3,553,000 be budgeted to be spent in 2013/2014 with the remainder in the following three years; and
- (c) The Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme of £19,572,000 be also approved. Of this amount, £14,805,000 be budgeted to be spent in 2013/2014 with the remainder in the following two years.

(c) Council Tax Setting 2013/2014

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 2013/2014 totalled £520,441. The increase in the average Band D Council Tax for Town and Parish Councils, including Special Expenses for the Unparished Area, was 8.6% and resulted in an average Band D Council Tax figure of £13.96 for 2013/2014.

Under the new governance arrangements for the Police, the Police and Crime Commissioner announced before Christmas the intention to freeze Council Tax for 2013/2014. This had recently been confirmed.

The confirmed precept was £6,264,441 which resulted in a Band D Council Tax of £168.03. The precept would be adjusted by a Collection Fund contribution of £25,600.

The Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority approved its tax requirement on 18 February 2013. The amount of precept included a 1.99% increase and had been set at £2,810,584, which resulted in a Band D Council Tax of £75.39. The Precept would be adjusted by a Collection Fund contribution of £11,260.

The Somerset County Council approved its tax requirement on 20 February 2013. The amount of precept included a 0% increase and had been set at £38,298,366.34, which resulted in a Band D Council Tax of £1,027.30. The Precept would be adjusted by a Collection Fund contribution of £156,520.

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 and Crime Commissioner, the Fire Authority and Taunton Deane, in shares relative to their precept levels.

This year the estimated balance was a surplus of £215,940. Taunton Deane's share of this amounted to £22,560, 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 2013/2014 be approved:-

(1) That it be noted that on 24 January 2013 the Council calculated the Council Tax Base for 2013/2014:-

- (i) for the whole Council area as 37,280.60 - 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 to these Minutes;

(2) That the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2013/2014 (excluding Parish precepts) be calculated as £5,039,960;

(3) That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2013/2014 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:-

- (i) £86,043,671 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates 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) £80,483,270 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act. (*Gross Income including reserves to be used to meet Gross Expenditure*)
- (iii) £5,560,401 being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act). (*Total Demand on Collection Fund.*)
- (iv) £149.15 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) £520,441 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 relates. (*Council Tax at Band D for Borough Excluding Parish Precepts and Special Expenses*);

(4) To note that Somerset County Council, Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner and Devon and Somerset Fire Authority would issue 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;

- (5) That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate provisional amounts shown in the table in Appendix A to these Minutes as the amounts of Council Tax for 2013/2014 for each part of its area and for each categories of dwellings;
- (6) Determine that the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2013/2014 was not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB 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:-

	2012/13	2013/14	Increase
	£	£	%
Taunton Deane Borough Council	135.19	135.19	0.00%
Somerset County Council	1,027.30	1,027.30	0.00%
Avon and Somerset Police Authority / Police and Crime Commissioner	168.03	168.03	0.00%
Devon and Somerset Fire Authority	73.92	75.39	1.99%
Sub-Total	1,404.44	1,405.91	0.10%
Town and Parish Council (average)	12.85	13.96	8.64%
Total	1,417.29	1419.87	0.18%

**APPENDIX
A**

Valuation Bands								
Council Tax Schedule 2013/14	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	50.26	58.64	67.01	75.39	92.14	108.90	125.65	150.78
Parish / Town only (a)	9.31	10.86	12.41	13.96	17.06	20.16	23.27	27.92
Parish / Town & District (b)	99.44	116.01	132.58	149.15	182.29	215.43	248.59	298.30
Total (c)	946.59	1,104.35	1,262.11	1,419.87	1,735.39	2,050.92	2,366.46	2,839.74
<u>Parish:</u>								
Ash Priors	937.28	1,093.49	1,249.70	1,405.91	1,718.33	2,030.76	2,343.19	2,811.82
Ashbrittle	952.65	1,111.43	1,270.20	1,428.97	1,746.51	2,064.07	2,381.62	2,857.94
Bathealton	941.21	1,098.07	1,254.94	1,411.80	1,725.53	2,039.27	2,353.01	2,823.60
Bishops Hull	950.43	1,108.83	1,267.23	1,425.63	1,742.43	2,059.24	2,376.06	2,851.26

Bishops Lydeard/Cothelstone	955.87	1,115.17	1,274.48	1,433.79	1,752.41	2,071.03	2,389.66	2,867.58
Bradford on Tone	950.15	1,108.50	1,266.86	1,425.21	1,741.92	2,058.64	2,375.36	2,850.42
Burrowbridge	953.25	1,112.12	1,270.99	1,429.86	1,747.60	2,065.35	2,383.11	2,859.72
Cheddon Fitzpaine	948.24	1,106.28	1,264.31	1,422.35	1,738.42	2,054.51	2,370.59	2,844.70
Chipstable	948.32	1,106.37	1,264.42	1,422.47	1,738.57	2,054.68	2,370.79	2,844.94
Churchstanton	953.07	1,111.92	1,270.76	1,429.60	1,747.28	2,064.98	2,382.67	2,859.20
Combe Florey	950.15	1,108.51	1,266.86	1,425.22	1,741.93	2,058.65	2,375.37	2,850.44
Comeytrowe	945.17	1,102.70	1,260.22	1,417.75	1,732.80	2,047.86	2,362.92	2,835.50
Corfe	944.85	1,102.33	1,259.80	1,417.27	1,732.21	2,047.17	2,362.12	2,834.54
Cotford St Luke	950.83	1,109.30	1,267.77	1,426.24	1,743.18	2,060.13	2,377.07	2,852.48
Creech St Michael	956.15	1,115.50	1,274.86	1,434.21	1,752.92	2,071.64	2,390.36	2,868.42
Durstun	944.19	1,101.55	1,258.91	1,416.27	1,730.99	2,045.72	2,360.46	2,832.54
Fitzhead	953.91	1,112.89	1,271.87	1,430.85	1,748.81	2,066.78	2,384.76	2,861.70
Halse	945.91	1,103.56	1,261.21	1,418.86	1,734.16	2,049.47	2,364.77	2,837.72
Hatch Beauchamp	947.98	1,105.97	1,263.97	1,421.96	1,737.95	2,053.94	2,369.94	2,843.92
Kingston St Mary	945.91	1,103.55	1,261.20	1,418.85	1,734.15	2,049.45	2,364.76	2,837.70

Langford Budville	950.58	1,109.01	1,267.43	1,425.86	1,742.71	2,059.58	2,376.44	2,851.72
Lydeard St Lawrence/Tolland	950.14	1,108.49	1,266.85	1,425.20	1,741.91	2,058.62	2,375.34	2,850.40
Milverton	952.27	1,110.98	1,269.69	1,428.40	1,745.82	2,063.25	2,380.67	2,856.80
Neroche	949.67	1,107.95	1,266.22	1,424.50	1,741.05	2,057.61	2,374.17	2,849.00
North Curry	952.08	1,110.76	1,269.43	1,428.11	1,745.46	2,062.83	2,380.19	2,856.22
Norton Fitzwarren	956.37	1,115.77	1,275.16	1,434.55	1,753.33	2,072.13	2,390.92	2,869.10
Nynehead	954.41	1,113.48	1,272.54	1,431.61	1,749.74	2,067.88	2,386.02	2,863.22
Oake	947.79	1,105.75	1,263.71	1,421.67	1,737.59	2,053.52	2,369.46	2,843.34
Otterford	937.28	1,093.49	1,249.70	1,405.91	1,718.33	2,030.76	2,343.19	2,811.82
Pitminster	950.89	1,109.37	1,267.85	1,426.33	1,743.29	2,060.26	2,377.22	2,852.66
Ruishton/Thornfalcon	953.52	1,112.44	1,271.35	1,430.27	1,748.10	2,065.95	2,383.79	2,860.54
Sampfard Arundel	963.52	1,124.10	1,284.69	1,445.27	1,766.44	2,087.61	2,408.79	2,890.54
Staplegrove	946.69	1,104.46	1,262.24	1,420.02	1,735.58	2,051.14	2,366.71	2,840.04
Stawley	949.69	1,107.96	1,266.24	1,424.52	1,741.08	2,057.64	2,374.21	2,849.04
Stoke St Gregory	956.00	1,115.33	1,274.66	1,433.99	1,752.65	2,071.32	2,389.99	2,867.98
Stoke St Mary	947.39	1,105.29	1,263.18	1,421.08	1,736.87	2,052.67	2,368.47	2,842.16

Taunton	939.23	1,095.76	1,252.30	1,408.83	1,721.90	2,034.98	2,348.06	2,817.66
Trull	949.37	1,107.60	1,265.82	1,424.05	1,740.50	2,056.96	2,373.42	2,848.10
Wellington	952.41	1,111.15	1,269.88	1,428.61	1,746.07	2,063.55	2,381.02	2,857.22
Wellington Without	949.77	1,108.06	1,266.35	1,424.64	1,741.22	2,057.81	2,374.41	2,849.28
West Bagborough	948.05	1,106.05	1,264.06	1,422.06	1,738.07	2,054.09	2,370.11	2,844.12
West Buckland	949.17	1,107.37	1,265.56	1,423.75	1,740.13	2,056.53	2,372.92	2,847.50
West Hatch	948.69	1,106.81	1,264.92	1,423.03	1,739.25	2,055.49	2,371.72	2,846.06
West Monkton	954.39	1,113.46	1,272.52	1,431.58	1,749.70	2,067.84	2,385.97	2,863.16
Wiveliscombe	952.52	1,111.27	1,270.02	1,428.77	1,746.27	2,063.78	2,381.29	2,857.54

TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL PRECEPTS

Parish/Town Council	2012/13			2013/14			Council Tax Increase
	Tax Base	Precept Levied	Council Tax Band D	Tax Base	Precept Levied	Council Tax Band D	
		£	(£)		£	(£)	
Ash Priors	84.83	-	-	81.46	-	-	0.00%
Ashbrittle	95.72	1,800	18.80	86.74	2,000	23.06	22.62%
Bathealton	89.28	500	5.60	84.83	500	5.89	5.25%
Bishops Hull	1,114.92	22,000	19.73	1,052.00	20,750	19.72	-0.04%
Bishops Lydeard/Cothelstone	1,120.81	25,185	22.47	1,021.90	28,489	27.88	24.07%
Bradford on Tone	293.94	5,500	18.71	285.01	5,500	19.30	3.13%
Burrowbridge	205.99	4,200	20.39	196.21	4,700	23.95	17.48%
Cheddon Fitzpaine	643.53	10,203	15.85	598.80	9,843	16.44	3.68%
Chipstable	133.31	1,950	14.63	129.81	2,150	16.56	13.23%
Churchstanton	337.87	7,299	21.60	342.98	8,126	23.69	9.67%
Combe Florey	122.05	2,250	18.44	116.50	2,250	19.31	4.76%

Comeytrowe	2,111.95	25,000	11.84	1,967.11	23,290	11.84	0.02%
Corfe	133.48	2,500	18.73	132.02	1,500	11.36	-39.34%
Cotford St Luke	821.67	16,000	19.47	752.62	15,300	20.33	4.40%
Creech St Michael	999.23	28,275	28.30	937.95	26,543.99	28.30	0.01%
Durston	59.10	600	10.15	58.64	607.37	10.36	2.02%
Fitzhead	122.29	2,995	24.49	113.55	2,832	24.94	1.83%
Halse	142.58	1,800	12.62	139.03	1,800	12.95	2.55%
Hatch Beauchamp	268.82	4,500	16.74	249.16	4,000	16.05	-4.10%
Kingston St Mary	463.52	6,000	12.94	424.73	5,496	12.94	-0.03%
Langford Budville	238.94	5,000	20.93	225.54	4,500	19.95	-4.65%
Lydeard St Lawrence/Tolland	208.84	3,582	17.15	199.03	3,839.23	19.29	12.47%
Milverton	624.11	12,650	20.27	562.51	12,650	22.49	10.95%
Neroche	255.27	4,500	17.63	239.15	4,446	18.59	5.46%
North Curry	741.43	16,500	22.25	692.23	15,366	22.20	-0.25%
Norton Fitzwarren	931.94	25,060	26.89	903.16	25,871	28.64	6.53%
Nynehead	164.15	4,250	25.89	165.34	4,250	25.70	-0.72%

Oake	333.34	5,000	15.00	317.34	5,000	15.76	5.04%
Otterford	174.06	-	-	165.11	-	-	0.00%
Pitminster	464.42	9,500	20.46	435.08	8,885	20.42	-0.17%
Ruishton/Thornfalcon	624.94	12,000	19.20	574.63	14,000	24.36	26.88%
Sampford Arundel	127.60	4,600	36.05	121.94	4,800	39.36	9.19%
Staplegrove	748.42	10,710	14.31	708.57	10,000	14.11	-1.38%
Stawley	128.82	2,400	18.63	132.17	2,460	18.61	-0.10%
Stoke St Gregory	384.63	7,000	18.20	356.14	10,000	28.08	54.28%
Stoke St Mary	210.86	3,008	14.27	198.25	3,008	15.17	6.36%
Taunton	16,226.62	47,382	2.92	14,115.83	41,218	2.92	0.00%
Trull	1,032.39	14,000	13.56	992.02	18,000	18.14	33.80%
Wellington	4,852.37	104,798	21.60	4,290.56	97,396	22.70	5.11%
Wellington Without	304.54	5,200	17.08	293.61	5,500	18.73	9.70%
West Bagborough	169.77	2,500	14.73	154.78	2,500	16.15	9.68%
West Buckland	448.31	8,000	17.84	424.77	7,580	17.84	0.00%
West Hatch	143.00	2,330	16.29	136.11	2,330	17.12	5.06%

West Monkton	1,184.22	27,664	23.36	1,077.78	27,664	25.67	9.88%
Wiveliscombe	1,128.51	23,500	20.82	1,027.90	23,500	22.86	9.79%

(d) Housing Revenue Account Estimates 2013/2014

The Executive had given consideration to the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) estimates for the 2013/2014 Financial Year. It also included details of the proposed increase in Average Weekly Rent for the year where a 4.9% increase had been recommended.

2013/14 would be the second year of operating the HRA under self-financing arrangements. The Council remained on course to repay the settlement debt of £85,200,000 by 2030. The lower cost of borrowing this sum was reflected in the Budget and had enabled the Council to fund the updated proposals in the HRA Business Plan and increase funding for housing development.

The Proposed Budget was based on assumptions and estimates on expenditure requirements and income projections, in order to deliver the updated Business Plan that was approved by Full Council in December 2012.

Dwelling rents for approximately 6,000 properties provided annual income of over £23,000,000 for the HRA.

Local authorities had both the power and duty to set their own rent. However, the Government had previously set out a policy for social rents in England to be fair, affordable and less confusing for tenants. Local Authorities and Housing Associations had therefore been requested to bring rents into line over several years, using a national formula to set a target rent (also called 'formula rent') based on property values and average manual earnings in each area.

The previous '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 Department for Communities and Local Government assumed should be charged. The Council continued to work towards the convergence date of 2015/2016 and had taken this into account in the draft rent calculations.

It was therefore proposed that the average weekly rent for dwellings for 2013/2014 should be set at the guideline rent of £77.21. This was an increase of 4.9% or £3.61 per week.

The Dwelling Rents formed the major element of income for the HRA. Each ½% rent increase was equivalent to approximately £114,600. 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 2.6% increase.

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee had considered the 2013/2014 draft budget at its meeting on 24 January 2013 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 4.9% be approved; and
- (2) The Housing Revenue Account budget for 2013/2014 be agreed.

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

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

Councillor Williams's report covered the following topics:-

- Budget Setting;
- Flood Alleviation Scheme;
- Northern Inner Distributor Road;
- A303/A30/A358 Somerset County Council Initiative;
- Infrastructure Costs and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL);
- Orchard Centre and Quantock House;
- West Somerset Council; and
- Community Development.

(ii) **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 Plan;
- Voluntary and Community Sector Grants and the Youth Fund;
- Health and Wellbeing;
- Community Development;
- Priority Areas Strategy; and
- Family Futures (Troubled Families); and
- Equalities and Diversity.

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

The report from Councillor Cavill covered:-

- Launch of Taunton Means Business;
- Rigid Containers Limited;
- Mid-Summer Festival;
- Business Start up Grants and Rural Retailer Grants;
- Hinkley Nuclear New Build;
- Taunton Town Centre Company;

- Make it Your Business, Wellington Business Event;
- Asset Management; and
- Tourism and the Arts Update.

8. **Suspension of Standing Order**

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

(iv) **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; and
- Cremation Services.

(v) **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.

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

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

- Housing Enabling - Regeneration;
- Affordable Housing Target;
- Sellicks Green, Blagdon Hill;
- Right to Buy Sales;
- Council House Building;
- Housing Services;
- Estates Management – Voids; and
- Estates Management – Benefit Changes.

(vii) **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;
- Corporate and Client Services;

- Corporate Performance;
- Legal and Democratic Services;
- Revenues and Benefits; and
- Wellbeing Initiatives.

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

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

- Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan;
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA);
- Planning Appeals;
- Core Strategy;
- Authorities Monitoring Report;
- Neighbourhood Planning;
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL);
- Heritage – Sandhill Park, Tone Works and Tonedale;
- Parking; and
- Communications.

(Councillor Stone left the meeting at 8.38 pm. Councillors Mrs Herbert, C Hill, Mrs Messenger, D Reed and D Wedderkopp all left the meeting at 9.10 pm. Councillor Morrell left the meeting at 9.20 pm. Councillors Ms Palmer and Ms Webber both left the meeting at 9.27 pm. Councillor Meikle left the meeting at 9.30 pm. Councillors Mrs Baker, Brooks, Mrs Hill and Nottrodt left the meeting at 9.38 pm. Councillor Bishop left the meeting at 9.45 pm.)

(The meeting ended at 10.00 pm.)

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 4 March 2013 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, Coles, Denington, D Durdan, Miss Durdan, Edwards, Farbahi, Mrs Floyd, Gaines, Hayward, Henley, Mrs Herbert, C Hill, Mrs Hill, Horsley, Hunt, Miss James, Mrs Lees, Meikle, Morrell, Mullins, Nottrodt, Ms Palmer, Prior-Sankey, D Reed, Mrs Reed, Ross, Gill Slattery, T Slattery, Mrs Smith, P Smith, Mrs Stock-Williams, Stone, Tooze, Mrs Warmington, Watson, Mrs Waymouth, A Wedderkopp, D Wedderkopp and Williams

1. Apologies

Councillors Cavill, A Govier, Mrs Govier, Henley, Mrs Herbert, Miss James, R Lees, Mrs Messenger, Swaine, Ms Webber and Wren.

2. Declaration of Interests

Councillors Brooks, Henley, Prior-Sankey, Mrs Waymouth and D Wedderkopp declared personal interests as Members of Somerset County Council. Councillor Henley also declared a personal interest as an employee of Job Centre Plus. Councillors Mrs Hill and Stone declared personal interests as employees of Somerset County Council. Councillor T Slattery declared a personal interest as an employee of Sedgemoor District Council. Councillor Tooze declared a personal interest as an employee of the UK Hydrographic Office. 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 and Stone declared prejudicial interests as Tone Leisure Board representatives. Councillor Mullins declared a personal interest as an employee of EDF Energy. Councillor Gill Slattery declared personal interests as a member of the Board of Governors at Somerset College and a Patron of the Supporters of Taunton Women's Aid. Councillor Farbahi declared a personal interest as a local owner of land in Taunton Deane.

3. Public Question Time

(i) With regard to the recent closure of the Brewhouse Theatre, Kelly Smith asked how any new model of the theatre would attract artists to perform. She

also asked whether the funding held by the Council for the Brewhouse would only now be released with specific conditions?

In response Councillor Williams stated that it would be for any new organisation who took over operating the Brewhouse to decide how to encourage performers to make use of the theatre. He added that £152,000 had been included in the budget for 2013/2014 and this would be retained to hopefully assist in bringing the Brewhouse back into operation. Provided any new operator had a viable and sustainable Business Plan, no further conditions as to the release of this money would be imposed.

A further £35,000 had also been allocated to protect the building and obtain professional advice on the best way forward for the facility.

(ii) Mr Roger Conway stated that after the disastrous Southwest One joint venture, he was staggered that the Council was even contemplating a proposal to rescue the failed West Somerset Council.

West Somerset was effectively insolvent and Taunton Deane could well be in a similar position within three years.

He predicted that any rescue of West Somerset would result in minimal savings and much higher costs which would significantly shorten the time it would take for Taunton Deane to reach financial crisis.

The project appeared to being driven by party politics and not what was best for the Council Tax payers. The Ministers who created the financial situation in West Somerset were now promising grants and favourable boundary changes – but only if West Somerset was rescued - to save political embarrassment.

Mr Conway went on to say that throughout all the current austerity, one budget remained intact. This was the one that paid allowances to 298 Councillors across the six Somerset Councils. By comparison Wiltshire Council managed with only 98 Councillors and saved over £750,000 per year as a result.

He felt that local people would not forgive Taunton Deane if party politics and Councillor ambition was put before the wellbeing, jobs and prosperity of the district. He urged Councillors to reject the flawed proposal to rescue West Somerset.

(iii) Mr David Orr stated that he was unhappy that with regard to the proposal to share services with West Somerset Council, significant budget and resources would be diverted away from Taunton Deane's community and economic priorities.

Taunton Deane already shared services with the County Council and the Police in the controversial joint venture Southwest One, which was majority owned by IBM. This had been a dismal failure.

Despite the large scale sharing of services in Southwest One and IBM's so-called expertise, Taunton Deane had had to extend borrowing and continue paying interest for problematic SAP IT systems. The additional loan interest costs to Deane taxpayers were a direct result of significant shortfalls in savings by Southwest One. Taxpayers were wrongly told in 2007 by the Council's Chief Executive and Finance Director that the savings were assured by IBM. They were wrong then and they are wrong now.

Other shared services elsewhere in England have failed to deliver promised savings, whilst costs had risen and flexibility had been lost.

If Southwest One had not succeeded after five years, how could sharing services with a small, insolvent neighbouring Council result in any worthwhile savings?

Taunton Deane had pressing needs to re-balance, support and stimulate the local economy. If West Somerset needed to be rescued, then it should be the job of the Government to do so – and this would require far greater funding and resource than the propose Project Mandate allowed. Was it necessary for an expensive Project Mandate to know that this rescue would not work?

Mr Orr concluded by asking the Councillors to make the regeneration of the local economy the Number One priority for Taunton Deane, by voting against the misguided proposal to rescue a bankrupt West Somerset Council.

In reply to both Messrs Conway and Orr, Councillor Williams said that he was unable to agree with the points that had been raised. West Somerset Council was not insolvent. Southwest One had not been the disaster described either. The existing contract had resulted in significant savings for Taunton Deane year on year.

4. Motion – Proposed reduction of Members' Allowances in connection with the Brewhouse Theatre, Taunton

Moved by Councillor Morrell.

“Closure of the Brewhouse Theatre is a loss to our community and an embarrassment for the Council and the County Town.

The funding gap of some £100,000 is something we, as elected representatives for our community can help with and so save this important amenity as well as 55 jobs which will be lost.

As Councillors we all receive an allowance of £4,301 per annum, with special additional sums for certain Members.

I am seeking support from my fellow Councillors to collectively reduce our annual allowance for the 2013/2014 financial year by 50% and allocate this sum of at least £120,428 to the Brewhouse in order to keep the doors open.

This motion has the caveat that the Brewhouse's long-term financial and

cultural viability must be independently challenged with relevant business and management changes made in order to secure the organisation's medium and long-term viability.

I strongly believe we collectively need to support our community during these challenging times. I hope you will be willing to support this motion.”

Before a seconder was sought, Councillor Denington moved and Councillor Mrs Adkins seconded that that the Council proceeded to the next item of business.

This motion was put and was carried.

5. **Recommendations to Council from the Licensing Committee**

(a) **Gambling Act 2005 – Revised Statement of Principles**

The Gambling Act 2005 placed a duty on all Licensing Authorities to produce a Statement of Principles (also known as the Gambling Policy).

Each Licensing Authority was required to review this policy document at least every three years and take into account the views of those representing the holders of existing licences and certificates, local residents, businesses and the Police.

Taunton Deane's 2010 Statement of Principles had recently been updated in accordance with the Statutory Guidance and widespread consultations had been undertaken.

On the motion of Councillor Hunt, it was

Resolved that the revised Statement of Principles be approved.

(b) **Licensing Act 2003 – Licensing Policy Adoption**

Under the Licensing Act 2003 the Council was required to adopt and publish a Statement of Licensing Policy. The published Policy then provided the framework for all decisions on applications relating to the Licensing Act 2003 and the way the Authority carried out its functions in relation to the legislation.

The Licensing Act 2003 further required that the Policy was reviewed at least every five years although if a need was identified it could be reviewed earlier.

Since the last adoption of the policy in 2010, changes to the Licensing Act had been made to reflect changes following the introduction of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. As a result, the Licensing Committee had decided that the Council's Licensing Policy needed to be updated.

On the motion of Councillor Hunt, it was

Resolved that the revised Statement of Licensing Policy 2013-2018 be approved.

6. **South West Audit Partnership Governance Arrangements**

The Corporate Governance Committee had met recently to consider approving proposed changes to the governance of the South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) towards the setting up of a Company Limited by Guarantee.

The current governance arrangements, introduced on the formation of the partnership in 2005 were designed and intended for relatively small partnerships.

However since 2005, SWAP had gradually expanded to the current twelve members. This increased membership had benefited all partners with greater economies of scale, a wider expertise base and quality and productivity improvements that would not have been possible with a smaller partnership.

The Partnership Board had explored a number of ways in which the current governance model might be adapted to meet the current and future needs of the partnership. Whilst some progress had been made, there remained a number of fundamental issues that could not be resolved which could be summarised as:-

- Partnership Board Voting Arrangements;
- Financial Control; and
- Staff Pay, Terms and Conditions.

Following much discussion, the Partnership Board had concluded that the following governance structure should be adopted:-

The Members' Board

This would be, in effect, the equivalent of the current Partnership Board. Each partner would nominate a Councillor to represent them on this Board which would be the supreme authority of the company and would make all decisions relating to strategy, policy, appointment and dismissal of senior management and the admission of new partners.

The Board of Directors

The Board would oversee the implementation of the strategy and policy, as well as ensuring the operational activities of the partnership were achieving the objectives set by the Members' Board.

The Partnership Board had endorsed the following membership arrangements for the board of directors:-

- Two Councillors who would normally be the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Members' Board.

- Twelve officers representing each of the current partners.
- A maximum of three executive officers from SWAP, with at least the Chief Executive being included.

The existing Joint Committee arrangement governing SWAP would cease in 2013, as it was clear that the majority of Partners supported the change to a Company Limited by Guarantee. Taunton Deane Council needed to consider whether it wished to join this arrangement, and appoint suitable representatives to govern Taunton Deane's interests.

The new Company would apply to become an admitted body of the Local Government Pension Scheme operated by Somerset County Council. It would require partner authorities to guarantee the pension liabilities of the partnership. Taunton Deane would therefore need to guarantee its share of the pension fund deficit appropriate to ex-Taunton Deane staff in the partnership. This was estimated at £148,901.

On the motion of Councillor D Reed, it was

Resolved that:-

- a) The formation of a Company Limited by Guarantee, to replace the existing South West Audit Partnership Joint Committee, be supported;
- b) It be decided that the Council should become a Member of the company the South West Audit Partnership Limited from 1 April 2013 in accordance with the terms and basis set out in the new Company's Articles of Association, Deed and Service Agreement;
- c) The dissolving of the South West Audit Partnership Joint Committee at a date to be determined, but not later than 30 June 2013, be agreed;
- d) The separation of responsibilities and membership profiles of the Members' Board and Board of Directors be noted and that the Chairman of the Corporate Governance Committee be nominated to sit on the Members Board and the Deputy Section 151 Officer be nominated to be the Director on the Company Board;
- e) The Legal and Democratic Services Manager be requested to progress the necessary legal work to facilitate the above and put in place the appropriate controls, authorities and indemnities to support officers and Members in the governance roles; and
- f) It be agreed that the Council should offer a guarantee to the Somerset Pension Fund to the level of deficit relating to Taunton Deane's ex-employees (estimated at £148,901).

7. **Recommendations from the Leader of the Council**

Joint working between Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council – Project Mandate

At its meeting on 21 February 2013, the Corporate Scrutiny Committee considered the proposal of joint working between Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) and West Somerset Council (WSC), with a particular focus on Joint Management and Shared Services.

WSC was a good Council. However, the current recession and significant cuts in funding had placed WSC in a very difficult position. It was now chronically underfunded, and was unable to “grow” itself out of trouble. As a consequence it lacked capacity and resilience in some areas.

WSC could set a budget for the next three years, albeit by utilising reserves in the latter two years.

Recognising its position WSC commissioned the Local Government Association (LGA) to undertake a review of options in the summer of 2012. Broadly speaking the Review concluded that as a matter of urgency WSC should look at its own cost base to make further savings, in the medium term they should seek a partner to share services with and, in the longer term, they might well be unviable and a Boundary Commission Review would be required.

In parallel, WSC Members considered the possibility of significantly increasing its Council Tax to raise sufficient Council tax to achieve sustainability. However, WSC had proposed in 2013/2014 to set a budget that did not trigger a referendum and had asked Taunton Deane to join them in a project which would result in joint working.

TDBC was an ambitious Council with clearly defined strategic priorities, particularly around the growth of Taunton Deane - investment in Infrastructure, jobs and housing and investment and maintenance of the high quality environmental, cultural and leisure offer.

The funding environment would become more challenging and more risky. There was limited Central Government/Local Enterprise Partnership capital funding available for growth but funding of core services would increasingly be down to Councils themselves, utilising new funding streams like Business Rate Retention.

Whilst reserves were currently healthy, front-line/core services had to be reviewed to ensure they were affordable going forward. Status quo was not an option. The Medium Term Financial Plan already showed a starting gap of £1.2million in 2014/2015 rising to £2.4million in 2015/2016.

In three to four years time TDBC would be in the same position as WSC if it did nothing. It was this position that needed to be compared with the potential costs and benefits of the joint project.

The importance of thinking radically about what the Council needed to look and feel like to deliver the best services to the community that it could was

therefore essential.

Members had previously shown, by way of the Corporate Business Plan Questionnaire, a clear appetite for Shared Services with 91% supporting them as a model going forward. In terms of shared management 41% of Members supported this – not a majority, but significant enough to suggest it was something we could explore further to minimise costs and impacts on funding available for front line services

It was suggested that the principles of Joint Management and Shared Services linked to TDBC's requirements going forward. They could potentially be the best way to deliver a sustainable future for Council services and protect capacity and investment to deliver strategic ambitions.

History and experience had demonstrated that these solutions had worked well for the Council. The Somerset Waste Partnership, Southwest One, Tone, the South West Audit Partnership and the Private Sector Housing Partnership, had all resulted in significant financial savings and service improvements.

Government policy was also pushing TDBC towards joint arrangements. Between 30 and 40 Councils already shared joint management and the Government expected more Councils to be sharing on a voluntary basis in the future.

The existence of a new Strategic Alliance of Councils was an opportunity to deliver Joint Management and/or Shared Services along the lines of "Team Somerset" which was set up by the Somerset districts to oppose the last attempt by the Somerset County Council to introduce a Unitary Council.

Whilst the driving authorities were TDBC and WSC the alliance partners of SCC, Sedgemoor District Council and Exmoor National Park Authority were supporting the proposed Business Case and had indicated their willingness to be actively involved in the detailed consideration of shared services in particular.

The potential was therefore considerable across the West of Somerset. The financial pressures on all authorities were different to Team Somerset times – doing nothing was no longer an option for any Council. This Strategic Alliance was TDBC's opportunity to capitalise on these pressures to drive partnership working forward with some pace.

This proposal would see TDBC and WSC being the key building block of the Alliance. It would lead to a proposal for Joint Management and Shared Services arrangements for these two Councils as a minimum, other Councils might well join and broaden the detailed proposals.

There were benefits to working with WSC:-

- They were a willing partner – they would jointly fund the project;

- Their community broadly looked to Taunton Deane, sharing a boundary, housing market, health, employment and retail catchment area;
- If WSC was to ultimately be an unviable unit of Local Government at some point in the future, TDBC would be strategically positioned to capitalise on any advantages from a Boundary Review; and
- TDBC would become better aligned to the strategic and economic benefits arising from the Hinkley C development.

The jointly funded project would deliver work streams and data which would be of value to TDBC even if the Business Case did not stack up or was not ultimately approved by Members. There would be a much better understanding of our services and potential for change in terms of improving efficiencies, reducing costs or improving income.

TDBC and WSC would keep their own local priorities, policies and service standards. Each Council would need to be assured their local priorities and standards were deliverable within their own affordability envelope. This would always be a Member decision taken by each individual Council.

Given this, WSC financial circumstances were not a risk to TDBC. They were a matter for WSC and they might conclude at the end of the Business Case work that there was insufficient savings/additional income to make the Business Case deliverable for them.

No “dowry” or financial support from TDBC was expected. TDBC would not be subsidising WSC’s contribution to any joint management or shared services at any point in time.

If Members wished to explore the opportunities for Joint Management and Shared Services within the context of the Strategic Alliance and with WSC, a Business Case would need to be put together to include the following key features:-

(a) Project Scope, Vision and Objectives

The Strategic Business Case would explore whether joint working would help both Councils achieve:-

- A sustainable future for both democratically independent organisations - each responsible for the government of their own area, acting independently of each other much of the time;
- A single, fully merged affordable officer structure; and
- Efficient, effective and affordable service delivery with reduced costs, increased income and improved resilience.

(b) Showstoppers

It was important to be clear on the non-negotiable or “show stoppers” from the

outset. These were identified as:-

- The Councils would retain their democratic independence as two sovereign local authorities with separately elected Members; and
- There must be no detriment to the local taxpayers of either Council in the delivery of joint management and services.

(c) Timescales

WSC could set a budget for 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 through the use of reserves. The TDBC Business Plan would run to March 2014/2015. The project duration would reflect these two aligned timescales.

The key milestones in terms of timescales would be as follows:-

- Detailed joint management proposal for consideration in October 2013 and implementation in April 2014;
- High level Business Case for Stage 2 on the shared service arrangements in October 2013 to hopefully green light work on Stage 2 in 2014/2015; and
- Detailed shared service proposals for consideration in October 2014 and implementation in April 2015.

(d) Governance

Key proposals were the establishment of the following two groups:-

- Joint Members Advisory Panel - This would consist of four Members from each Council. The group would ensure the democratic involvement in the project direction; and
- Joint Programme Board - This would include the two Chief Executives (CEO'S), three TDBC Directors and three WSC Corporate Directors/Managers.

Each Council would also have its own independent Scrutiny and Executive arrangements for considering reports.

(e) Resources

This project would require resourcing for the production of the Business Plan to the next key milestone, namely the October 2013 decision on Joint Management and high level service case.

New unavoidable costs would arise from the need to procure additional support from Southwest One and external specialist advice. This would be in the region of £35,000 of which £30,000 would be stand alone TDBC costs and

TDBC's share of joint costs.

If Members chose to allocate new funding to this project so as to protect existing work programmes the Council would need to back fill three days per week capacity for a Strategic Director and a Lead level Officer. This would require one off funding of up to a maximum of £57,000.

The CEO's of both Council's were exploring the potential for funding contributions from the LGA and/or the DCLG. It was not known at this stage if this would be effective as no formal external funding streams currently existed.

Members therefore had a clear choice:-

- To mandate the Business Plan to explore with the Strategic Alliance and in detail with WSC the case for joint management and/or shared services; or
- To reject this and to proceed on our own to reduce Corporate Management costs and to streamline services.

Whatever option was chosen, Members would be in control. The Corporate Management proposals would reflect the strategic ambitions already established by Members in the Business Plan approved to date.

When the Corporate Scrutiny Committee considered this issue Members narrowly supported the project in principle and the detailed Project Mandate and agreed to request Full Council to fund up to £30,000 of unavoidable one off costs for additional Southwest One support and external advice.

The Committee also agreed that Full Council should be recommended to allocate one-off funding to meet the cost of backfilling the existing officer roles who would be involved in preparing the Business Case if agreement to proceed was obtained.

Moved by Councillor Horsley, seconded by Councillor Coles that the proposed recommendations be replaced with the following:-

“Recommended that the Corporate Management Team be asked to explore the possibility of working out an outline Business Case only with West Somerset Council which would be much simpler and involve so much less upfront costs as the main proposals tonight.”

The amendment was put and was lost.

Moved by Councillor Ross, seconded by Councillor Gaines that the proposed recommendations be amended to read as follows:-

- “(1) The proposed project for future joint working between Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council be supported in principle;
- (2) The detailed Project Mandate be approved;

- (3) But no other action be taken at this time other than that the Chief Executive be instructed to make an immediate bid to the Transformation Challenge Award fund for the full cost of preparing the joint Business Plan.”

The amendment was put and was lost.

On the motion of Councillor Williams it was:-

Resolved that:-

- (1) The proposed project for future joint working between Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council be supported in principle;
- (2) The detailed Project Mandate be approved;
- (3) The Chief Executive be instructed to make an immediate bid to the Transformation Challenge Award fund for the full cost of preparing the joint Business Plan;
- (4) Full Council approval be subject to West Somerset Council underwriting fully the external costs of £25,000 should the bid to the Transformation Challenge Award fund not be successful;
- (5) It be agreed to underwrite the Council’s internal costs arising from the decision to fully backfill officers working on this project should the bid to the Transformation Challenge Award fund not be successful, and that one-off funding of up to a maximum of £67,000 be allocated from the General Fund reserves for this purpose.

8. Recommendations to Council from the Executive

(a) Corporate Business Plan 2013/2014 to 2015/2016

At its last meeting, the Executive considered the development of a three year Corporate Business Plan to replace the Council’s Corporate Strategy.

The Business Plan had been developed after detailed consultation work with Councillors and all political groups and following an external peer review by the Local Government Association (LGA).

The ‘Where do we want to be in the future’ section of the Business Plan described the Council’s Vision and three Corporate Aims together with the strategic actions required over the next three years to deliver these aims. The actions were deliberately high level and would be interpreted into more detailed and specific work programmes. Many of the actions had been designed to address the issues identified as a result of the LGA’s Peer Review.

The new Vision and three Corporate Aims, were as follows:-

Vision: Taunton Deane was known nationally as a quality place that was growing and developing sustainably, with a vibrant economic, social and cultural environment.

Aim 1: Quality sustainable growth and development;

Aim 2: A vibrant economic environment; and

Aim 3: A vibrant social, cultural and leisure environment.

The Corporate Business Plan also included a 'Transformed Council' section which detailed three further objectives required to make the Council fit for purpose, address funding pressures and set a long term balanced, sustainable budget. These objectives therefore underpinned the Council's ability to achieve the Corporate Aims.

The three objectives under this section were:-

- Achieving financial sustainability;
- Transforming services; and
- Transforming the way we worked.

There were particular areas of work in this section that were seen as early priorities to progress in the next financial year as a matter of urgency. These projects would be further scoped and costed and brought back for Member consideration in the Spring with a request for funding. These four projects were:-

Asset Management – Commissioning a specific piece of work to review how Taunton Deane could use assets more commercially including disposal of poor performing assets and identification of invest to save opportunities.

Accommodation and Customer Access – Commissioning a project to make recommendations on meeting the Council's future accommodation needs, including the future of The Deane House. This work would need to consider customer access and increasing financial pressures.

Streamlined, modern services – Commissioning work to introduce business process re-engineering reviews to a programme of Council services. These reviews should lead to services becoming more customer focussed, streamlined and efficient and should deliver financial savings. The commission would include training to officers in the organisation to allow it to build the skills to roll this out widely across other services.

Marketing and Promotion – Commissioning some work to help develop and deliver a clear marketing strategy for Taunton Deane that defined Taunton's niche and unique selling point.

There was another action within the Business Plan that needed to be progressed as a matter of urgency and was identified as the most critical recommendation from the LGA Peer Review.

This related to **Service Prioritisation and Savings Targets** which needed to be approved in early 2013/2014. It was intended to invite the LGA to facilitate a workshop with Members in early 2013 to agree a profile of services with associated budgets that collectively were affordable for the Council in its Medium Term Financial Plan.

This would need to meet the aspirations of Councillors in terms of their service priorities but by necessity would involve a considerable cut in spending in service areas to be affordable over the business plan period.

Once a costed service profile had been agreed, this would be reviewed annually and adjusted to take account of the success of other initiatives, such as those listed above.

On the motion of Councillor Williams, it was:-

Resolved that:-

- (a) The Vision, Corporate Aims and the eleven objectives of the draft Business Plan be endorsed;
- (b) The commitment to prioritise and fund the four projects set out above be approved in principle, on the understanding that further detail would be brought back to Scrutiny and the Executive with full scoping and costs;
- (c) It be agreed that work should proceed in developing a detailed delivery plan to map out how this Business Plan would be delivered; and
- (d) It be also agreed that work should proceed to organise the proposed Local Government Association's facilitated Councillor workshops to develop a costed service profile that would describe how a medium-term balanced budget would be achieved.

(b) Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy

The Executive had recently considered a report which detailed the Treasury Management and Investment Strategies for the 2013/2014 financial year.

The Council's debt was currently £94,999,000 which included the Housing Revenue Account self-financing debt of £85,200,000. Short-term interest rates were currently at 0.5% and this rate was expected to be at this level for the next financial year.

The Strategy had the preservation of capital as the most important factor in investing taxpayer's money. Although borrowing rates were currently low the cost of carry had to be considered before taking on any further debt.

The purpose of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and investment Strategy (TMSS) was to approve:-

- The Treasury Management Strategy for 2013/2014 (Borrowing and Debt Rescheduling);
- The use of Specified and Non-Specified Investments; and
- The Prudential Indicators for 2013/2014, 2014/2015 and 2015/2016.

The Council's Financial Advisors, Arlingclose, had suggested that interest rates were likely to remain low for even longer, until at least 2016, given the extension of austerity measures announced in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement.

The TMSS had therefore been written in continuing challenging and uncertain economic times.

The current economic outlook had several key treasury management implications:-

- Investment returns were likely to remain relatively low during 2013/2014;
- Borrowing interest rates were currently attractive, but might remain low for some time; and
- The timing of any borrowing would need to be monitored carefully. There would remain a cost of carry – any borrowing undertaken that resulted in an increase in investments would incur a revenue loss between borrowing costs and investment returns.

As a result, the Strategy looked to reduce exposure to risk and volatility by:-

- (1) Considering security, liquidity and yield, in that order;
- (2) Considering alternative assessments of credit strength;
- (3) Spreading investments over a range of approved counterparties; and
- (4) Only investing for longer periods to gain higher rates of return where there were acceptable levels of counterparty risk.

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

The Council's General Fund Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) for 2013/2014 was £7,688,000 which was currently funded through internal borrowing. The Council was able to borrow funds in excess of the current CFR up to the projected level in 2015/2016 of £7,086,000. #

On the motion of Councillor Williams, it was:-

Resolved that:-

- (1) The Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy

be approved; and

- (2) The Prudential Indicators, set out in Appendix B of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy be also approved.

9. **Suspension of Standing Order**

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

(c) **Halcon North Regeneration, Taunton – Creechbarrow Road Project**

The Executive had recently given consideration to a proposal to re-development an area of land at Creechbarrow Road, Taunton.

For several years, the Council had been considering the Halcon North area in terms of what action could be taken to tackle the high levels of deprivation and to provide a greater level of support to this community. The previous regeneration project comprised the demolition of approximately 200 Council dwellings and a mixed tenure development, with significantly increased density. However towards the end of last year, it was accepted that smaller scale regeneration would be more preferable to local residents.

At the outset of the previous project, a competitive process was undertaken to appoint partners to work alongside the Council on the Halcon North project, and Knightstone Housing Association (KHA) was subsequently appointed. KHA had appointed Boon Brown Architects to assist them with this task. As a result, both parties had built up a considerable knowledge of the area.

KHA had been awarded, Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) subsidy funding for 30 Affordable Rented Homes (80% of Market rent). The investment in these new homes would be in the region of £4,000,000. Despite the larger project for the area not progressing, the allocated HCA funding remained and this has created an opportunity to consider a smaller regeneration project.

Key features of the HCA funding were:-

- It was allocated to the Halcon area. However, KHA could request for it to be transferred to any other site in Somerset, if it appeared that the HCA funding was not going to be spent within the prescribed timetable;
- The new housing to which it related had to be completed and the money spent by the end of March 2015;
- The timescale available to achieve construction and therefore HCA spend in this timescale was very challenging. Consequently KHA required a decision on this matter as soon as possible;
- The HCA wished to see developments to which the funding related, on site by September 2013; and

- For a scheme to progress, it was proposed that the land would be transferred with vacant possession to KHA for £1.

Attention was now focussed on a scheme on Creechbarrow Road, which was one of the four streets in the original project.

The scheme would involve all current residents being found alternative accommodation. All the current flats would then be demolished. One end of the site would be transferred to KHA upon which 30 affordable rented houses would be constructed. The remainder of the site would remain in Taunton Deane ownership, on which 57 new homes for Social rent would be built. In addition, the scheme would see the creation of a central green/play area and a Community Hub building.

Whilst the project was housing driven, it was also designed to help tackle the deprivation in the area. In total, there is the potential for 87 new homes which represented a significant increase on the current situation in terms of better quality affordable housing and a potential investment of over £11,000,000 in this area.

The play/communal area would provide a new central focus and help integration of the new and the existing properties and provide a quality open space. The Community Hub building could house a multi-agency team working in the Ward and provide facilities for the community that would seek to address the serious issues of deprivation in the locality.

Although the increase in homes was significant, the potential increase in bed numbers was huge with 339 bed spaces likely with the new development compared with the 172 spaces which currently existed.

The new Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 30 Year Business Plan included priorities in relation to the provision of more affordable housing, investment and support to vulnerable communities and sustainable development.

The HRA also had available to it additional borrowing headroom of £16,000,000. With the availability of very low interest rates and resources available in the Business Plan to fund such borrowing, the current climate and context were right to consider a scheme such as the one proposed.

The KHA outline development of 30 dwellings was likely to consist of 9 x 1 Bed Flats; 8 x 2 Bed Flats; 2 x 2 Bed Houses; 8 x 3 Bed Houses; and 3 x 4 Bed Houses.

For regeneration projects it was usual for the Council to underwrite 50% of the "at risk" costs - the costs incurred in a scheme design prior to planning consent being obtained. In this case 50% of the at risk costs for the KHA portion of the site would be £32,000 if planning permission was not granted.

The outline of the Taunton Deane part of the development was likely to consist of 19 x 1 Bed Flats; 19 x 2 Bed Flats; 4 x 2 Bed Houses; 9 x 3 Bed Houses; 4 x 4 Bed Houses; 1 X 5 Bed House; and 1 x 6 Bed House.

In addition at the end of Moorland Road, where two semi-detached houses were currently situated, there would be an additional eight, 2 bedroom flats, with a Community Hub building on the ground floor.

The scheme could be further enhanced by additional new housing frontage being provided on the opposite side of this end of Moorland Road. The proposal therefore included three additional family homes on the site of Nos 2 and 4 Moorland Road.

The “at risk” costs for the Taunton Deane portion of the site were estimated to be £120,000. The estimated project costs for 57 new dwellings and the Community Hub building was £7,667,000.

Although the site would ultimately be in two parts in terms of ownership, in terms of development it would be desirable from a practical point of view to redevelop it as one.

There were four key requirements to consider for the scheme to progress:-

Development Agent – The Council did not have all the necessary skills, capacity and experience to undertake this project. A third party organisation to undertake development services on Taunton Deane’s behalf was therefore required. A quote has been received from KHA to undertake this work which would enable them to project manage the whole site on behalf of both parties.

Although the fee quoted was at a level where a procurement exercise would normally be required, it was recommended that Contract Procedure Rules should be waived to allow KHA to be appointed as Development Agents.

Architect – Boon Brown Architects had already been working on various schemes in this area with KHA. From a planning perspective there was an urgency to submit a planning application for the KHA part of the site to ensure the HCA funding was not lost. However, in order for this application to be considered in time, it was felt advisable to submit an application for the whole site using one architect. In order to achieve this, the Council would need to waive Contract Procedure Rules to enable Boon Brown to continue to act on the Council’s behalf as the fee for this service would exceed procurement thresholds that would usually require an open procurement process.

Employers Agent – No agent had been appointed for either party in relation to the scheme. However, one would need to be appointed as soon as possible. KHA had undertaken a procurement exercise to pre-select on a framework agreement five firms who could undertake the role of Employers Agent. Under normal circumstances, the level of fee for this service would again exceed the relevant services aspect of Contract Procedure Rules. However, it was proposed to waive Contract Procedure Rules and undertake a mini competition from the KHA framework and appoint a joint Employers Agent.

Contractor – The estimated costs of building contractor works were likely to

exceed EU procurement thresholds. In order for the Council to undertake EU compliant procurement, the Council was proposing to access framework agreements established by the HCA which had been designed with Local Authority housing projects specifically in mind. It was proposed that Taunton Deane and KHA would jointly procure contractors for the project from a framework agreement set up and managed by the HCA.

As a proportion of the costs will be incurred in the current financial year, the sum of £200,000 needed to be added to the 2012/2013 Capital Budget to be funded from HRA reserves.

On the motion of Councillor Mrs Adkins, it was:-

Resolved that:-

(a) In relation to the proposed Knightstone Housing Association portion of the site:-

- (1) To agree the transfer of the Southern part of the Creechbarrow Road site (incorporating new house numbers 1-30 on the sketch plan) to Knightstone Housing Association for £1, in order to enable the development of 30 new affordable homes, subject to agreed heads of terms to be negotiated and agreed by the Health and Housing Manager in conjunction with SW1 Property Services and the Legal department.
- (2) To approve the decant of the tenants currently occupying the southern end of the site (current property Nos 2-20) and transfer these properties with vacant possession to Knightstone Housing Association;
- (3) To accept to underwrite 50% of Knightstone Housing Association's "at risk costs" of approximately £32,000, to be funded by existing Housing Revenue Account resources if required.

(b) In relation to the proposed Taunton Deane portion of the site:-

- (4) Subject to satisfactory detailed scheme appraisal, to approve the redevelopment of the Taunton Deane portion of the site and for that purpose to:-
 - Progress the actions necessary to achieve vacant possession of the current properties including decanting, buy back of former right to buy properties or agreement of exchange of alternate property, the decommissioning of properties and securing the site;
 - Progress the detailed design and site evaluation; and
 - Preparation of a planning application;
- (5) To approve in principle borrowing of £7,700,000 to fund the scheme within the Housing Revenue Account and identify any additional funding for the Community Hub and play aspects of the development;

(6) To agree to commit Taunton Deane to “at risk” costs of approximately £120,000, to be funded by Housing Revenue Account resources;

(7) To waive Contract Procedure Rules and:-

- Appoint Knightstone Housing Association as Development Agents to act on behalf of the Council in relation to this project;
- Appoint Boon Brown Architects to continue to act on the Council’s behalf in relation to this scheme; and
- Undertake a joint mini competition amongst the five Employers Agent firms on the Knightstone Housing Association framework and appoint, as appropriate, one company to act on the Council’s behalf in relation to this scheme;

(c) In relation to the project as whole:-

(8) To approve a supplementary estimate from the Housing Revenue Account reserves of £200,000, which would be added to the 2012/2013 capital budget, as a proportion of the costs would be incurred in the current financial year; and

(9) To issue and serve on the tenants of the site (where applicable) Demolition Notices pursuant to the Housing Act 1985 (as amended).

(The Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer, the Legal and Democratic Services Manager and the Democratic Services Manager and Corporate Support Lead declared prejudicial interests in the following item and left the meeting during its consideration.)

(d) Localism Act 2011 – Pay Policy Statement

The Localism Act 2011 had made it a requirement for all Local Authorities to prepare a Pay Policy Statement each year for approval by Members.

The first Statement was prepared last year following consideration by Scrutiny and the Executive. However, due to the fact that the document was largely unchanged, a decision to refer the 2013/2014 Statement directly to Full Council was reported through the Weekly Bulletin on 21 February 2013.

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

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

Resolved that the Pay Policy Statement for 2013/2014 be approved.

10. Appointment of Civic Marshall

Reported that since December 2005 the post of Civic Marshall had been effectively carried out by Councillor Mrs Jean Allgrove.

Councillor Mrs Allgrove now wished to relinquish this role and it was necessary to appoint a successor.

Councillor Mrs Marcia Hill had indicated that she was willing to undertake the duties of Civic Marshall.

Resolved that:-

- (1) Councillor Mrs Marcia Hill be appointed as Civic Marshall; and
- (2) Councillor Mrs Allgrove be thanked for carrying out the duties over the past seven years.

(Councillors Mrs Baker, Bishop, Henley, Stone and D Wedderkopp all left the meeting at 9.04 p.m.)

(The meeting ended at 9.48 p.m.)

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 – Councillor Swaine**
- **Member of the Board of Governors at Somerset College – Councillor Gill Slattery**
- **Patron of Supporters, Taunton Women’s Aid – Councillor Gill Slattery**
- **Owner of land in Taunton Deane – Councillor Farbahi**

Motion to Full Council – 9 April 2013

Theatre and Arts Policy for Community Engagement in Taunton's Cultural Quarter

Motion proposed by Councillor Steve Ross and seconded by Councillor Eddie Gaines

The public response to the closure of the Brewhouse Theatre and Arts Centre has demonstrated that our community wants a theatre space in central Taunton to be preserved and go forward. Collective action is necessary to address short term challenges and identify and meet our community's aspirations for theatre and the arts in Taunton Deane.

This Council recognises that it has a key role in supporting the provision of theatre and the arts in Taunton but that it should not be managing it. The Executive is commissioning a feasibility study about the future of theatre in central Taunton, engaging external consultants.

Suggestions that Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) might bid for the Brewhouse Theatre lease have confused matters for local groups already going forward with ideas for what follows the Brewhouse Theatre and Arts Centre. While it would not be the Council's intention, lack of clarity risks obstructing community initiatives in respect of what is next for the Brewhouse.

New groups that have been set up: 'Count Me In' and 'Tone Theatre Association' are making proposals for the way forward. Other established groups have also expressed interest in shaping the future of the theatre and arts after the Administration of the Brewhouse (TAPA, the Cultural Consortium, social enterprises, community interest companies, local educational establishments and other arts and educational organisations in Taunton Deane). A mechanism should be put in place to bring together and support these groups from our community to present a united offering.

Key principles that have emerged from community discussions about any new arts and theatre offering in central Taunton suggest that any organisation delivering this should aim:-

- To create and facilitate a theatre and arts centre that is welcoming, inclusive and open to all sections of the community in the centre of Taunton.
- To enhance the theatre and arts centres reputation, maintain a high profile, and become a vital component of the public and cultural life of Taunton and of the wider community of Somerset.

- To programme, promote and produce work that both satisfies and challenges audiences and Members.
- To offer opportunities to develop performance and other creative skills, in both young people and adults and develop talent through new work and new ways of working.
- To collaborate with other partners, as sponsors, co-producers or funders to enhance and extend the quality and scope of productions and other activities to support economic growth of Taunton and promote well-being.
- To celebrate the diversity of talent in Taunton, Somerset and beyond through high quality programming focused on a balanced mix of art forms and media, productions, exhibitions and other activities provided by professional and amateur organisations as well as individuals from all sectors of the arts and entertainment industry.
- To maintain and enhance the fabric and building of the former Brewhouse Theatre through the efficient running and financial viability of the organisation.
- To celebrate the diversity of talent in Taunton, Somerset and beyond through high quality programming focused on a balanced mix of art forms and media, productions, exhibitions and other activities.

These are points from our community that Councillors will likely subscribe to and that our community can ill afford consultants fees for us to clarify.

Our community needs clear leadership and to understand the direction of this Council's policy towards the Brewhouse administration and what comes next.

Motion 1

1. This Council's policy will be to facilitate the provision of community led theatre and arts activities in Taunton Deane.
2. In relation to the closure of the Brewhouse, the Council will deliver that policy by pledging its support for the formation of a new community led organisation, the 'new CLO', that is subsequently established as a charitable organisation involving all interested local individuals and organisations, to operate the theatre and arts centre currently known as the Brewhouse in the future.
3. This Council will support the work of the new CLO by allowing its representatives to work with officers on the scope and delivery of a

feasibility study with TDBC for the future of theatre and the arts in the cultural quarter of Taunton.

4. The Council will commit its ring fenced funding in 2013/2014, previously targeted at the Brewhouse to be used by the new CLO if either the Council or new CLO secures a lease of the Brewhouse Theatre building.

Motion 2

5. The Council will bid to the Administrator and secure a lease, fixtures and fittings on behalf of the community it represents before facilitating the future operation of the Brewhouse by the new CLO.
6. If the Council decides to bid to the Administrator and is successful in its bid it will endeavour to transfer the lease to the CLO (but retain freehold ownership) at the earliest opportunity subject to that organisation providing best value to the Council and our community.

Motion 3

7. If Councillors reject Motion 2 and do not decide to bid for the lease, fixtures and fittings of the Brewhouse Theatre, it will be this Council's policy to support the new CLO in their bid to the Administrator to secure the lease, fixtures and fittings.

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Full Council – 9 April 2013

Potential Purchase of the Brewhouse Theatre and Options for the Future

Report of Strategic Director – Brendan Cleere

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Norman Cavill)

1. Executive Summary

This report seeks Full Council approval of a bid to purchase the remaining lease on The Brewhouse Theatre and assets within, together with approval of a process to facilitate a sustainable future for the venue.

Trustees of the Brewhouse Theatre – an independent charity – decided to appoint administrators resulting in the closure of the venue on 21 February 2013.

Administrators have a duty to secure maximum value for the assets and a marketing exercise is currently under way. The deadline for bids for the remaining 61 years of the existing lease is 12 April 2013. The Council owns the land and the lease contains a number of restrictive covenants, giving the Council powers to ensure that the use remains as a theatre.

A valuation exercise has been carried out and a bid has been submitted to the administrators, subject to Full Council approval.

There are financial implications associated with owning this property, which are outlined in the confidential Appendix.

There are risks associated with owning the property which are outlined in section 11.

An independent consultant is currently being appointed to advise on potential operating models and proposals emerging for the operation of the theatre. It is recommended that the work of this consultant is overseen by Group Leaders, together with the portfolio and shadow portfolio holders and the Chairman of the Taunton Cultural Consortium.

2. Background

- 2.1 Management and trustees of the Brewhouse Theatre and Arts Centre approached the Council in early January 2013 to give notice of their severe financial predicament and to request significant additional funds to enable the venue to continue trading.
- 2.2 The Council provides a grant of £152,000 per annum to The Brewhouse, and Group Leaders were unanimous in their view that there should be no further funding without a clear recovery plan, showing how the theatre could be put onto a sustainable financial footing.
- 2.3 Trustees of the Brewhouse (an independent charity) then engaged a firm called BDO – specialists in financial insolvency and administration – to advise on their options for the future. This resulted in trustees recommending an option whereby the theatre would be placed into administration and the administrators would immediately enter into a license with the Council to enable the theatre to remain open.
- 2.4 Again, Group Leaders were unanimous in their view that the Council could not consider entering into a license with the administrators, due to the scale of the financial risks and uncertainties involved.
- 2.5 BDO were formally appointed as administrators of The Brewhouse on 21 February 2013 and the venue closed on that day.
- 2.6 The administration process is ongoing and BDO are currently marketing the remaining 61 years of the lease on the property, with a deadline for offers of 12 April 2013. The proceeds of any sale will be used by the administrator to cover their costs and to pay outstanding creditors.
- 2.7 The Council's annual grant of £152,000 remains protected in the 2013/14 budget towards any successor venture. A further sum of £35,000 was also set aside in February 2013, to assist with any costs incurred in protecting the Council's interest in the asset and facilitating a sustainable future for the venue.

3. Potential Purchase of The Brewhouse

- 3.1 As described above, administrators are currently marketing the 61 year lease remaining on the building, with a view to achieving the best possible price in accordance with their legal duties to former trustees and creditors. As landowner and owner of the freehold for the building, the building would otherwise revert to the Council in 61 years' time.
- 3.2 Group Leaders have expressed support in principle for the submission of a bid to buy out the remaining 61 year lease on the venue, as a means of both protecting the asset and having a strong role in facilitating a

- sustainable future for the theatre. On the latter issue, there was support for the principle that the Council should act as facilitator, rather than prospective theatre operator.
- 3.3 A detailed valuation exercise has subsequently been undertaken and a bid submitted, subject to contract, Council approval and a detailed survey. Details of the bid value are attached in Appendix A (confidential).
 - 3.4 The closing date for bids has been set as 12 April 2013. Formal Council approval would lend credibility to the bid that has been submitted, with the associated guarantee of support and availability of funds that such a decision would bring. On the other hand, the Council may decide not to support the bid that has been submitted, due to the associated cost and risks involved.
 - 3.5 Additional 'Holding costs' for the property are estimated at up to £140,000 for a twelve month period and £69,000 for a six month period. These costs include utilities, 24 hour security, insurance and business rates.
 - 3.6 As mentioned in section X, the offer submitted is subject to survey. There are potential additional costs associated with any works required on the structure of the property and its electrical and mechanical infrastructure. Following acceptance of any offer by the Council, a survey will be carried out to establish these costs in more detail. It is recommended that delegated authority is given to the steering group described in section 4.2 to consider these costs and decide whether to proceed with the purchase.

4. Determining Options for the Future of The Brewhouse

- 4.1 A process is currently under way to appoint an independent consultant to advise the Council on options for the future of the venue and also to advise on emerging interest and potential proposals to run the theatre. The consultant will start work by the end of April 2013 and will be required to submit a report by the end of July 2013. This is to be funded from the £35,000 budget already approved.
- 4.2 It is proposed that the work of the independent consultant is overseen at key intervals by a steering group comprising Group Leaders, the relevant Portfolio and Shadow Portfolio Holders and the Chairman of the Taunton Cultural Consortium. A key role of the steering group would be to look at the financial viability of any emerging models, as well their alignment with the commitment to a thriving arts and cultural scene in Taunton. The steering group will also consider any property related costs established by a detailed survey.
- 4.3 The consultant's report content will depend on a number of variables which are not known at this stage, such as whether the Council acquires the property and the nature and viability of any interested parties' proposals to run the theatre.

- 4.4 The final report of the consultant will be subject to scrutiny and further decision, if appropriate, by Executive and Full Council.

5. Finance Comments

- 5.1 As highlighted earlier in this report, there are both capital and revenue costs associated with acquiring and holding the asset. There are also potential unforeseen additional costs that could be identified by the proposed survey should the bid be successful, which the Council may face an obligation to address or pass on the liability through any subsequent lease arrangement.
- 5.2 Further comments are provided within the Confidential Appendix.

6. Legal Comments

- 6.1 As the Council owns the freehold of the Brewhouse, if the Council acquires the lease, the lease will merge with the freehold and cease to exist. The Council could then grant a new lease on such terms as can be agreed with a new tenant. If the Council does not acquire the lease there is a restriction on assigning the lease to a new tenant. If the Administrator sought to assign the lease in breach of the terms of the lease then the Council could (if they chose to do so) take enforcement action through the Court.

7. Links to Corporate Aims

- 7.1 A vibrant arts and culture scene makes a significant contribution to the local economy and the Council's growth and regeneration priority.

8. Environmental Implications

- 8.1 There are no specific environmental implications arising from this report. Should the Council acquire the property, any improvements works required would need to consider environment and sustainability issues.

9. Community Safety Implications

- 9.1 24 hour security is currently in place to protect the property against potential vandalism or anti-social behaviour. If the Council acquired the property, the holding costs referred to previously in this report include continuation of 24 hour security.

10. Equalities Impact

- 10.1 The closure of the Brewhouse has impacted on many groups and individuals.

10.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out in respect of any subsequent business case from a third party to re-open and run the theatre, which depends on support of the Council. These matters will also be considered by the steering group referred to previously.

11. Risk Management

11.1 Key risks associated with this report are set out below:

Risk	Comment/Mitigation
A bid from the Council is not acceptable to the administrators	The Council will be able to exert significant influence over prospective purchasers through the terms of the lease.
The Brewhouse is acquired by a third party, resulting in a potential reduction in the amount of control that the Council can apply over the future of the venue.	Whilst the Council would lose a degree of control over the venue, the terms of the remaining lease are such that the Council can still exert substantial influence, through the terms of the lease, over the future of the venue.
The Brewhouse is acquired by a third party, who expects TDBC to provide unconditional support for their activities.	Restrictive covenants give TDBC substantial influence over the use of the venue. Members are strongly advised not to lend support of any kind to any third party unless a sustainable operating model is in place. This will take some time and the independent consultant will advise in this regard.
The costs of 'holding' the asset in the event of the Council owning the venue are deemed too high and/or property related costs are prohibitively high following detailed survey.	This is a matter for members to consider in deciding whether or not to endorse the bid that has been submitted. Should the Council's bid be accepted by administrators, it is recommended that authority be delegated to the steering group referred to in section 4.2, should a detailed survey reveal prohibitive property related costs.
Following purchase of the venue, the Council fails to find a party willing to operate it.	The proposed steering group will be notified at the earliest possible stage whether any operating models have a realistic prospect of success in financial terms. It is suggested that alternative options for the venue may be needed if a successor operator cannot be found during the period to Christmas 2013.
Following purchase of the venue, there is pressure on the Council to open the	It is strongly advised that the Council does not bow to pressure to open the

doors prematurely, and without a clear and sustainable operating plan.

doors prematurely, without a clear and financially viable operating model in place. The independent consultant will advise on this matter.

12. Partnership Implications

12.1 There are no partnership implications at this stage.

13. Recommendations

13.1 Full Council is recommended to:-

- (i) Decide whether to give its endorsement for the bid which has been submitted, details of which are provided in Appendix A (confidential).
- (ii) Should such endorsement be given, to approve the mechanism described in Appendix A (confidential) for funding the purchase and the associated 'holding costs' and subject to further consideration of likely property related costs to be established through a detailed survey.
- (iii) Approve the establishment of the Steering Group (described in section 4.2) to oversee development of options for The Brewhouse and to delegate authority to the Steering Group to decide whether to proceed with any purchase, should a detailed survey reveal excessive property related costs.

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Taunton Deane Borough Council

Full Council – 9 April, 2013

Proposed Improvements to Creech Castle Junction, Taunton

Report of the Regeneration and Delivery Manager

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Norman Cavill)

1. Executive Summary

To obtain the Council's approval to:-

1. A Supplementary Estimate for the 2013/2014 Capital Programme of £375,000, funded from the newly established Growth and Regeneration Reserve towards planned improvements to the Creech Castle Junction, Taunton on the basis that Somerset County Council (SCC) makes a similar contribution and the balance of £1,950,000 is met by contributions of £150,000 from private developers (secured) and £1,800,000 from the Department for Transport (DfT).
2. Transfer a small area of Taunton Deane owned land adjoining Creechbarrow Hill to SCC at nil consideration in order to facilitate the planned junction improvements.

2. Background

2.1 The DfT have made funds available to deliver infrastructure improvements which help to facilitate growth and overcome local congestion problems. This fund is called the Local Pinch Points Fund.

2.2 A summary of the guidance for the new fund is as follows:-

- Grant funding for schemes to unlock economic development and tackle congestion with a wide variety of types of scheme eligible (roads, cycling, bus priority, failing structures etc).
- Most awards will be for £1m to £5m schemes, but there will be opportunity by exception for some £5m- £20m schemes. Funding is capital.
- Views of the Local Enterprise Partnership / Local Transport Board will be taken into account in prioritising and approving funding.

- A 30% local contribution is required (this may be from local third parties/ developer funds or other sources).
- Funding is for 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 so schemes must be deliverable at pace. There is no allowance for funding slippage and no allowance for cost over-run.
- Grant funding will not cover scheme preparation costs such as planning and CPO processes etc. Scheme preparation costs must be met by the promoting authority.
- Whilst there is no limit on the number of bids, the DfT reserves the right to limit awards to two schemes per authority if necessary. Bids need to be prepared to a high quality over a very short period of time so it is proposed that the Council submit no more than two bids.
- Business case submissions required by **21 February 2013**. This is a reduced version of the usual major schemes business case assessments but still required significant quantitative evidence about the benefits of any schemes.

2.3 SCC considered a number of alternative schemes both countywide and within Taunton Deane before prioritising the Creech Castle Scheme (along with one other in South Somerset). In particular, improvements to J25 of the M5 were considered and rejected on the basis of relative delivery risk when compared with the Creech Castle scheme.

2.4 A scheme to increase capacity on the circulatory carriageway and slip roads at J25 remains an extremely high priority for the County, the Borough and the Local Enterprise Partnership. There is, however, currently no agreed design for the improvement and land would need to be acquired from the Highways Agency and other landowners. Whilst it was considered possible to deliver within the two year programme, it would have been very challenging and risk prone and would also have been much more difficult to secure the required 30% local contribution for this much more expensive scheme (£5m+). SCC considers that any J25 scheme will be a good candidate for funding though the new Major Transport Schemes Programme currently being prepared by the LEP/Local Transport Board for construction in 2015-2019.

2.5 On balance it was decided that a local Pinch Points bid should be prepared for Creech Castle where there is an outline scheme designed which can be delivered mainly within land in local authority ownership and which is a clear prerequisite to enable the planned delivery of growth and economic development at Monkton Heathfield.

3. The Proposed Improvement

3.1 The planned scheme comprises at-grade capacity improvements at the junction (via a 'hamburger' layout junction) which was identified as the preferred solution through a detailed technical study which considered a variety of options.

3.2 A plan of the scheme design is attached as an appendix.

3.3 Delivery of the proposed scheme requires the transfer from the Council to SCC of a small area of land to enable an improved slip onto Tone Way from the south.

4. Officer Views

4.1 Capacity at Creech Castle Junction is undoubtedly having an increasing impact on congestion, journey time reliability and the business perception of Taunton as an effective location in which to invest and do business. These problems are likely to be exacerbated by the planned housing and economic growth at Monkton Heathfield.

4.2 It is considered that the opportunity to deliver significant improvements to this critical junction at limited local cost and with 70% of the total cost funded by the DfT is one which should be fully supported.

4.3 The alternative is that limited other funding such as CIL is prioritised towards the delivery of this scheme; which would be at considerable opportunity cost.

5. Financial Implications and Comments

5.1 The funding requested for this scheme is on a one-off basis, therefore from a financial management perspective it is advisable that the funding is provided from one-off resources.

5.2 The proposal is to pay a Capital Contribution of £375,000 to Somerset County Council towards this scheme. It is recommended by the author that the most appropriate source of funding is the £2,375,000 Growth and Regeneration Reserve Fund, which makes the proposal affordable from existing resources held by the Council. Payment arrangements should be scheduled such that funds are only released when appropriate planning approvals etc are in place, and in line with contractual commitments to pay third party contractors undertaking the works.

5.3 SCC has already agreed to provide 'their' £375,000 of local matching funding (Cabinet 20 March 2013).

5.4. £150,000 of developer funding is already secured via an existing S106 Agreement for development at Monkton Heathfield.

6. Legal Comments

6.1 Submission of the bid to the DfT does not commit the authority to making a contribution towards the cost of the scheme. A further decision will be taken if grant funding is offered to SCC. It will be necessary to ensure firm commitments to all funding contributions before SCC accepts the grant funding. At this stage, the commitment is indicative only.

- 6.2 Legal agreements may be necessary in due course to secure funding contributions.
- 6.3 There are well established processes for transferring small areas of land between local authorities at nil consideration.

7. Links to Corporate Aims

- 7.1 This proposal links to the Regeneration and Growth Aim of the Corporate Strategy.

8. Environmental Implications

- 8.1 The scheme is planned to reduce congestion at an existing congestion 'hot spot'. It is likely that the scheme will generate environmental benefits but these will only be quantified in detail as part of the later detailed scheme submission by SCC.

9. Community Safety Implications

- 9.1 The scheme will increase capacity at this junction but will also provide better safe crossing opportunities for pedestrians and cyclists.

10. Equalities Impact

- 10.1 The implications of the schemes for people with protected characteristics will be examined by SCC as part of the business case and the scheme design in due course.

11. Risk Management

Risk	Low/Medium/High	Mitigating Action
There is a risk, should the scheme be accepted for funding, that it may not be delivered within the available two-year window due to issues such as land acquisition.	Medium	The scheme has been chosen by SCC specifically because it minimises this risk. Delivery risks will be further examined as part of the detailed business case preparation and appropriate mitigation identified. These risks will be considered carefully prior to acceptance of any grant funding.

Risk	Low/Medium/High	Mitigating Action
There is a risk that there may be total scheme cost over-run. DfT have said that they will not absorb any elements of such cost over-run ; which could lead to pressure to identify additional local funding	Medium	There is already a significant amount of scheme and cost information. The scheme has been chosen by SCC specifically because it minimises this risk. Delivery risks will be further examined as part of the detailed business case preparation and appropriate mitigation identified. These risks will be considered carefully prior to acceptance of any grant funding

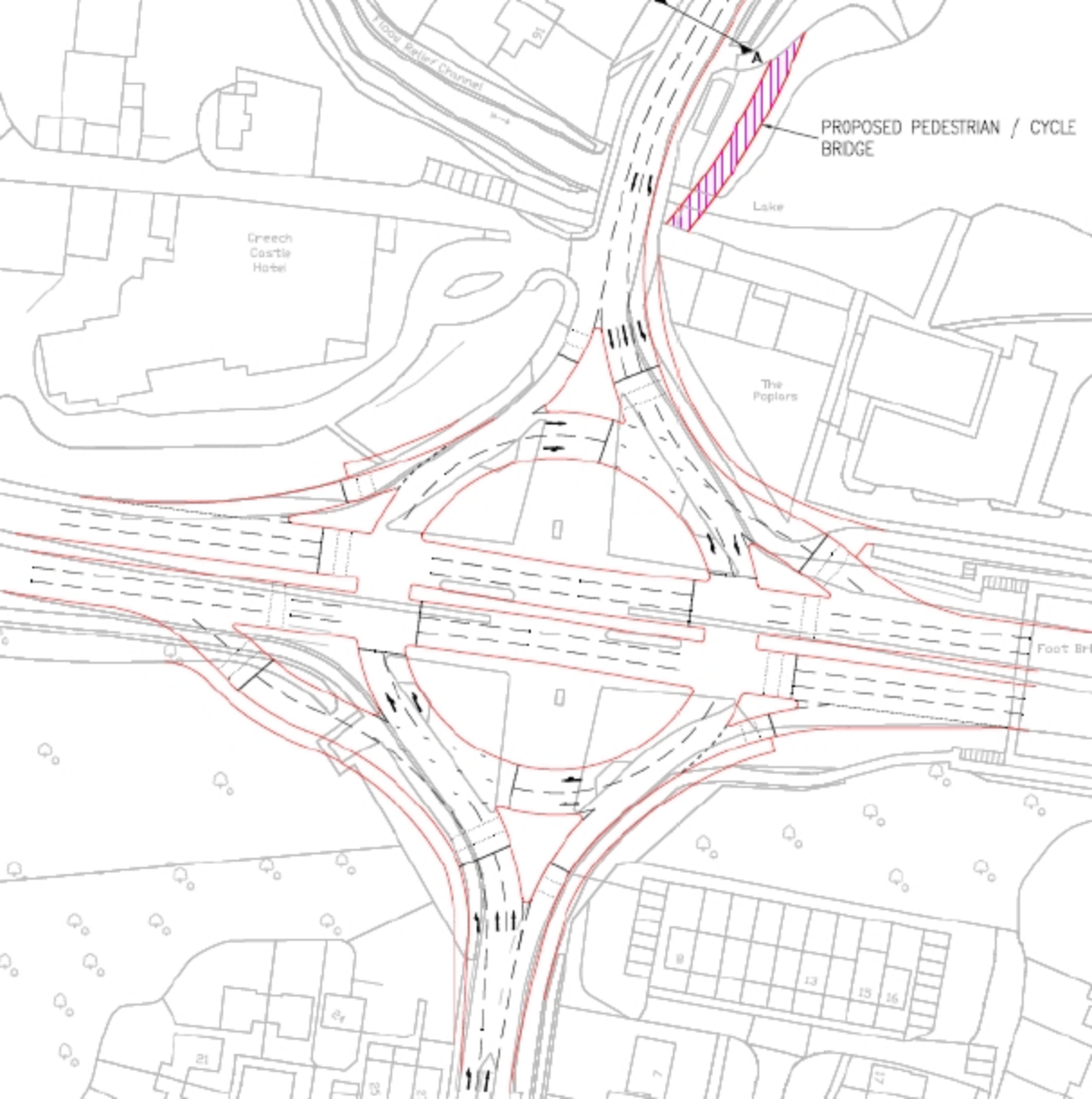
12. Partnership Implications

12.1 This is a partnership scheme with SCC as the lead delivery partner.

13. Recommendations

- 13.1 That Council approves a Supplementary Estimate for the 2013/2014 Capital Programme of £375,000, funded from the newly established Growth and Regeneration Reserve as Taunton Deane's element of local funding towards the delivery of the planned improvement of Creech Castle Junction, Taunton; and
- 13.2 That the small area of Taunton Deane owned land adjoining the southern slip on to Tone Way required to deliver the planned improvement be transferred to SCC at nil consideration should the DfT funding be forthcoming and the scheme be proceeded with.

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PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN / CYCLE BRIDGE

Creesh Castle Hotel

Lake

The Poplars

Foot Br

Foot Path Channel

21

24

25

23

7

17

13

15

16

22

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Council Meeting – 9 April 2013

Part I

To deal with written questions to, and receive recommendations to the Council from, the Executive.

(i) Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams

Financial and Performance Monitoring – Quarter 3 2012/2013 – Proposed Carry Forwards

At its meeting on 13 March 2013, the Executive considered a report concerning the update on the financial position and the performance of the Council to the end of Quarter 3 of 2012/2013 (as at 31 December 2012) is an important part of the overall performance management framework.

The Executive noted that the current forecast outturn for the Council's General Fund Capital Programme was Net Expenditure of £5,200,000, compared to the budget of £7,424,000. The forecast under spend is therefore £2,224,000 (30%) for the financial year. Of this amount, £2,176,000 related to slippage on projects into 2013/2014, with an under spend on project budgets of £48,000.

Explanations for variances were provided in the report in respect of 14 capital projects. However, of these 14, the following five projects were identified as requiring a carry forward of budgets into the 2013/2014 Financial Year:-

- (a) **Climate Change Initiatives** - Slippage is being reported against this project of £40,000. A request has recently come forward to Members to consider installing solar PV cells on the tennis centre roof at Blackbrook Pavilion, to be funded from this budget next year. It is therefore recommended that £40,000 of the budget is carried forward.
- (b) **PC Refresh Project** - It is currently forecast that expenditure of £15,000 will be deferred until the 2013/2014 financial year. A new five year rolling programme for the replacement of PC's is currently being prepared which will determine when the cost is incurred. It is therefore recommended that £15,000 of the budget is carried forward.
- (c) **ICT Infrastructure Maintenance** - This project has not yet been started due to continuing discussions with partners. The cost of the project to the Council is currently unknown and the timescale for spend has not yet been determined. It is therefore recommended that the £35,000 budget is carried forward.
- (d) **Project Taunton – Coal Orchard** - A new masterplan is required for this

project which is connected to the Town Centre Retail project. This is not due to happen until next financial year therefore it is recommended that the £10k budget is carried forward.

- (e) **Grants to Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)** - There is slippage reported on the grants to RSLs capital budget of £414,000. Normally 50% of Taunton Deane grants are paid on commencement and the remaining 50% on completion. These resources are all allocated to schemes such as the affordable housing scheme at Parmin Close, Taunton but payment will not be required before April 2013. It is therefore recommended that the £414,000 budget is carried forward.

In the circumstances, it is **recommended** that the following carry forwards, totalling £514,000 be approved:-

- Climate Change Initiatives – £40,000;
- PC Refresh Project – £15,000;
- ICT Infrastructure Maintenance – £35,000;
- Project Taunton – Coal Orchard – £10,000; and
- Grants to Registered Social Landlords – £414,000.

Full Council Meeting – 9 April 2013

Report of Councillor John Williams – Leader of the Council

1. EDF and Hinkley Point

- 1.1 It is extremely disappointing that such adverse comments are being made about this Council and lack of diligence in our approach to EDF. This is in respect of the many opportunities arising from the proposed development. These are coming from a minority of Members who, quite frankly, I would expect to know better.
- 1.2 This potential project was pursued by us as soon as it started to become reality. EDF concluded the deal to purchase Hinkley Point from Nuclear Energy in early January 2009 and on the 12 January 2009 a meeting was arranged for a presentation by EDF on their plans for Hinkley Point.
- 1.3 Although this was a Conservative Group meeting, because of the importance of the potential project, an invitation was extended to all political group Members and officers. The meeting covered the following points:-
- 1.4 The presentation covered six major topics:-
 - About EDF;
 - EDF and British Energy (recently merged);
 - Plans for Hinkley Point;
 - Potential benefits;
 - Response to public consultation;
 - What happens next; and
 - Questions and discussion.
- 1.5 From the foregoing it can be seen we could not have been much quicker off the mark. Our contact was Simon Dunsford, EDF Local Manager who was the EDF representative at consultations across the area.
- 1.6 Contact with Simon was maintained until he was transferred to another post and replaced by the present incumbent in the post, David Eccles.
- 1.7 By this time the Conservatives had taken over the administration of the Council and I, as Leader, together with the Chief Executive, actively pursued our contact with EDF.

- 1.8 From these early days it was made clear to us that EDF had no intention of increasing their office capacity beyond what they already had in Bridgwater. However, the prize for us would be to attract the major contractors as they would undoubtedly require considerable office and residential accommodation. We have taken every opportunity to press home the benefits of Taunton Deane by meetings and presentations of what Taunton has to offer.
- 1.9 Many meetings have taken place and some with our private sector partners to promote the benefits of Taunton Deane direct. Our Economic Development Officers and Project Taunton have also been closely involved in promoting Taunton Deane to EDF representatives and potential major sub-contractors and these contacts continue.
- 1.10 Only towards the end of last year it became known that EDF were looking to secure large offices part of which would service the Hinkley development but also be convenient to Gloucester, London and France.
- 1.11 We have pursued this rigorously but being realistic, geographically we do not provide a natural fit. As we understand it, no deal has yet been done and we are still lobbying hard on the basis that EDF should show commitment to Somerset for hosting the new power station.
- 1.12 I am sure most Members will see from the foregoing that we have been, and continue to be, actively involved in securing benefits for Taunton Deane from this major development should it go ahead.

2. South West Business Insider, Business Breakfast

- 2.1 A very well attended business breakfast sponsored by a number of local businesses and Taunton Deane was held recently at the Cricket Club. There were over 100 in attendance to hear lively debate and searching questions to a panel of mainly private sector business people.
- 2.2 I am pleased to say what did come across was positive and a “can do” attitude to promote economic growth in Taunton, together with major investment across the Deane. Planning and improved infrastructure were highlighted as being an impediment on growth but it was also acknowledged that changes/investment for the better were being implemented.
- 2.3 The shortage of available freehold employment land suitable for investment by small businesses was also raised which is a well known problem to us. It is also a particularly difficult problem to resolve as most suitable land around Taunton has already been optioned to major developers or has access problems preventing it coming forward. We have submitted an offer on suitable land for employment purposes to

meet this need. Because of access problems the vendor has decided not to sell in the interim. We are trying to resolve this problem as we do recognise the need for such sites to come forward.

3. Ongoing Projects

3.1 As an Administration, Members and Officers are being criticised for lack of ambition and lack of leadership. This I find extremely disappointing on behalf of my colleagues and officers who are committed to delivering success for Taunton Deane. I can only put it down to a lack of understanding of what is actually going on at present and list as follows some of the major projects ongoing at present:-

- Working with our partners and Somerset County Council to deliver Firepool of which the Northern Inner Distributor Road is key;
- Working with EDF and others to promote Taunton Deane as a place to live, work and enjoy;
- Working with the Local Enterprise Partnership to agree and secure opportunities to bid for funding from the various growth and regional funds available;
- Sale of the Taunton Youth and Community Centre site to deliver a substantial capital receipt;
- Major flood alleviation scheme to protect existing properties and allow new development;
- Delivering a solution for the Thales site to encourage employment use and a solution that maintains our income;
- Working with the new owners of the Orchard Centre to deliver new retail space and protect against loss to out of town retail shopping;
- Negotiating the purchase of Quantock House, Taunton;
- Possible relocation of the Deane DLO to free up a prime employment site for inward investment;
- Working with County on “growth points funding”;
- Working with County on new infrastructure to accommodate major development at Monkton Heathfield and Junction 25;
- Implementation of the Creechbarrow Road housing development both Council Housing and Knightstone development, total 87 dwellings and hopefully a community hub;
- Successfully using the 30 year Housing Business Plan to deliver funding for the 57 dwellings at Creechbarrow Road and a further 30 new dwellings around Taunton Deane;
- Over £7,000,000 investment in major repairs and extensions to our existing housing stock;
- Establishing and steering through an approved Infrastructure Delivery Plan;
- Delivering a major increase in housing development across Taunton Deane including affordable housing;
- Carrying out a review of our own office accommodation needs and what is best to take us forward that is affordable and fit for purpose;

- Preparation of a Business Plan for possible shared services or management with West Somerset District Council;
- Negotiations with bus station owners to relocate bus stops from Castle Way to the bus station and allow completion of Castle Green; and
- Review of our Corporate Business Plan and future priorities to meet the impending cuts in Revenue Support Grants and make us sustainable as an organisation in the long term.
- Safely implementing the changes required by the Welfare Reform agenda.
- Swimming Pools – progressing a solution.

3.2 These are in no order of priority and I will no doubt have missed some important issues. However, what I have tried to do is demonstrate that a huge amount is ongoing at any one time but this is only possible because of the team effort and commitment of a great team! This in no way belittles the very important tasks of ensuring the day to day services of the Council continue to be delivered in an efficient and courteous manner. We must truly thank our staff for the manner in which they carry out their duties despite the necessary savings that have to be made to meet budgetary requirements.

4. Northern Inner Distributor Road (NIDR)

- 4.1 This is a key component for the delivery of development on Firepool and at present it is awaiting Ministers final sign off of the funds already allocated. Initial preparatory work has been commenced with the clearance of bushes and trees but it does not look as though the date noted previously of 8 April 2013 for commencement will now be met.
- 4.2 We are liaising closely with Somerset County Council to try and resolve this and remain ready to lobby Ministers if the need arises but at present County are taking the lead on this. We are pressing for and hopeful a satisfactory conclusion will be reached soon.
- 4.3 The Local Enterprise Partnership Chairman is also taking a keen interest in this because of the major economic development potential the new road will release on the Firepool site.

5. Orchard Centre

- 5.1 Having seen preliminary plans for the extended Orchard Centre they are deliverable and with great potential. They should help us protect the town centre against the loss of valuable town centre retail to out of town locations.
- 5.2 The proposals as seen will deliver 105,000 sq ft of retail space in a number of units set around an attractive town square environment. It is presently with Agents to establish levels of interest for the proposed

developments and it is hoped to progress a planning application later this year.

6. The Brewhouse Theatre

- 6.1 This will be before Members for debate and consideration as to a way forward but it is good to see interested parties come forward with expressions of interest in keeping this establishment going as a successful performing arts and exhibition centre. There are several potential expressions of interest – with different focuses – and we look forward to learning more.
- 6.2 The final decision on the future of the Brewhouse clearly rests with the appointed Administrator and the bid date closing is 12 April 2013. We must work closely with the Administrator or the chosen bidder to ensure the Brewhouse Theatre maintains its role as an important venue for delivery of the arts and culture to our community.

Councillor John Williams

Council Meeting - 9 April 2013

Report of Councillor Mrs Vivienne Stock-Williams - Corporate Resources

1. Customer Contact Centre

Telephony Refresh

- 1.1 After lengthy procurement discussions, Customer Contact was able to announce that the contract for refreshing the Contact Centre's telephony technology was signed with Siemens on 28 February 2013, with an expected go-live date by the end of summer 2013.
- 1.2 The refresh project will deliver class leading technology to the Contact Centre and provide the infrastructure necessary for enhancements which will improve service delivery to our customers. The project will deliver the following products:-
 1. Siemens OpenScape Contact Centre V8.0 (including Web collaboration and Social Media modules);
 2. NICE IEX Workforce Management;
 3. ASC Voice/Screen Recording and Quality; AND
 4. Netcall voice recognition automation.
- 1.3 As with the current MacFarlane solution, Taunton Deane Revenues and Benefits Telephony Team will also run off the new solution and Customer Contact staff will be working with their team to assist them with the transition over the coming months.

Service Delivery

- 1.4 February saw delivery of service for Garden Waste Renewals and 11,000 renewal letters were sent out during the second week of the month. Calls and postal renewals are dealt with within the Contact Centre and a walk-in renewal service is provided by both Wellington Community Office and The Deane House Reception.
- 1.5 Council Tax billing was sent out on 12 March with 62,000 bills being delivered by Royal Mail over a week long period. Changes to Council Tax and Benefit arrangements originally had a significant impact on the service, but a new triage arrangement put in place within the service has meant that staff have been able to ensure that calls are directed to the correct team with as limited disruption to customers as possible.

Statistical Information – February 2013:-

- 1.6 During February 2013, a total of 1,593 enquiries were dealt with at The Deane House Main, Housing and Planning Receptions. 1,528 people visited Wellington Community Office – 962 to make enquiries including TIC and 566 to make a payment through the kiosk. Staff dealt with 1,521 letter and email enquiries during February, including Garden Waste renewals.

Service Line	Reporting Authority	KPI No	Performance Measure	Frequency of Reporting	2012/2013 Target	Feb-13	Mar-13
						QUARTER 4	
Customer Contact	TDBC	1	% of calls answered in 20 secs	Monthly	80%	85%	
Customer Contact	TDBC	2	% of calls resolved at first point of contact	Monthly	92%	97%	
Customer Contact	TDBC	3	% of external customers rating the Customer Contact service as Very Good/Good	Annually (monitored quarterly)	75%		
Customer Contact	TDBC	4	Abandoned call rate - less than 5%	Monthly	<5%	2.29%	

2. Corporate and Client Services

Client Team

- 2.1 The Client Team have now completed the contract changes required to facilitate the return of the Revenues and Benefits Service in-house. The service will return on 1 April 2013. A staff integration plan will be implemented in April for all the staff in the service.

Performance and Delivery

- 2.2 The majority of the key performance indicators (KPI's) and Service Development Plans (SDP's) have now been agreed with Southwest One for 2013/2014. We continue to monitor service delivery by the various Southwest One services, which are broadly on track.

Retained ICT

- 2.3 The Retained ICT Lead is working with the Southwest One ICT service to progress the ICT Strategy.

Procurement

- 2.4 The shortfall in delivered savings through the Procurement Transformation Project remains a significant concern and issue for the Authority. Consequently, we are closely managing the position. Detailed Procurement Transformation update reports are made to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee every 6 months (the most recent was presented on 24 January 2013).

Savings

- 2.5 Savings are continuing to be delivered, with a further £100,000 having been delivered since July 2012, bringing the total savings delivered to date beyond the £1,500,000 mark. Current savings initiatives to look at potential savings in fleet, banking, domestic heating and waste removal, disposal and recycling (excluding those items within the scope of the Somerset Waste Partnership) are continuing.

Pool refurbishment

- 2.6 The Procurement Service is actively involved in assisting with the pool refurbishment project.

Retained Finance and Corporate Insurance

- 2.7 The Retained Finance Team continues to manage the finance functions not provided by Southwest One, provide support to the Section 151 Officer, assist the Client Team in monitoring the Finance Service element of the Southwest One contract and provide support for the retained Parking functions.

Procurement of New Contracts

- 2.8 The new banking contract has now been signed and is effective from 1 April 2013. Work is ongoing in respect of the procurement of the new insurance contract. The Treasury Management Contract is due to be signed in the near future.

Year End

- 2.9 The focus for the last month has been on preparation for Finance year-end.

Retained HR

- 2.10 The Retained HR Manager continues to provide strategic HR support to the Authority, manages the HR functions not provided by Southwest One and assists the Client Team in monitoring the HR aspects of the Southwest One contract.

Current priorities

2.11 Current priorities include:-

- Managing the HR aspects of the forthcoming return of the Revenues and Benefits service in relation to secondees and any staff who will TUPE transfer to the Council;
- Assisting in the provision of cover for the vacant Health and Safety role and the recruitment of a new Health and Safety Officer;
- Monitoring sickness levels throughout the Authority; and
- Ensuring the implementation of the new lease and car allowance policies

SAP Re-Launch and Patching

2.12 The key elements of the system have been launched and are working.

PREDS Module

2.13 The performance review (PREDS) element of the system is scheduled for launch in April 2013 and training has been arranged for the Business Support Teams.

Residual Modules

2.14 This leaves the e-recruitment, sickness and overtime modules to be launched.

2.15 The Client Team is shortly going to review an upgrade version of the e-recruitment module. The sickness module is provisionally scheduled for launch in July 2013.

Corporate Projects

2.16 **ICT Infrastructure Upgrade** - The initial stage of the infrastructure upgrade has commenced, which has involved the upgrading of network switches in The Deane House. New servers have been delivered and installed. The new servers are now being used and all services will be deployed during 2013/2014. The e-mail migration project is now complete.

2.17 **Welfare Benefits** - The new local Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme changes have been implemented and bills have been issued.

3. Corporate Performance

Corporate Performance

- 3.1 The Quarter 3 Corporate Performance report was considered by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 21 February 2013, and by the Executive Committee on 13 March 2013.

Out-turn Performance

- 3.2 The Quarter 4 Out-turn Performance report will be prepared during April and reviewed by CMT on 8 May 2013.

Performance Scorecards

- 3.3 Now that the new Corporate Business Plan has been approved, CMT will commence a review of the Corporate Performance Scorecard and recommend new measures / updated targets for implementation in 2013/2014. Members will also be invited to help develop a refreshed scorecard and suite of performance indicators.

Service Planning

- 3.4 Service Planning 2013/2014 – Theme Managers and Lead Officers have commenced the annual review and refresh of all Service Plans. This will be a relatively 'light-touch' review until further work has been completed with Members and CMT on the agreement of a costed profile and prioritisation of all Council services (ref LGA facilitated Member workshop to be held on 24 April 2013). 2013/2014 Service Plans will be discussed with Portfolio Holders and submitted for approval during March/April 2013.

Monitoring Audit Recommendations

- 3.5 The Performance Lead has recently undertaken a review of all audit recommendations (both external and internal audits). Managers have provided an update on the status of all current audit recommendations.
- 3.6 As at 8 March 2013, there were a total of 113 'open' recommendations and 72 actions from the original list are now 'closed'. Monitoring of the status of all 'open' actions will occur on a quarterly basis and be reported to the Corporate Governance Officers Group. The Corporate Governance Action Plan will next be reported to the Corporate Governance Committee on 20 May 2013.

Risk Management

- 3.7 The Corporate Risk Register was reviewed by the Corporate Governance Committee on 11 March 2013, together with progress of the Council's Risk Management Action Plan.
- 3.8 CMT will conduct a further review of the Corporate Risk Register as part of the Quarter 4 Performance Review (8 May 2013), particularly in light of the decision to progress the business case to look at joint working with West Somerset Council.

Corporate Change Programme

3.9 The Council's Corporate Change Programme is overseen by the Strategy and Performance team. Project Managers for all major corporate projects report monthly to the 'Programme Management Group' (PMG). The major corporate projects currently within the scope of this group are:-

- Corporate Business Plan (Simon Lewis / Dan Webb)
- Community Infrastructure Levy (Tim Burton)
- DLO depot relocation business case (Sue Tomlinson)
- Welfare and Finance Reform (Paul Harding)
- Flood Alleviation Solutions (Mark Green)
- Taunton Town Centre (Ian Franklin)
- New Swimming Pool (Sue Tomlinson / Alison North)

New Projects

3.10 New projects to be added to the PMG 'programme' are:-

- West Somerset joint-working Business Case;
- Accommodation and Customer Access;
- Asset Strategy; and
- Phase 1 Housebuilding/Creechbarrow Road.

Overview

3.11 An overview of the entire programme will be provided for Members as part of the Quarter 4 / Out-turn Performance Monitoring report.

4. Legal and Democratic Services

Legal Services

4.1 A replacement for Judith Jackson has now been successfully recruited. Roy Pinney is the current Principal Solicitor at Mendip District Council and comes to Taunton Deane highly recommended. It is anticipated that Roy will start on 1 July 2013 and that there will be a hand-over period with Judith.

4.2 The contract for the on-line legal library has now been signed. The procurement of a single contract for the four individual authorities has resulted in a saving of £68,000. If Mendip decide to join the consortium next year, that will increase the saving further.

4.3 Unfortunately, there is continuing delay to the implementation of the CASE management system. We are still waiting for Civica to come back to us to confirm that they have everything set up for the hosting arrangements.

Civica are being pushed on this, as we are keen to get this system up and running.

Corporate Support Unit

- 4.4 Tracey Meadows is at present on sick leave and is recovering well from a successful knee operation. During her absence, Tracey's work is currently being covered by the other members of the team.

Land Charges

- 4.5 A report is currently being prepared by Tonya Meers, in which it is recommended to CMT that Land Charges should move to Building Control. Figures have recently been received from Finance, together with some deadlines from IT, relating to the PALC (Public Access Land Charges) system. The Monitoring Officer is, therefore, working towards a date of 1 September 2013 for a transfer of the function.

Judicial Review

- 4.6 The Judicial Review instigated by Mike Davis regarding the Halse Farm development has been withdrawn.

Complaint to Auditor

- 4.7 In addition, the licensing complaint submitted by Mike Davis is currently being assessed by the Auditor and the outcome is awaited.

M5 Investigation

- 4.8 The prosecution case against Geoff Counsell has been listed for a five week trial, commencing the week of 11 November 2013. The Crown Prosecution Service is carrying out a considerable amount of the work, but we are maintaining an overview of the investigation.

Business Case for the Pool Project

- 4.9 A dedicated team is working on the complex legal issues involved in the preparation of the business case for the proposed pool project at Blackbrook.

Elections

- 4.10 The Elections Team is currently preparing for the Somerset County Council Elections which are due to be held on Thursday, 2 May 2013.

Freedom of Information Requests

- 4.11 Over the last few years we have monitored the numbers of FOI requests that have come in and the results are set out below:-

4.12 Total requests by calendar year (Jan- Dec):-

2009 = 269
2010 = 326
2011 = 432
2012 = 520
2013 = 136 (so far)

4.13 Clearly, this results in a huge cost to the Council in officer time taken to respond to these requests. This will need to be monitored carefully in times of dwindling resources.

5. Revenues and Benefits

Welfare Reform

- 5.1 Revenues and Benefits have experienced unprecedented demands on the service this year. In planning for the major Welfare Reforms, in early February 2013 information was sent out to all customers directly affected. This information, in the form of fact sheets, explained the new localised Council Tax Support scheme which will replace Council Tax Benefit.
- 5.2 More information was also sent to everyone who would potentially lose benefit, as a result of changes in Housing Benefit for those in social housing, because they were considered to have a “spare” bedroom.
- 5.3 These fact sheets and other information on Welfare Reform are also now available through the TDBC website. This supplemented information we made available to customers following the announcements about the reforms. It was thus intended that by the time new benefit notifications and Council Tax bills hit the mats for 2013/2014, our customers would not receive news they had not been expecting.

Reaction

- 5.4 Unfortunately, our Communications Plan has not prevented record numbers of worried people contacting the service since 11 March 2013. This has been exacerbated by last minute announcements on changes by the Government.

Housing Benefit

- 5.5 As Members will be aware, the Welfare Reform Act meant that, from April 2013, working-age social tenants would have their Housing Benefit reduced if they live in housing considered to be too large for their needs. The policy is highly controversial and has been labelled the “bedroom tax”.

Legal Challenge

- 5.6 Restrictions on entitlement to Housing Benefit based on the size of the accommodation have applied to claimants living in privately rented housing since 1989.
- 5.7 A legal challenge was brought against the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) by families who had disability needs living in privately rented accommodation. In May 2012 the Court of Appeal found unanimously, declaring the rules applied to these families were unlawful and discriminatory.
- 5.8 However, the DWP immediately lodged an appeal and advised Local Authorities to withhold any extra benefit that could have resulted from this judgement until the outcome of their appeal. On 4 March 2013, it was reported the Government faced another legal challenge, expected to go ahead in May 2013, brought by 10 disabled people and their families. This challenge is against the under-occupation measure to be applied for social sector tenants of working age.

Current Position

- 5.9 On 12 March 2013, the DWP withdrew their appeal against the ruling of May 2012. However, we understand the DWP still intend to defend the "10 families" case. Guidance has now been received stating that we should no longer restrict Housing Benefit for "severely" disabled children when we are satisfied they cannot share a bedroom, but revised regulations have not yet been received.
- 5.10 This announcement, together with further concessions to be allowed for people with foster care responsibilities and parents of adult children serving in the Armed Forces, came after we had issued our annual benefit notifications. Consequently, the information sent out is no longer correct. We will now have to undertake remedial action to identify those people who could possibly benefit from these changes. A briefing note to all Members on this issue will be circulated soon.

Council Tax and Business Rate Collection

- 5.11 On a more positive note, the targets for in-year Council Tax and Business Rate collection have already been exceeded. At the time of writing, they are 97.86% and 98.82% respectively. This is very good news for the Council in a time of continuing financial pressure.

Return of Service

- 5.12 Finally, the Revenues and Benefits Service will be returning to Taunton Deane from Southwest One on 1 April 2013. I will be joining Penny James on a tour of the service on 2 April 2013 to welcome staff back.

Council Accommodation and Customer Access Project

- 5.13 The Executive considered the report on The Deane House Accommodation Project in September 2012. One recommendation was that officers were asked to look comprehensively at the Council's future accommodation needs in the light of priorities identified in the Corporate Business Plan. A report will be going to the Community Scrutiny Committee on 2 April 2013, prior to being considered by the Executive and Full Council.

Customer Access

- 5.14 Any review of accommodation needs to take into account access to services. The latest customer access strategy was approved in 2005 as part of the Southwest One project. This now needs revisiting and updating in the light of both social and technological changes and the Council's changing role.

Alignment with West Somerset Project

- 5.15 As Members are aware, the West Somerset Project is progressing alongside this project. The Council Accommodation and Customer Access Project will consider a recommended strategy for Taunton Deane Borough Council, but which can be scaled to accommodate a shared approach should that be the final outcome.

Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams

Council Meeting – 9 April 2013

Report of Councillor Mark Edwards - Planning, Transportation and Communications

1. Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan

- 1.1 Officers have now finished consulting on the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan. The events themselves were extremely well attended with around 1,000 people attending the 11 events.
- 1.2 Whilst we have not yet had the opportunity to consider or read through all of the comments in detail, it would appear that we have in the order of 600 or so comments which will be published on the website in due course.
- 1.3 We will now need to reflect on the responses we have received from the communities and key stakeholders before developing a 'Preferred Options' plan which we will take out for further consultation in the Autumn.

2. Community Infrastructure Levy

- 2.1 The response period for comments on the Council's draft CIL Charging Schedule has now closed. We have received responses from twenty five individuals and organisations which will now go on to the Examination.
- 2.2 Many of the issues raised are common to other CIL examinations in the country in so far as they relate to matters of viability and assumptions underpinning the viability assessment.
- 2.3 Officers will now be working towards summarising these comments and submitting the Charging Schedule to the Planning Inspectorate during April.
- 2.4 The CIL Examination is likely to be heard in June/July. The Council intends to adopt CIL in the Autumn.
- 2.5 Beyond the technical work required, officers in various parts of the Council and beyond are undertaking vital work to establish a mechanism for identifying funding priorities and the systems which need to be in-place for CIL implementation.

3. Neighbourhood Planning

TDBC Neighbourhood Plan Groups

- 3.1 Plans are progressing in the three designated Neighbourhood Plan Areas (Trull, Wellington and Wiveliscombe). These three groups have been accumulating information on their communities (qualitative and quantitative) which is helping them identify likely Policy Direction.
- 3.2 Taunton Deane has received an application from Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone Parish Council to undertake a Neighbourhood Plan. The application is undergoing six weeks statutory consultation before the Council rules on the appropriateness of the designation.

Funding

- 3.3 The Government have announced financial support for Local Authorities and Neighbourhood Plan Groups for the next two years. Local Authorities are able to claim financial assistance, up to £30,000 per Neighbourhood Plan Group, towards their costs of administering and supporting Neighbourhood Plans. These payments, made in three stages and in arrears, are welcome but may not cover the full costs incurred by the Council as there is a cap on the funds available and number of claims which can be made.
- 3.4 On 15 March 2013, the Government announced a new £9,500,000 two-year programme to help Neighbourhood Plan Groups develop their Neighbourhood Plans. Details of the fund will be made available shortly but early indications are that the Neighbourhood Plan Groups will bid direct to the Department for Communities and Local Government. A number of organisations will be delivering the support, including Planning Aid who has been working recently with the Taunton Deane Neighbourhood Plan Groups.

Taunton Deane working with Planning Aid

- 3.5 Planning Aid has run two excellent workshops for the Neighbourhood Plan Groups in Taunton Deane. The first in October was about Plan Preparation and looked at project planning, community engagement (what, who and how), evidence base (information needed to underpin the Plan and building an evidence base), and identifying sites (what else you need to consider).
- 3.6 The second event in mid March focused on the practicalities of Policy Writing; best practice, drafting a policy, assessment of policy and conditions statements. Attendees were very positive about the events, finding them very helpful. Along with Taunton Deane, the Neighbourhood Plan Groups wrote letters of support for Planning Aids bid for future funding.

Neighbourhood Planning and Planning Policy

- 3.7 As the Council's Site Allocation and Development Management Plan (SADMP) progresses and adopts site allocations, revises settlement boundaries and development management policies, the ability of Neighbourhood Plans to influence that process diminishes. However, Neighbourhood Plans can still allocate land in addition to that in the SADMP and provide policy guidance along with more detailed information such as Design Codes and community priorities for CIL.

4. Planning Enforcement

- 4.1 The Enforcement Team won a recent appeal regarding the construction of a Carnival Float at Crossways Farm, Bickenhall.
- 4.2 The Inspector considered that the Council was correct to enforce so as to remove the harm to the residential amenity of the adjoining neighbours, but to allow the float to be moved to a different location where the construction could continue without any undue disturbance.

5. Heritage

- 5.1 Four men have now been sentenced for the fire at Sandhill Park. We now have an amended scheme for the enabling development and a new Listed Building application for the conversion of the house and outbuildings.

6. Communications

A number of high profile issues kept the press office extremely busy in February and March.

- 6.1 The closure of The Brewhouse Theatre prompted a number of interview requests and media statements. Parking issues at Castle Green were also in the news, along with the preparation of a business case on joint working with West Somerset Council.
- 6.2 Preparations for the homecoming parade for 40 Commando Royal Marines is well under way and a large media presence is expected for the event in mid-May. The first press release on the parade has been issued and will be followed by more detailed information.
- 6.3 Taunton Deane's annual Council Tax booklet is going online in the coming year, in line with the other Somerset districts. Information on Council Tax and the new Council Tax Support scheme in Taunton Deane is also being provided in Somerset County Council's publication, "Your Somerset" for the first time. It is due to be distributed to households this month.

6.4 Communications “champions” are coming forward from a number of services to improve both internal and external communication. Thank you to all who have volunteered.

Councillor Mark Edwards

Council Meeting - 9 April 2013

Report of Councillor Jane Warmington - Community Leadership

1. April 2013

- 1.1 This April many of the changes the Coalition Government has been planning over the last two years take effect. A number of these have an impact on local authorities and the communities we serve.
- 1.2 The NHS has been reorganised. NHS England holds the budget for specialist services now, with over 200 GP Clinical Commissioning Groups replacing the Primary Care Trusts. Public Health becomes the responsibility of the Local Authorities with the formation of a Health and Wellbeing Board across each county.
- 1.3 Legal Aid is restricted and likely to be available to only a quarter of those who have used the service before.
- 1.4 The new Police Commissioners have published their first Police and Crime Plans.
- 1.5 Other changes include the Self Financing of our social housing, where we bought ourselves out of the previous arrangement with the Government. This necessitated the development of a robust 30 year Business Plan enabling the setting up of our Social Housing Fund to build some new council houses.
- 1.6 Changes to Non Domestic Rates mean we are able to keep more of our own Business Rates but take on much greater risks of loss through business failure. We cannot set them which is still controlled centrally. The new Business Support Scheme was developed in house to provide local incentives for businesses to set up and grow and has already contributed to securing inward investment from a major company.
- 1.7 Welfare Reform starts in April with Universal Credit rolling out from October over four years. It aims to be a simpler, fairer system which makes work pay. Pensioners are fully protected with reforms affecting those of working age. However its implementation will not be easy despite continuing efforts to prepare for and mitigate its impact here across the Borough.
- 1.8 Some elements begin immediately: benefits are now capped; under occupancy (spare rooms) of a (council) property may result in reduced benefits; Council Tax Support now decided locally may be less; the discretionary Social Fund (crisis loans) is now local; Personal Independent Payment replaces the Disability Living Allowance with all recipients being (regionally) reassessed. They may appeal but it seems likely that many deserving will still lose out.
- 1.9 Universal Credit is digital by default (though details can be taken over the telephone) and should be more responsive. Payments are monthly (cause for concern as lower incomes are harder to budget). Work allowances have increased as has support for childcare. It has to be implemented as not to would be

unaffordable for the remaining taxpayers. We need to try and make it work, supporting those through the process and campaign where we see any serious injustices.

2. Police and Crime Plan

- 2.1 Sue Mountstevens has launched her first Police and Crime Plan setting out her vision for policing and community safety across Avon and Somerset for the next four years.
- 2.2 The Plan covers the Commissioner's four priority areas of tackling anti-social behaviour, burglary, violence against women and children and putting victims at the heart of the criminal justice system.
- 2.3 The Plan also focuses on key issues that were raised by the public during consultation in January and February, such as road safety and visibility of Police Officers.
- 2.4 The Commissioner has also introduced six extra local Police and Crime Plans to reflect and respond to local needs across the policing districts of the Constabulary. Taunton Deane falls under Somerset West.

3. Shelter Update

- 3.1 Shelter Somerset closed at the end of March. They have 600 clients, 377 of whom live in Taunton Deane. Last year the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) referred 140 cases to Shelter.
- 3.2 Taunton Deane expects the need to increase due to Welfare Reform and the current economic climate. This will affect the CAB and Housing Options Team who were asked what would be of most help.
- 3.3 Full Council was therefore asked to support the additional New Burdens Funding of £40,000 (agreed) to ease benefits changes. Housing (HRA) are also funding an additional £15,000 to provide an enhanced Money Matters service. An addendum to the CAB Service Level Agreement is being drawn up to ensure that these funds also help mitigate the loss of Shelter advice.
- 3.4 Shelter will continue to provide a website and free phone line.
- 3.5 Some of the work undertaken by the SW Private Sector Housing Partnership will help, especially that bringing empty homes back into use with nomination rights, as should the ability to bid into the EDF funding made available for Taunton Deane from the proposed development of Hinkley C.

4. Health and Wellbeing

- 4.1 An Audit of South Somerset District Council services is going to the Leads meeting asking them to review and adapt this for Taunton Deane. The aim is to produce an audit of what the Council does and what the TDP Partnership (TDP) does against the three Health and Wellbeing (HW) objectives.

- 4.2 The audit will lead to a gap analysis and proposals to the TDP to use the fund they hold from HW through Somerset County Council (SCC) for this.
- 4.3 Health and Wellbeing is being introduced to the impact assessment which accompanies committee papers and is expected to be particularly relevant to key services such as major planning applications, changes to leisure and environmental health services.
- 4.4 Members will be updated and asked to comment in a report coming to the Community Scrutiny Committee in July.
- 4.5 The new pilot **drop-in GP surgery** at the Acorns in Halcon (open on Tuesdays from 11am until 1.30pm) is not getting much use (after being asked for). Ward Councillors in particular, please encourage residents to use it so that it stays. It is so much closer than both health centres. A banner is being put up on Tuesdays to remind everyone.

5. Safeguarding

- 5.1 Following the internal report and action plan on safeguarding (lead Vikki Hearn) training materials are being developed and will be rolled out across the Council to include both officers and Members. This will be happening over the next couple of months.

6. Community Development (Priority Areas)

- 6.1 Congratulations to Martha Prangnell who married James at the end of March. She is now Martha Dudman and rejoins the Community Development Team in May.
- 6.2 **Halcon Brunch Club** is running again across the Easter holidays, Monday and Friday late mornings.
- 6.3 The **Graffiti Art Project** has two more sessions over Easter and one at Whitsuntide working on two local teen shelters and some panels to brighten up some park fencing.
- 6.4 **Pride in Priorswood (PiP)** has two events on Tuesdays over the Easter holidays.
- 6.5 **Happy Halcon** has two activity days on Thursdays over the holidays.
- 6.6 **18-25ers** group of young people who are taking action for themselves to lobby for activities and facilities for their specific age group now have a DVD of the film produced with Fixers. The launch at All Saints Church filled the hall. Councillor Williams has been involved and has suggested possible premises which might be suitable on a trial basis.
- 6.7 The two successful **football tournaments** held last year for youngsters are taking place again this year. The first Community Fun Day at Hamilton Gault on Saturday 27 April and the second at Taunton Academy South Site in August.

- 6.8 This years schedule is being drawn up for the **Community Clean Up Days**.
- 6.8 Somerset College runs a **National Citizenship** course which has a voluntary service element. Working with Martha Dudman, this year they are improving more open spaces and enhancing Blenheim Park.
- 6.8 **Anti Dog Fouling Campaign** has started with local schools being invited to submit campaign posters by the 28 March. The response has been good and the winning entry will be used to draw attention to the new bins being provided across Taunton East and North Taunton to try and reduce the problem. *
- 6.6 There are many other ongoing activities which Taunton Deane supports or has supported to get started across the district as well as those organised by the friends groups, churches, charities, the Police and the voluntary sector.

7. Partnership Working

- 7.1 An opportunity has arisen for closer partnership working with the Police in Halcon where they have set up a dedicated Neighbourhood Policing Team. Good liaison in particular with our Community Development Team, Estates (Housing) Officers, and Anti-Social Behaviour Officers has helped deliver significant improvements within the community. The plan is to build on this now with a shared base or hub to work from in the future.
- 7.2 This links well with the Troubled Families Project which also intends to improve lives with more in-depth smarter working across agencies.

8. Youth Forums

- 8.1 Feedback from the recently held SCC local choices events and from local youth providers in Somerset highlighted the need for a youth forum in each of the five districts in Somerset.
- 8.2 In response, SCC Youth and Community Service (lead Gail McCarthy) is setting these up. Forums are already operating in South Somerset and Mendip. Over the coming few months they will be established in Taunton Deane (where we have a youth liaison group already), Sedgemoor and West Somerset.
- 8.3 The forums will provide space for area based meetings to involve providers, VCS groups, town and parish councils. The forums will be co-ordinated, administered and funded by SCC.
- 8.4 The forum aims to provide an opportunity for representatives from communities to broaden their networks and meet other organisations to share ideas, good practice, funding advice and other functions to be agreed with forum members as they evolve.
- 8.5 The membership of the forum is voluntary and is not exclusive however those with strategic roles and with responsibility for managing youth provision within their area

will be encouraged to attend. Terms of reference and agreement of fixed agenda items will be agreed at the first meeting in each district.

- 8.6 Taunton Deane has a youth liaison group although it has not met for over a year. It seemed obvious that this should be the basis for a youth forum in line with the other districts and serviced by SCC. Those on the YLG (and others) are being invited to meet up in June with invitations being sent out by the end of April from Gail McCarthy.

9. Rural Matters

- 9.1 The Spatial Planning Working Group (a sub group of the TDP set up under the Local Development Framework) has been renamed the **Community Planning Working Group** (CPWG). The Group has recently agreed to take on the rural priority areas.
- 9.2 The Group thought that with Welfare Reform, it should concentrate on access to services, particularly the internet and see what community facilities there were across the parishes which enabled internet access. For example Churchstanton has access in its Post Office. Also what advice and support was available (village agents in some areas). Gaps could be identified, good ideas shared and applications for funding prompted.

10. Family Focus (Troubled Families)

- 10.1. Louise Casey, who holds the Government's portfolio on Troubled Families has recently visited Somerset and left feeling confident that the Districts were now delivering.
- 10.2 In excess of 75% of families for 2012/13 have now been signed up in Taunton Deane and across the County, guaranteeing payment to the County for the second year of the (three year) project.
- 10.3 The post of Family Focus Project Manager (fixed term to 31/3/15) has just been advertised (internally).
- 10.4 Recruitment of Family Intervention Workers into the SCC Early Intervention Hub has been agreed and should begin very soon.
- 10.5 SCC are also consulting on an Early Intervention Strategy and are inviting input.
- 10.6 For a regular update visit www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/familyfocus

Councillor Jane Warmington

Council Meeting - 9 April 2013

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

1. Rigid Containers Limited

- 1.1 Purchase and conversion of the former Co-operative Distribution Depot at Chelston in Wellington by the cardboard box manufacturer and distributor, Rigid Containers is proceeding smoothly. The company has already recruited its senior posts in Wellington and aims to have completed the recruitment prior to an initial opening of the plant in August 2013.
- 1.2 The Council actively worked with the company to secure its investment in Chelston, as follows:-
- Planning permission for the change of use of the property, to include B2 General Industrial uses, was turned around by the Council in under 6 weeks;
 - The Council has offered the company £1,000/per job from its Investment Fund, up to 100 full time equivalents and has also worked with the company to assist it in obtaining relief on the Business Rates whilst the property has been empty; and
 - The company is talking to officers about holding a 'Jobs Fair' at the Wellington Job Club later this Spring to encourage local people to apply for the 140 jobs that will be needed when the site is fully developed.

2. Summary of Small Business Grants awarded this year

New Businesses

- 2.1 The following 15 new businesses in Taunton Deane were supported during the 2012/13 financial year:-

Georgie Fox, Brendan Hill	£1,000
Mat Dusting, M24	£1,000
Sebastian Tipley, webcards	£1,000
Opus consulting	£1,000
Creative Innovation Centre	£1,000
Wivey Business group-	£865
Pauline Homeshaw	£2,000
Keith Bellringer	£1,000
Sue Mitchinson	£598
10 Community Youth	£800
Paula Cooke	£1,000

Wandering Wivey	£1,250
George Akroyd- Moorish	£500
Laura Pinkney- isomerset	£500
Emma Hawkes	£500

2.2 Rural Post Offices and Shops

The following rural Post Offices and Village Shops were also supported during the 2012/13 financial year:-

Stoke St Gregory Stores	£2,000
York Inn, Churchinford	£155
Bishops Hull Post Office and Stores	£2,000
Churchinford Shop	£2,000
Blagdon Hill Pub and Post Office	£2,000
Oake Shop	£2,000

3. Taunton Town Centre Events Programme

Somerfest

- 3.1 The Council and its partners in the Taunton Events Group are finalising plans for the Somerfest event on Saturday, 15 June 2013. This one day event will be held in the town's new public open spaces – Somerset Square, Goodlands Gardens and Castle Green – and will also involve the closure of North Street throughout the day.
- 3.2 The community event will be procession based with musical performances and workshops for the public taking place on Somerset Square and Castle Green between 10 am and 4 pm. Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership will be organising taster sports events on Goodlands Gardens, and will be holding races on North Street. Other water based races and events will be delivered by community and sports groups on the River.
- 3.3 The Council will be underwriting the event up to the sum of £20,000. Other income, including business sponsorship is also being sought.

Arts Council G4A bid

- 3.4 The Council is working with the Town Centre Company, SuperAct and Fuse to submit a bid to the Arts Council in April for funding to enhance a programme of cultural events in Taunton this coming Summer, thereby encouraging increased footfall and spend in the town centre.
- 3.5 If successful, the funding would enhance events that are already in the calendar, such as Somerfest and the Flower Show, through coordinated and enhanced marketing. It would also provide funding towards new, smaller street events to be held on weekends where the calendar is currently empty. The funding would also enhance the profile and visibility within the town

centre of events that are slightly outside, such as Somerset versus Australia cricket in June.

Christmas Celebrations

3.6 Working with the Make Taunton Sparkle Team again, the Town Centre Company is already planning activities for this year's town centre Christmas celebrations. A report will be considered by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on the 2012 and 2013 events later this month.

3.7 The celebrations will comprise four elements, notably:-

- Festive Lights throughout the town centre;
- Light Switch on event planned for Sunday, 17 November 2013;
- Christmas Fair; and
- Marketing and Publicity.

3.8 Kelly Durdan and the Town Centre Company will again be working together with Kelly leading the fund raising and PR for the event. Kelly has various fund raising activities planned between now and November. Graham Love will be the Event Manager, working with Kelly and others to put on a safe, fun programme in November and December.

4. Taunton Means Business (T-M-B)

4.1 T-M-B was launched in November, as Taunton Deane's new inward investment web site. In January a media/PR company was appointed – 'A Head for PR' – who are carrying out a three month programme to raise awareness of the site and the support the Council is able to offer investors. Activities delivered to date include:-

- A three minute video has been produced featuring five successful and expanding local businesses. The video will be shown for one month from mid April by Volo TV, which is the in-house video used by First Great Western, on all its trains travelling from London to the South West and South Wales.
- A Regional Business Breakfast, organised by SW Business Insider magazine. This successful event was held on 26 March 2013 at The County Cricket Ground and was attended by 150 local businesses and investors.
- Case studies of various local businesses, which will be featured on the T-M-B website. These include written case studies and video case studies of the five businesses that took part in the video.

4.2 On 1 April 2013, the Council rejoined Into Somerset, which will strengthen and be complementary to our own marketing work.

5. Taunton Town Centre Company new Company Structure

- 5.1 Following a comprehensive review of its function and company structure during 2012 the Company has reorganised its structure with a view to encouraging more town centre businesses to have representation.
- 5.2 Since Christmas the Town Centre Manager has met with businesses to inform them of the Company's work and to encourage them to sign up as company members. Having set an initial target of 50 businesses the company already has 44 signed up, and is now looking to increase the target. Each member business pays £50 to become a member.
- 5.3 The first AGM of the new company will be held on the evening of Tuesday 9 April, 2013 at which a Company Board, comprising 10 members will be elected. Taunton Deane has been asked to nominate one additional member.
- 5.4 Meetings of the Town Centre Company will continue to be held to discuss the management of the town, hearing presentations from the Council's Economic Development Manager and the Regeneration Manager, the local Police, and other organisations. All member businesses are invited to attend those meetings. At a meeting in mid-March, 37 local businesses attended.
- 5.5 Following election of the new Company Board members the company will take a view on a future Business Improvement District (BID) proposal. Should it agree to proceed along that route a ballot could be planned for late Autumn 2013.

6. Hinkley Nuclear New Build

- 6.1 Members will be aware that Planning Permission was granted by the Secretary of State for the new Hinkley C Power Station in March. EDF Energy has yet to take its Final Investment Decision on whether to proceed with the development.
- 6.2 Over the past two years the Council's Economic Development Team has engaged proactively with EDF Energy and the other Somerset Councils, to ensure that Taunton Deane benefits from the increased investment that the development will attract. That activity has proceeded on various fronts:-
 - **Hinkley Supply Chain.** EDF appointed the Somerset Chamber of Commerce to develop a Supply Chain Portal for local businesses that would be in a position to supply products and services to the power station. Over 1,250 businesses are now signed up to the Portal, including a high proportion from Taunton Deane. Taunton Deane attends the Hinkley Supply Chain Forum to keep abreast of supply issues, and has supported Somerset Chamber in delivering events and activities to encourage businesses to sign up to the Portal. In March 2012 the Council attended the EDF Nuclear Conference in London as part of Into Somerset, which showcased the County to potential

investors, and met potential first tier suppliers. Earlier this year the Council supported a 'Meet the Buyer' event by Kier Bam.

- **Attracting Investors.** The Council has actively sought to attract Hinkley suppliers to Taunton Deane, hosting visits and showing businesses around investment sites. The Council has been bidding to provide offices for EDF in Taunton.
- **Employment and Skills Brokerage.** In 2012 EDF appointed MACE to develop a mechanism for local residents to benefit from the many thousands of Employment and Skills opportunities that would be forthcoming from the power station. MACE has since set up the Somerset Employment and Skills Brokerage, including a Talent Pool on which people can sign up and register their interest in working at the plant. MACE is currently recruiting six Employment and Skills Managers to act as brokers between Hinkley Suppliers, local colleges and residents. The Council meets on a monthly basis with the Project Manager from MACE to ensure that opportunities for local residents are maximised. Officers introduced MACE to Somerset College in 2012 and the two parties have been developing opportunities for apprenticeships and bespoke training from Somerset College.

Councillor Norman Cavill

Council Meeting – April 2013

Report of Councillor Ken Hayward – Environmental Services

1. Climate Change / Carbon Management

Blackbrook Solar PV project

- 1.1 The report on this project presented to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 21 March highlighted that the revised timetable produced by the SWOne Project Team would see completion of the installation on 2 July 2013, which is two days after an anticipated cut in the Feed-in-Tariff rates.
- 1.2 This would result in a loss of income of £3,000 which would reduce the overall profit from the project from £100,000 to £97,000. Not a huge amount, but all agreed that every effort should be made to avoid missing this deadline.
- 1.3 The delay on the Taunton Pool Solar Panel Project last year was purely as a result of needing to wade through the correct procurement procedures. From the 27 companies registering an interest in that project, seven were selected to be the most suitable.
- 1.4 It seems sense that, as this new project follows on so closely from the last, we simply approach those seven companies on the basis that they would be the most suitable and the others still would not meet the criteria. Following consultation with Tonya Meers I have therefore approved the waiver of the Council's procurement regulations.
- 1.5 It is hoped that the seven companies will all be able to quickly turn around a proposal for installation, which we in turn will be able to quickly process. The nett effect from all of this should be that several days can be shaved off of the project timetable. I have asked officers to keep me 'in the loop' throughout.

Schneider Project Update

- 1.6 Schneider have now produced final reports for Blackbrook, Wellsprings and Wellington Sports Centre. The internal project group, consisting of Taunton Deane Officers together with officers from SWOne and Tone Leisure have scrutinised their findings and costings.
- 1.7 I have also gone through the reports and agree with the Group's conclusion, which, to put it simply is that the finance case as presented by Schneider, does not stack up. Under their proposals, with a bit of persistent 'drilling down', it became apparent that their costs would actually exceed the guaranteed savings.
- 1.8 Whilst we will not be proceeding with Schneider's energy saving package *per se*, it is acknowledged that their findings identified some good measures that we can progress independently. So this is what the team will be next looking at.

2. Environmental Health

- 2.1 Congratulations to Scott Weetch on his appointment into the permanent position of Community Protection Lead. When he took on the role as “Acting Lead” 12 months ago after the departure of Charlotte Dale, he freely admitted it was going to be a personal challenge to him. However he immediately set about learning everything he needed to know about EH matters and more importantly, getting to know his new team. I knew back then that he was absolutely the right person for the job. In the intervening months he has quickly grown into the job, earning huge respect from everyone. His appointment is truly well-deserved.
- 2.2 I am pleased to confirm that Jo Bliss and Hannah Butcher have passed their probationary periods with the Council and are now substantive members of the team. Jo Toogood has undertaken Case Studies and an interview process to achieve Senior Environmental Health Officer.
- 2.3 I have agreed to fund from Reserves additional food inspections during 2013/2014. This will have the effect of catching up on some of the lower risk rated premises which have fallen behind as a result of less staff and additional resource placed to investigate the M5 incident.
- 2.4 The Auditors' investigation into taxi fees as requested by a local elector is nearing conclusion. This has been a very thorough process and we will await the Auditors' findings with interest. It is likely that there will also be significant interest across the Licensing community in the outcome of this challenge.
- 2.5 The Licensing Team continues to work with West Somerset Council. This work will have the effect of aligning Policies and Procedures to make it easier for the public to understand - if you ask a Licensing question in West Somerset or Taunton Deane, you will broadly receive the same answer. It is separate from the ongoing work with West Somerset and is a business as usual response to a welfare issue encountered by West Somerset.
- 2.6 Finally the Health and Safety prosecution brought before Magistrates in respect of an accident connected to a machinery sale at Walford Cross in 2011 has been adjourned until April.

3. Waste Management

- 3.1 Somerset County Council have adopted the Waste Core Strategy.
- 3.2 Somerset Waste Board has resolved to note progress with implementing the Action Plan from the Business Plan for 2012-2017.
- 3.3 The Anaerobic Digester Plant at Walpole has generally progressed as intended but is running around 10 weeks behind the original schedule due to adverse weather throughout the construction period.
- 3.4 The Board successfully overturned a VAT ruling concerning VAT Partial Exemption, principally through the Chairman and individual partners lobbying

MPs and Senior Cabinet Ministers. This has saved South Somerset District Council around £100,000 per annum and avoided this potential cost for other partners and other waste partnerships.

- 3.5 The Board was not successful in securing funds from the Department for Communities and Local Government's (DCLG) Weekly Refuse Collections Fund. This limited progress against some of the Board's objectives. Most of the much criticised fund has been directed at Councils who collect waste weekly. At least one (Trafford Council) has since advised DCLG that it will not take up its allocation of £6,400,000 as it will cost £11,600,000 to retain weekly collections over five years.
- 3.6 The SWB contacted DCLG about whether this money could be reallocated to unsuccessful but innovative bidders and was advised that "*Ministers are now considering how we can further support weekly collections, take forward the innovation being championed by the Weekly Collections Support Scheme, and help deliver greater efficiency and joint working across local government to protect and enhance frontline services. We are currently generating evidence to go into the next Spending Review in June and it is highly unlikely that Ministers will make firm decisions before this time*".
- 3.7 A Waste Analysis exercise was undertaken in November 2012 in response to rises in tonnages going to landfill. The analysis revealed that around half the uplift in 2012/2013 was due to increased green waste, linked to the extended growing season caused by the very high rainfall in the summer and autumn of 2012. The Analysis also revealed that there is still a high proportion of recyclable or digestible waste (i.e. food waste) in the residual stream, and several workstreams in the Business Plan 2013-2018 aim to direct efforts to try and recover more of this.

Councillor Ken Hayward

Council Meeting - 9 April 2013

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

1. Parks

- 1.1 Work has continued in the parks to repair damage caused by the continuing bad weather. Considering the battering they have received most are still looking very presentable in the main and I would like to thank all the parks team for their hard work.
- 1.2 I met with Shaun Creagan of Taunton in Bloom in Vivary Park last month and we discussed the Bloom Committee's wish to try some vegetable planting in the park. With the right weather we may be able to have a snack on our way round the park in the summer.

2. Community Leisure and Play

- 2.1 We will shortly begin planning the improvements to Staplegrove play area as the S. 106 monies will soon become available to us. This will involve the parish council and using some of the great ideas that the local primary school came up with as part of a school project last year.

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 New programmes are starting at Galmington Pre-school and Wellington Children's Centres in the new financial year, focusing on sports skills and physical activity with 2½-5 year olds. Sports skills have started at Galmington Pre-school on a fortnightly basis to encourage children to enjoy activity from an early age.
- 3.3 A Water Babies initiative is launching at Wellington Sports Centre through Loughborough University and the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) focusing on weak adult swimmers and influencing their children to swim more.

Older People

- 3.4 Men's golf is launching in Priorswood with some Market Segmentation funding. This will be run in partnership with England Golf.

Flexercise

- 3.5 Tone currently has over 140 participants in Flexercise per month in various settings across Taunton Deane.

Facility News

3.6 Wellington Sports Centre

- 3.6.1 Work has commenced on the upgrading of the Family Changing Rooms and will be completed with the centre operating normally. Staff and customers alike are looking forward to the work being completed. The work includes new lockers, changing cubicles, new floor, ceiling tiles, improved lighting and the entrance decorated. The full refit is expected to take about 5-6 weeks, with work commencing at the end of April.

- 3.6.2 Tone has received great feedback from Wellington Children's Centre who have hired out two lanes of the swimming pool. The Sports Centre staff will be coaching and teaching water confidence within a family fun environment. In partnership with Tone's Development Team, the Centre has secured funding for two further projects working with the Children's Centre, which started in March.

3.7 Wellsprings Leisure Centre

- 3.7.1 Two large commercial events are taking place in April - the return of Jimmy Carr and a new Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) and K1 Kickboxing event which will feature a lot of local talent and fighters from across the UK and Ireland. Current UK Mixed Martial Arts professionals, plus up-and-coming future stars of the sport, will be competing in this action packed night. The show boasts NSAC, Semi-Professional MMA fights; in addition spectators can relish full, no holds barred, professional fights as well as professional K1 bouts and an International Kickboxing Title Fight - not for the faint-hearted.

3.8 Vivary Adventure Centre and Vivary Golf Course

- 3.8.1 Delivering Tone's golf business remains challenging. The Golf Course has still not fully recovered from the flooding and even the smallest amount of rainfall causes the course to become waterlogged again. Tone are working with Taunton Deane to find solutions to the ongoing flooding concerns.

- 3.8.2 The Golf Academy starts at the beginning of April with Richard Coffin delivering all of the lessons and sessions to improve clients' golf skills and hopefully encourage more people to join Vivary Golf Course and Club.

3.8.3 Dan Brice (High Ropes Manager) has been out to schools to meet Heads and Teachers to encourage more school bookings and this is slowly having a positive effect. Several schools have now booked for full and half-days and two schools have signed up to bring between 15 and 24 young people per week for six week blocks as an after school club.

3.9 St. James Street Baths

3.9.1 During the February half-term St. James Street ran a number of short, intensive swimming courses and all of the lessons that took place had an overall occupancy of 82%.

3.9.2 Birthday party bookings at St. James Street Swimming Baths are going from strength to strength with at least one booking each weekend. The Water Walker balls have been a huge success and continue to be very popular.

Councillor Catherine Herbert.

Council Meeting – 9 April 2013

Report of Councillor Mrs Jean Adkins – Housing Services

1. Housing Enabling - Regeneration

- 1.1 Following approval for the Creechbarrow Road, Taunton scheme at Full Council on 4 March 2013, three draft plans have been provided by the architects along with suggested elevational treatments for consultation with residents and stakeholders.
- 1.2 These will be displayed in the Members' Room on Wednesday, 10 April 2013 between 3.30 p.m. and 7 p.m.
- 1.3 A planning application will be submitted later this month.
- 1.4 Stephen Major has recently been appointed as Housing Development Project Lead with responsibility for Creechbarrow Road.

2. Affordable Housing Target

- 2.1 A final figure is not yet available as information is still awaited from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) for Firstbuy. Last year this was not available until July.
- 2.2 The highways issue at Ruskin Close, Taunton mentioned in my last report has been resolved. However, the HCA would only allow six of these units as completions, which is very disappointing. The shortfall of 15 units which are physically complete will give us a good start to 2013/2014.
- 2.3 At the time of writing approximately 150 completions are anticipated from the pipeline of houses under construction.

3. Council House Building

- 3.1 The four Phase One sites (three in Taunton and one at West Bagborough), which include a scheme for four Passiv Haus, are progressing towards planning applications being submitted next month (May).
- 3.2 Caroline White is the Housing Development Lead officer for these schemes. She has experience of Passiv Haus.

4. Housing Services

- 4.1 Tenders for the next Air Source Heat Pump contract will be opened this week.

5. Estates Management – Benefit Changes

- 5.1 The Tenants' Forum hosted the Tenant Information Day on 20 February 2013 at the Somerset County Cricket Ground. Advice was available from the Revenues and Benefits Team, Housing Options and organisations such as a Credit Union. Attendance was lower than hoped at 20, but those who came found it very helpful.
- 5.2 In association with Shelter, we held three workshop sessions at The Deane House on 7 March 2013 for tenants wishing to learn about budgeting and money management.

6. Estates Management – Transfer Removal Grants

- 6.1 These grants are available to assist tenants wishing to downsize, thus freeing up some of our larger stock.
- 6.2 The original budget set at the start of 2012 was £30,000. This was increased to £45,000 in October 2012 in response to the increased number of grants being taken up partly due to the introduction of Welfare Reform legislation.
- 6.3 The total number of grants awarded were 35 over the year with a spend of £42,500.
- 6.4 Properties that came available as a result of grant were as follows:-

Type of property	No	Type of property	No
6 bed house	1	2 bed house	5
5 bed house	2	3 bed bungalow	1
4 bed house	3	2 bed bungalow	5
3 bed house	18		

Councillor Mrs Jean Adkins

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 9 April 2013 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, Hayward, Mrs Herbert, C Hill, Mrs Hill, Horsley, Hunt, Miss James, R Lees, Mrs Lees, Meikle, Mrs Messenger, Morrell, Nottrodt, Ms Palmer, Prior-Sankey, D Reed, Mrs Reed, Ross, 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

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of Taunton Deane Borough Council held on 26 February 2013 and 4 March 2013, copies having been sent to each Member, were signed by the Mayor.

2. Apologies

Councillors A Govier, Mrs Govier and Henley.

Councillor Horsley reported that Councillor Mrs Govier was currently in hospital. The Council conveyed its best wishes to Councillor Mrs Govier for a speedy recovery.

3. "Taunton Means Business"

Prior to the main business of the meeting commencing, a three minute video titled "Taunton Means Business" was viewed by Councillors. This video, which set out to raise awareness of what Taunton Deane could offer potential investors, was currently being shown on First Great Western trains running between London and South Wales/the South West.

4. Declaration of Interests

Councillors Brooks, Prior-Sankey, Mrs Waymouth and D Wedderkopp declared personal interests as Members of Somerset County Council. Councillors Mrs Hill and Stone declared personal interests as employees of Somerset County Council. Councillor T Slattery declared a personal interest as an employee of Sedgemoor District Council. Councillor Tooze declared a personal interest as an employee of the UK Hydrographic Office. 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 and Stone declared prejudicial interests as Tone Leisure Board representatives. Councillor Gill Slattery declared personal interests as a member of the Board of Governors at Somerset College and a Patron of the Supporters of Taunton Women's Aid. Councillor Farbahi declared a personal interest as a local owner of land in Taunton Deane. Councillors Gaines and Meikle declared prejudicial interests in the Brewhouse Theatre and stated that they would leave the room when these items were discussed.

5. **Public Question Time**

Mr Simon Nicholls from the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service referred to a consultation document that had recently been issued about proposed changes to the service following a cut in Government funding.

He drew Councillors' attention to the proposed reduction in cover for the Taunton Town Area which would see only one whole time fire appliance retained. This appliance would also be expected to provide 'back-up' for Bridgwater.

In a growing town the size of Taunton and taking into account recent tragedies such as the M5 Motorway fire and the accident at the Athelney Level Crossing, Mr Nicholls felt the Fire Authority was taking a gamble with their savings proposals.

He added that the Fire Authority comprised 24 Members, mostly from the County of Devon with no-one directly representing Taunton Deane. Mr Nicholls asked whether the Council would be contacting the Fire Authority to express concern about its proposals for future fire cover in the area.

In response, Councillor Williams stated that officers had already been tasked to consider the Devon and Somerset Fire Authority's Consultation Document and a response would be sent in due course.

6. **Motion – Facilitating community engagement in support of Taunton Deane Borough Council's Bid for the Brewhouse Theatre, Taunton**

Moved by Councillor Horsley, seconded by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Ms Lisgo.

"The public response to the closure of the Brewhouse has demonstrated that our community wants a theatre space in central Taunton to be preserved and go forward. It has also demonstrated that our community would wish to see such an offering be inclusive and self sustaining. Collective action is necessary to meet our community's aspirations. This Council recognises its

key role in supporting the provision of theatre and the arts in Taunton but that it should not be managing it. The Executive is in the process of engaging a consultant to advise on the future of the theatre in central Taunton and the Council has announced its intention to bid for the theatre.

New groups have been set up ('Count Me In' and 'Tone Theatre Association') and, with other established groups and organisations, have expressed interest in shaping the future of the theatre and arts after the Administration of the Brewhouse (TAPA, the Cultural Consortium, social enterprises, community interest companies, local educational establishments and other arts and educational organisations in Taunton Deane). We welcome the initiative and applaud the energy we know has been applied to setting up these groups. This motion proposes a mechanism be put in place to bring together and support these groups to present a united offering based on shared principles

Motion

1. The Council pledges its support for the formation of a new organisation representing community arts. The Council expects the new organisation to have an evolving Business Plan which will include early full and appropriate consultation with all parties who have so far expressed interest in The Brewhouse's future, together with the wider public, the potential users, within Taunton Deane.
2. This Council will support the work of the new organisation and others, by allowing them to work with our consultant on the scope and delivery of the feasibility study for the future of theatre and the arts in the cultural quarter of Taunton.
3. The Council will endeavour to secure a lease of The Brewhouse Theatre building to ensure the building and contents are retained for use as an important viable and sustainable venue for the theatre and arts centre for the whole community. It would be this Council's hope that a new community organisation will be successful if it demonstrates innovation and delivers value by developing an offering that will give Taunton Deane a viable theatre and arts centre.
4. The Council looks to the new organisation to provide an offering of a commercial and professional performance arts venue commensurate with the County Town's status as a regional centre that aspires to be both the origin of and appropriate venue for, artistic works of national importance.
5. The Council will continue to enable funding in its 2013/2014 budget for the support of a theatre facility in Taunton and we confirm it remains within our Medium Term Financial Plan for future consideration."

During the discussion of the motion Councillor Farbahi, seconded by Councillor Coles, proposed an amendment to the Motion to read:-

- "6. That Somerset County Council be requested to reinstate some of the funding it cut from the Arts in Somerset."

The Amendment was put and was lost.

The Motion was put and was carried.

7. Potential Purchase of the Brewhouse Theatre, Taunton and options for the future

Considered report previously circulated, which sought approval of a bid to purchase the remaining lease on The Brewhouse Theatre and Arts Centre and assets within, together with approval of a process to facilitate a sustainable future for the venue.

The Management and trustees of The Brewhouse approached the Council in early January 2013 to give notice of their severe financial predicament and to request significant additional funds to enable the venue to continue trading.

The Council provided a grant of £152,000 per annum to The Brewhouse, and Group Leaders had been unanimous in their view that there should be no further funding without a clear recovery plan, showing how the theatre could be put onto a sustainable financial footing.

The trustees of the Brewhouse (an independent charity) then engaged a firm called BDO – specialists in financial insolvency and administration – to advise on their options for the future. This had resulted in the trustees recommending an option whereby the theatre would be placed into administration with the administrators immediately entering into a license with the Council to enable the theatre to remain open.

Again, Group Leaders had been unanimous in their view that the Council could not consider entering into a license with the administrators, due to the scale of the financial risks and uncertainties involved.

BDO was formally appointed as administrators of The Brewhouse on 21 February 2013 and the venue closed on that day.

The administration process was continuing and BDO was currently marketing the remaining 61 years of the lease on the property, with a deadline for offers by 12 April 2013. The proceeds of any sale would be used by the administrator to cover their costs and to pay outstanding creditors.

Reported that the Council's annual grant of £152,000 remained protected in the 2013/14 budget towards any successor venture. A further sum of £35,000 had also been set aside, to assist with any costs incurred in protecting the Council's interest in the asset and facilitating a sustainable future for the venue.

As landowner and owner of the freehold for the building, the building would otherwise revert to the Council in 61 years time if no offers were received.

The Group Leaders had expressed support in principle for the submission of a bid to buy out the remaining 61 year lease on the venue, as a means of both protecting the asset and having a strong role in facilitating a sustainable future for the theatre. On the latter issue, there was support for the principle that the Council should act as a facilitator, rather than a prospective theatre operator.

A detailed valuation exercise had therefore been undertaken and a bid submitted, subject to contract, Council approval and a detailed survey. Details of the bid value were included in a confidential appendix.

Additional 'Holding costs' for the property had been estimated at up to £140,000 for a twelve month period and £69,000 for a six month period. These costs included utilities, 24 hour security, insurance and Business Rates.

There were potential additional costs associated with any works required on the structure of the property and its electrical and mechanical infrastructure. Following acceptance of any offer by the Council, a survey would be carried out to establish these costs in more detail.

Further reported that a process was currently underway to appoint an independent consultant to advise the Council on options for the future of the venue and also to advise on emerging interest and potential proposals to run the theatre. The consultant would start work by the end of April 2013 and would be required to submit a report by the end of July 2013. This was to be funded from the £35,000 budget already approved.

It was proposed that the work of the independent consultant should be overseen at key intervals by a Steering Group comprising the Group Leaders, the relevant Portfolio and Shadow Portfolio Holders and the Chairman of the Taunton Cultural Consortium.

A key role of the Steering Group would be to look at the financial viability of any emerging models, as well their alignment with the commitment to a thriving arts and cultural scene in Taunton. The Steering Group would also consider any property related costs established by a detailed survey.

The final report of the consultant would be subject to scrutiny and further decision, if appropriate, by the Executive and Full Council.

Following the presentation of this report, the Executive **resolved** that the press and public be excluded from the meeting to allow discussion of the contents of the confidential appendix, because of the likelihood that exempt information would otherwise be disclosed relating to Clause 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

Resolved that:-

- (i) The bid which had been submitted to the Administrator for the purchase the remaining lease on The Brewhouse Theatre and Arts Centre and assets within, be endorsed;
- (ii) The mechanism described in the Confidential Appendix for funding the purchase and the associated 'holding costs' be approved and be subject to further consideration of likely property related costs which would be established through a detailed survey;
- (iii) Subject to a successful bid, a Supplementary Estimate to increase the 2013/2014 Capital Programme by the amount set out in the Confidential Appendix from the Housing and Planning Delivery Grant Reserve be approved;
- (iv) The potential liability of property related costs be taken into account and that it be noted that further details would be submitted to a future meeting of Full Council for formal review and approval;
- (v) The establishment of the Steering Group, comprising the Group Leaders, the relevant Portfolio and Shadow Portfolio Holders and the Chairman of the Taunton Cultural Consortium, to oversee the development of options for The Brewhouse, be approved; and
- (vi) Negotiations towards a potential purchase of The Brewhouse Theatre be continued, with approval for any further bid to come from Full Council at a future meeting.

8. Proposed Improvements to the Creech Castle Junction, Taunton

Considered report previously circulated, concerning a proposal to improve the Creech Castle Junction, Taunton.

The Department for Transport (DfT) had made funds available to deliver infrastructure improvements which would help to facilitate growth and overcome local congestion problems. This fund was called the Local Pinch Points Fund.

Somerset County Council (SCC) had considered a number of alternative schemes both countywide and within Taunton Deane before prioritising the Creech Castle Scheme (along with one other in South Somerset). In particular, improvements to Junction 25 (J25) of the M5 had been considered and rejected on the basis of relative delivery risk when compared with the Creech Castle scheme.

Whilst a scheme to increase capacity on the circulatory carriageway and slip roads at J25 remained an extremely high priority there was currently no agreed design for the improvement and land would need to be acquired from the Highways Agency and other landowners.

It was therefore decided that a local Pinch Points bid should be prepared for

Creech Castle where there was an outline scheme designed which could be delivered mainly within land in local authority ownership and which was a clear pre-requisite to enable the planned delivery of growth and economic development at Monkton Heathfield.

The planned scheme comprised at-grade capacity improvements at the junction (via a 'hamburger' layout junction) which was identified as the preferred solution through a detailed technical study which had considered a variety of options. Noted that it required the transfer from the Council to SCC of a small area of land to enable an improved slip onto Tone Way from the south.

Capacity at Creech Castle Junction was undoubtedly having an increasing impact on congestion, journey time reliability and the business perception of Taunton as an effective location in which to invest and do business. These problems were likely to be exacerbated by the planned housing and economic growth at Monkton Heathfield.

It was considered that the opportunity to deliver significant improvements to this critical junction at limited local cost and with 70% of the total cost funded by the DfT was considered to be one which should be fully supported.

Further reported that the funding requested for this scheme was on a one-off basis, therefore from a financial management perspective it was advisable that the funding was provided from one-off resources.

The proposal was to pay a Capital Contribution of £375,000 to Somerset County Council towards this scheme from the Growth and Regeneration Reserve Fund, which made the proposal affordable from existing resources held by the Council. SCC had already agreed to provide its £375,000 of local matching funding

Resolved that:-

- (1) A Supplementary Estimate for the 2013/2014 Capital Programme of £375,000 be approved, funded from the newly established Growth and Regeneration Reserve as Taunton Deane's element of local funding towards the delivery of the planned improvement of Creech Castle Junction, Taunton; and
- (2) The small area of Taunton Deane owned land adjoining the southern slip onto Tone Way required to deliver the planned improvement be transferred to Somerset County Council at nil consideration should the Department for Transport funding be forthcoming and the scheme be proceeded with.

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

(i) **From Councillor Horsley to Councillor Williams – Hinkley Point**

Does the Leader of the Council recognise that the lack of visibility for Taunton Deane Borough Council when the Government announced in mid-March the

granting of planning permission for Hinkley Point C - "caught napping" to quote the Editor of The County Gazette - reflects poorly on the leadership of the Council and is doing untold damage to our Growth and Regeneration prospects?

Is he now engaging with EDF at the highest level as he promised he would at the Taunton Deane Economic Advisory Board on Thursday, 10 January 2013? Is he not ashamed that the words he uses in Paragraph 1.5 of his report "we could not have been much quicker off the mark" have nothing more than a hollow ring to it. As the Editor of the Gazette puts it – "How many wake-up calls do we need?" Both cannot be right. Either we are doing well or we are not. Which is it?

Reply - The editor of the Gazette is entitled to his view, but I respectfully disagree with him.

This administration recognises the economic opportunities that the new Nuclear Build at Hinkley Point presents for Taunton Deane, not just from EDF but the many businesses of all sizes who will need to play a part in the Country's biggest construction project for a generation.

The Council **is** engaging with EDF, and has also rejoined "Into Somerset" as an active partner – to stress the many benefits of locating business in Taunton Deane. These benefits are all clearly extolled by companies in the recently launched Taunton Means Business campaign

I stand by the words in my report.

(ii) **From Councillor Horsley to Councillor Williams – Northern Inner Distributor Road (NIDR)**

Could the Leader of the Council let the Council know what priority he is giving to delivering the NIDR amongst the list of his Ongoing Projects set out in Section 3 of his report? He identifies it as a key to the unlocking of our development at Firepool – the centre-piece of job creation for our so-called Economic Strategy.

Can he explain why there has been no progress on its start and why this did not happen yesterday as he mentioned in Section 4 of his report?

Is it true that the Department for Transport (DfT) has requested a significant re-appraisal of the project which could delay the project by a number of months? Could he inform the Council how long this delay might be?

Could he also inform us of the additional cost up to date that this delay is likely to cost Somerset County Council (SCC) and Taunton Deane and therefore the tax payer? Is there a danger that the project may have to be re-tendered and has he identified the likely sum per month that this delay is going to cause the taxpayer – over and above the £27 million project cost already identified?

Does he also agree with me that any prolonged delay will seriously undermine our ability to meet the job, employment and housing targets set out in both the Town Centre Area Action Plan and the Core Strategy? Has he got a Plan B? Would he like Councillor Habib Farbahi and myself help to arrange a meeting with the relevant Minister in the DfT as we wish to avoid any debacle on this critical matter, demonstrate cross-party collaboration on what is doubtlessly the most important matter facing this Council at present and be proactive rather than have to react as we are doing over The Brewhouse Theatre?

Reply - Firstly, I wish to make it clear that the 'operating' Council for the NIDR Project is SCC. However, delivering the NIDR remains a top priority for this Council as it will indeed unlock the full growth and development potential of the Firepool site.

There have been delays in getting this important project started. Firstly, the Order permitting the compulsory purchase of land needed to complete the road was signed by Government Ministers after a long and frustrating wait and much pressure from this Council, SCC and other key partners.

More recently, we have learned that the DfT intends to carry out a significant re-appraisal of the scheme. This is of great concern not just to this Council but also for our partners (including the Local Enterprise Partnership, SCC, local MPs) who share our ambitions for Taunton and the Firepool site. We are applying concerted efforts with partners to encourage the Government to remove any further unnecessary obstacles to achieving the major growth potential that the NIDR and Firepool presents.

I am grateful to Councillor Horsley for his suggestion of cross party collaboration and a meeting with DfT and will follow this up with him separately, but to reassure Members we are already working with our Member of Parliament to try to achieve a speedy resolution of unforeseen hurdles.

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

Financial and Performance Monitoring – Quarter 3 2012/2013 – Proposed Carry Forwards

The Executive had recently considered a report on the financial position and the performance of the Council to the end of Quarter 3 of 2012/2013.

The current forecast outturn for the Council's General Fund Capital Programme was Net Expenditure of £5,200,000, compared to the budget of £7,424,000. Of the £2,224,000 under spend, £2,176,000 related to slippage on projects into 2013/2014, with an under spend on project budgets of £48,000.

Explanations for variances were provided in respect of 14 capital projects. However, of these 14, the following five projects were identified as requiring a carry forward of budgets into the 2013/2014 Financial Year:-

- (a) **Climate Change Initiatives** - Slippage of £40,000 was reported. A request had recently come forward to Members to consider installing solar PV cells on the tennis centre roof at Blackbrook Pavilion, to be funded from this budget next year. It was therefore recommended that £40,000 of the budget was carried forward.
- (b) **PC Refresh Project** - It was currently forecast that expenditure of £15,000 would be deferred until the 2013/2014 financial year. A new five year rolling programme for the replacement of PC's was currently being prepared which would determine when the cost was incurred. A carry forward of £15,000 was recommended.
- (c) **ICT Infrastructure Maintenance** - This project had not yet been started due to continuing discussions with partners. The cost of the project to the Council was currently unknown and the timescale for spend had not yet been determined. It was therefore recommended that the £35,000 budget be carried forward.
- (d) **Project Taunton – Coal Orchard** - A new masterplan was required for this project. As this was not due to happen until next financial year a £10,000 carry forward was recommended.
- (e) **Grants to Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)** - Slippage of £414,000 was reported on the grants to RSLs capital budget. These resources were currently all allocated to schemes such as the affordable housing scheme at Parmin Close, Taunton but payment would not be required before April 2013. It was therefore recommended that the £414,000 budget was carried forward.

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

Resolved that the following carry forwards, totalling £514,000 be approved:-

- Climate Change Initiatives – £40,000;
- PC Refresh Project – £15,000;
- ICT Infrastructure Maintenance – £35,000;
- Project Taunton – Coal Orchard – £10,000; and
- Grants to Registered Social Landlords – £414,000.

11. Reports of the Leader of the Council and Executive Councillors

(i) Leader of the Council (Councillor Williams)

Councillor Williams's report covered the following topics:-

- EDF and Hinkley Point;
- South West Business Insider, Business Breakfast;
- Ongoing Projects;
- Northern Inner Distributor Road;

- Orchard Centre; and
- The Brewhouse Theatre.

(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;
- Corporate and Client Services;
- Corporate Performance;
- Legal and Democratic Services; and
- Revenues and Benefits.

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

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

- Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan;
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL);
- Neighbourhood Planning;
- Planning Enforcement;
- Heritage – Sandhill Park; 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:-

- April 2013;
- Police and Crime Plan;
- Shelter Update;
- Health and Wellbeing;
- Safeguarding;
- Community Development (Priority Areas);
- Partnership Working;
- Youth Forums;
- Rural Matters; and
- Family Focus (Troubled Families).

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

The report from Councillor Cavill covered:-

- Rigid Containers Limited;

- Summary of Small Business Grants awarded this year;
- Taunton Town Centre Events Programme;
- “Taunton Means Business”;
- Taunton Town Centre Company – New Company Structure; and
- Hinkley Nuclear New Build.

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

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

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

12. **Suspension of Standing Order**

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

(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 Enabling - Regeneration;
- Affordable Housing Target;
- Council House Building;
- Housing Services;
- Estates Management – Benefit Changes;
- Estates Management – Transfer Removal Grants.

(Councillors Mrs Messenger, Gill Slattery and T Slattery all left the meeting at 8.23 p.m. Councillors Mrs Adkins and Morrell left the meeting at 8.40 p.m. Councillors C Hill and Ms Palmer left the meeting at 8.44 p.m. Councillors Mrs Baker, Stone, Mrs Waymouth, Ms Webber and D Wedderkopp all left the meeting at 8.51 p.m. Councillor D Reed left the meeting at 8.55 p.m. Councillors Mrs Floyd and Tooze both left the meeting at 9.22 p.m. Councillor Watson left the meeting at 9.24 p.m.)

(The meeting ended at 9.41 p.m.)