

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 8 April 2014 at 18:30.

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## **Agenda**

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

- 1 To receive the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 25 February 2014 (attached).
- 2 To report any apologies for absence.
- 3 To receive any communications.
- 4 Declaration of Interests  
To receive declarations of Disposable 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 Update on The Rifles. Presentation by Lieutenant Colonel (Ret'd) Mike Motum DL, The Rifles Secretary, Taunton.
- 8 Complaint against Councillor Jefferson Horsley. Verbal Report of the Chairman of the Standards Committee, Councillor Gwil Wren. A copy of the Minutes of the Standards Committee's Hearings Panel which met on 17 February 2014 to consider the complaint is attached.
- 9 Part I - To deal with written questions to, and receive the following recommendation from, the Executive:-  
  
Councillor Williams - South West Audit Partnership Governance Arrangements.
- 10 Part II - To receive reports from the following Members of the Executive:-
  - (a) Councillor John Williams - Leader of the Council;
  - (b) Councillor Jane Warmington - Community Development;

- (c) Councillor Norman Cavill - Economic Development, Asset Management, Arts and Tourism;
- (d) Councillor James Hunt - Environmental Services and Climate Change;
- (e) Councillor Catherine Herbert - Sports, Parks and Leisure;
- (f) Councillor Jean Adkins - Housing Services;
- (g) Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams - Corporate Resources; and
- (h) Councillor Mark Edwards - Planning, Transportation and Communications.

Bruce Lang  
Assistant Chief Executive

28 July 2016

Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting and listen to the discussions.

There is time set aside at the beginning of most meetings to allow the public to ask questions.

Speaking under “Public Question Time” is limited to 4 minutes per person in an overall period of 15 minutes. The Committee Administrator will keep a close watch on the time and the Chairman will be responsible for ensuring the time permitted does not overrun. The speaker will be allowed to address the Committee once only and will not be allowed to participate further in any debate.

Except at meetings of Full Council, where public participation will be restricted to Public Question Time only, if a member of the public wishes to address the Committee on any matter appearing on the agenda, the Chairman will normally permit this to occur when that item is reached and before the Councillors begin to debate the item.

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

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

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

Full Council, Executive, Committees and Task and Finish Review agendas, reports and minutes are available on our website: [www.tauntondeane.gov.uk](http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk)



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](mailto:r.bryant@tauntondeane.gov.uk)**

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## **Council Members:-**

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

Councillor J Warmington  
Councillor P Watson  
Councillor (Historic)Mrs 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 25 February 2014 at 6.30 pm.

**Present** The Mayor (Councillor Ms Lisgo)  
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor D Durdan)  
Councillors Mrs Adkins, Mrs Allgrove, Beaven, Bishop, Bowrah, Cavill, Coles, Denington, Ms Durdan, Edwards, Mrs Floyd, Gaines, A Govier, Mrs Govier, Hall, Hayward, Henley, Mrs Herbert, C Hill, Mrs Hill, Horsley, Hunt, Miss James, R Lees, Mrs Lees, Meikle, Mrs Messenger, Ms Palmer, Prior-Sankey, D Reed, Mrs Reed, Gill Slattery, T Slattery, Miss Smith, Mrs Smith, P Smith, Mrs Stock-Williams, Stone, Swaine, Tooze, 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 10 December 2013, copies having been sent to each Member, were signed by the Mayor.

### **2. Apologies**

Councillors Mrs Baker, Mrs Gaden, Morrell, Nottrodt and Ross.

### **3. Communications**

- (a) The Mayor announced that a team comprising Councillors A Govier, Mrs Govier, Mrs Herbert and Mrs Warmington had recently swum to raise money for the Mayor's Charities at the Soroptomists Annual Swimathon at Taunton School. She presented the four Councillors with their swimming medals and a photograph and thanked them for their efforts.
- (b) Councillor Gill Slattery stated that since just before Christmas, life on the Levels had been difficult, worrying and threatening for many due to the extensive flooding.

She thanked the Taunton Deane Councillors from across the political divide for all their kind messages of concern and support.

It quickly became apparent that some authorities were having difficulties in understanding their role with regard to the floods which created a temporary void into which a number of volunteer organisations, such as Flooding on the Levels Action Group (FLAG),

jumped with great enthusiasm and much dismay.

After intervention by the Deputy Prime Minister, the co-ordination between FLAG and the statutory authorities gradually improved. Several of the County Councillors had also done a great deal to ensure the Lead Local Flood Authority (Somerset County Council) carried out its appropriate functions. She was especially pleased that Taunton Deane had agreed to send a Property Officer and a Revenues Officer to provide advice to affected residents.

She went on to say that after the 2012 floods she wrote to the County Council asking when they were going to properly investigate this significant event. Eventually – after much pressure – a report was written but was not distributed.

To ensure this did not happen again, Councillor Slattery called for a public inquiry into this latest event. She felt that as a Council we would want to see the report, understand what specific lessons had been learned and what recommendations would be made by the County Council to Central Government, the Environment Agency, the Inland Drainage Board and other bodies.

She thanked Councillors Williams, Edwards and several other Taunton Deane and Somerset County Councillors for being prepared to learn the lessons from the Taunton Deane point of view in attending the customised tour on 20 February 2014. It was a great shame that the Leader of the County Council and the appropriate portfolio holder could not attend or send their apologies. Thanks were also offered to John Lewis, Chris Hall and all their colleagues for their considerable assistance and patience over many weeks.

Lastly, Councillor Slattery expressed her admiration for the staff and board of the Environment Agency who had been working '24/7' since 19 December 2013 and had been the subject of mis-informed criticism from some quarters. They were, after all, the ones who were moving the water and any resolution would be delivered by them as well. She formally requested that a letter be sent to the Environment Agency thanking them for their contribution, patience and continuing professionalism.

In response, the Mayor undertook to write a letter on behalf of the Council.

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

Councillors Coles, A Govier, A Wedderkopp and D Wedderkopp declared personal interests as Members of Somerset County Council. Councillor Henley declared personal interests both as a Member of Somerset County Council and as an employee of Job Centre Plus. Councillor Hunt declared personal interests both as a Member of Somerset County Council and as

one of the Council's representatives on the Somerset Waste Board. Councillor Prior-Sankey declared a personal interest as a Member 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. 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 as a Patron of the Supporters of Taunton Women's Aid. Councillor Farbahi declared personal interests as a local owner of land in Taunton Deane and as a member of Taunton Forward. Councillor D Reed declared a personal interest as a Director of the Taunton Town Centre Company. Councillor Miss James declared a personal interest as an employee of Somerset College. Councillors D Durdan, Gill Slattery and T Slattery declared prejudicial interests as owners of land that would benefit from any future flood alleviation works. They all indicated that they would leave the meeting if any discussion on this topic took place. Councillor Horsley declared a personal interest as a member of Taunton Forward.

## 5. **Public Question Time**

(a) Liz Payne-Ahmadi representing the 'Taunton Campaign Against Cuts' asked the following questions:-

(i) There are cuts this year, next year and the next. When and how do you see it ending? What will the situation of the Council and the public services it provides be at the end?

(ii) What representations do you make and will you make to the Government about the impact of the cuts on local people?

(iii) You have said that the cuts will impact in particular on older people and those with disabilities. We are talking here about cumulative impact. There is evidence that vulnerable groups of people are disproportionately impacted upon by both national and local cuts? Are you taking this into account? Will you do so in the future and how will you mitigate cumulative impacts that are so severely affecting people's lives?

(iv) The Campaign welcomes the proposed increase in Council Tax and that some of the increased revenue will be used to help reduce the impact of the cuts. Can you give more details about how this will be done and where funds will be targeted?

(b) Alan Debenham asked the following questions:-



(i) With all the further savage cuts in the Council's spending, when will we see just one Taunton Deane Councillor making vehement public protests against this Government's continued massacre of Local Government's services and jobs? And who is that Councillor likely to be when there are no Green Party representatives to put that Party's alternative economic policies which do not include any cuts in frontline public spending? And why is it, when there is no local coalition, we do not see Liberal Democrats protesting against the Government as they have often done in the past;

(ii) When the Government is planning to spend £billions over the next 20 years on the renewal of nuclear weapons, subsidies to prop-up new nuclear generation and controversial fossil fuel 'fracking', is it not a blatant lie to say that Councils' spending must be severely cut to control the national budget deficit? And when, like some other Councils in the South West, is Taunton Deane going to pass a resolution to the effect of requesting the Government to stop wasting these essential public funds?

In response the Leader of the Council, Councillor John Williams, stated that:-

- (1) The Government was cutting the Support Grant it gave to Councils on an annual basis with it due to disappear in 2018. The Council therefore had to find ways of making up what was lost through new initiatives, particularly through growth in Taunton Deane;
- (2) The budget deficit was created as a result of national and international difficulties. Whilst efforts continued to be made to address the significant deficit which still existed, Councillor Williams could not see how standing up and saying "it's all wrong!" would help;
- (3) The proposed 1.99% rise in Council Tax would allow Taunton Deane to retain more of the front line services which currently existed than otherwise would have been the case.

Councillor Williams undertook to provide written answers to the other points that had been raised by the questioners.

## **6. Proposed re-opening of The Brewhouse Theatre, Taunton**

Reported that negotiations had progressed with the Taunton Theatre Association (TTA) in recent months to secure the reopening of The Brewhouse Theatre and Arts Centre. The Council had purchased the lease on the property from the Administrator in October 2013.

The Executive had subsequently approved the leasing of the property to the TTA and resolved to delegate authority to the Portfolio Holder to sign off the TTA's Business Plan and to enter a lease and a funding agreement.

The Brewhouse Steering Group had met on 10 February 2014 and considered correspondence from the TTA intended to reassure Members of the robustness of the Business Plan. The Steering Group had acknowledged the uncertainties involved in the re-opening of the theatre and had agreed to sign off the Business Plan.

A draft set of Heads of Terms for a ten year lease on the property and a draft funding agreement in relation to the Council's annual grant had both been issued to the TTA.

Under the proposed terms of the lease the Council would retain responsibility for the maintenance of the external fabric of the property. Upon consideration of this item in December 2013 the Executive had agreed to allocate £70,000 per year to the maintenance for a period of five years. Since then advice had been obtained that the total maintenance cost over the proposed ten year term of the lease would be in the region of £601,000.

Further reported that in recent days a Tenancy at Will had been entered with the TTA, and a short term funding agreement had also been agreed.

The tenancy had enabled the TTA to take occupation of the property in order to carry out preparatory works for two events at The Brewhouse during April 2014. The short term funding agreement had enabled the payment of monies to the TTA for the procurement of start up services and minor improvement works. Both agreements were intended to be short term, whilst the parties agreed a ten year lease and a longer term funding agreement.

**Resolved** that:-

- (a) The report be noted; and
- (b) The long term financial implications for building maintenance works at The Brewhouse Theatre of an estimated £601,000 over ten years also be noted. This would need to be reflected in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and longer term financial projections for the period.

## 7. **Flooding response for the Levels – Council Tax and National Non Domestic Rates**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning proposals that would form the Council's response to the flooding on the levels in relation to Council Tax and Business Rates.

Flooding on the levels had affected three of the Somerset Districts. Taunton Deane Borough Council, Sedgemoor District Council and South Somerset District Council had all been working together to take a

consistent and fair approach in providing support to Council Tax payers in the affected villages.

The villages in Taunton Deane that had been most affected by the recent flooding were Saltmoor, Burrowbridge, Stathe, North Curry, Stoke St Gregory, Curload, Knapp and Ruishton. The impact of the floods applied to businesses as well as people's homes.

Unless already exempt there would be a liability to pay Council Tax or Business Rates, or in the case of a mixed hereditament, possibly both. There were already some discounts or exemptions that could be applied but these did not cover all situations arising from the current flooding.

The proposals set out in the report would apply a policy extension to the following policies:-

- Section 13a (1)( c ) Reductions Procedures
- Business Rates Discretionary Relief Policy effective from 2014 and the previous policy from 2008 up to 31 March 2014.

Centrally prescribed Council Tax and Business Rate reliefs did not offer any specific support for victims of flooding. However, where a property had been left uninhabitable, the local "Class D" discount could be awarded for a period of up to 52 weeks. To date, ten properties had been classified as uninhabitable and the discount applied. This cost would be borne by all of the major precepting authorities.

Noted that Authorities could also provide a "local discount" under exceptional circumstances such as flooding under Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended.

The Council had the right to choose whether to use this power on a case by case basis or it also had the right to specify a class of use. A class of use was where several people who paid Council Tax fell into a group because their circumstances were similar e.g. Council Tax payers who had been affected by flooding. Members were requested to consider 100% discount for six months for a "class of property" - in this case residents of Saltmoor, Burrowbridge, Stathe, North Curry, Stoke St Gregory, Curload, Knapp and Ruishton whose homes were flooded at the end of December/ early January.

Reported that the billing authority awarding the discount had to fund the cost of that discount. This meant that the other precepting authorities wishing to support this initiative would need to make a direct financial contribution to the Council. There was sufficient evidence to apply the discount without this requirement to approximately 15 homes within these specific villages.

The discount proposed would apply where the property was flooded since late December / early January and the resident had decided to remain in

the property (living upstairs). The period of award proposed was 100% for a period of up to approximately six months from 23 December 2013 (or date first flooded) to 30 June 2014.

In addition it was proposed that if a household was inaccessible due to flooding of the surrounding area and road infrastructure, such that the occupants were fully cut off and stranded in their homes they would receive 100% relief via Section 13A for a maximum of three months. It was estimated this could range from an estimated 20 properties.

It would also be appropriate to possibly discount other properties on the Levels or other severely flooded areas depending on their individual circumstances but these would need to be based on individual requests.

The Prime Minister announced on 19 February 2014 that funding of up to £4,000,000 would be available to local authorities in support of Council Tax Discounts for homes that had been flooded.

The guidance that followed confirmed that local authorities would be able to claim funding support from the Government towards the cost of discretionary flood relief. It was anticipated this additional funding would cover the cost of providing Council Tax relief for a period of up to three months.

Further reported that the Prime Minister had recently announced that 100% relief for three months would be given to businesses affected by the flooding.

Following receipt of guidance it was proposed that Flood Relief would be applied before statutory reliefs for a maximum of three months between the period 1 December 2013 and 31 March 2014, after which statutory reliefs could be applied and/or discretionary reliefs as per policy.

Where the income of a business had suffered as a result of the flooding they were able to apply under the Council's Hardship Policy.

The time limit of three months might not be enough time for some businesses to re-occupy so there might be a mix of assistance given with options that were already available.

Statutory reductions would be applied before any discretionary relief or new three months flood relief was paid, as follows:-

- Empty rate relief - where businesses had vacated due to the floods, the Council was able to give up to three months 100% relief, or six months for industrial units; and
- Hardship - where the income of a business had suffered as a result of the flooding they were able to apply under the Council's Hardship Policy.

Noted that agricultural land and buildings were generally exempt from Business Rates and did not appear in the Rating List.

Guidance had also been received from the Government in respect of a new Business Support Scheme. Taunton Deane had been awarded £85,000 to distribute through this scheme.

Support through this scheme was available for small and medium sized businesses that had been flooded or whose business had been adversely affected by flooding, in order to develop and implement business recovery plans. Details of the type of costs that could be covered and the categories of businesses that could apply for grant funding were set out in the report.

Reported that a new scheme to provide grants of up to £5,000 to homeowners and businesses that had been flooded had also been introduced by the Government. The Repair and Renewal Grant Scheme would be administered by local authorities and would be aimed at providing funds for additional flood resilience and resistance measures for homes that had been flooded since 1 December 2013.

**Resolved** that:-

- (1) The Council used its discretionary powers to introduce a once-off local Council Tax discount of 100% for up to six months for residents in Saltmoor, Burrowbridge, Stathe, North Curry, Stoke St Gregory, Curload, Knapp and Ruishton, who had decided not to leave their flooded property using the award criteria set out in the report;
- (2) Up to £40,000 be allocated from General Reserves to fund the above Council Tax discount;
- (3) Consideration and allocation of discounts of up to 100% for up to six months for other domestic properties in the severely flooded areas that had been flooded be delegated to the Assistant Director – Resources in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for any applications received by the Council prior to 30 June 2014 only. A further report on the use of this delegated authority be provided to Council after it had expired;
- (4) The help available for Business Rates to assist businesses affected by the flooding be noted; and
- (5) A new Flood Relief Business Support Scheme Budget totalling £85,000, funded by Section 31 Grant from the Government, be approved and that decisions regarding individual applications be delegated to the Economic Development Manager.

## 8. **Changes to Standing Order 18 - Voting**

Reported that the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, which were issued on 7 February 2014, required local authorities to amend their Standing Orders to provide that votes at key budget decision making meetings were recorded.

Because of their recent introduction, there had not been time to bring the changes through the Council's normal decision making processes.

The regulations came into force on the same day as the Council's budget decision making meeting and therefore the changes to the Standing Orders needed to be approved to comply with this legislation. A failure to comply would make the decisions made at the budget decision meeting unlawful.

**Resolved** that the changes to Part 4 of the Constitution, Standing Order 18 as detailed in the Appendix to these Minutes, be approved.

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

##### **From Councillor Morrell to Councillor Mrs Vivienne Stock-Williams – Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) and West Somerset Council (WSC) Shared Service Arrangements**

**(a)** Had the TDBC / WSC Chief Executive Officer (CEO) re-joined the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and, if true, why was the CEO not contributing to the Civil Service Scheme beforehand? Also, what was the impact from April 2014 on the claimed savings for a shared CEO if the TDBC / WSC CEO re-joined the LGPS?

**Reply** - The TDBC/WSC CEO had not re-joined the Local Government Pension Scheme. The 'costings' for the Joint CEO had been based on the 'spot salary' approved by Council on 12 November 2013 plus the employers Local Government Pension Scheme contribution as employees can opt in and out of the Scheme.

**(b)** Also, since the TDBC / WSC merger I understand lease cars had / were to be provided to staff and, if true, why, to whom, and at what cost to the taxpayer?

**Reply** - There had been no changes to our policy on lease cars as a result of the Joint Management and Shared Services Project (JMASS).

TDBC currently had a protected Lease Car and Cash Alternative Scheme which was reviewed by Council on 2 October 2012 when the cost of the scheme reduced by approximately 50%.

As part of the JMASS Project Consultation was taking place with UNISON on a review of terms and conditions of employment and no decisions had

been made on any elements of a new set of terms and conditions of employment.

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

### **(a) General Fund Revenue Estimates 2014/2015**

The Executive had considered its final 2014/2015 budget proposals which recognised the continuing financial challenges, with annual reductions in Government funding for Local Council services as the Government sought to reduce the national deficit.

The budget contained details on:-

- (i) the General Fund Revenue Budget proposals for 2014/2015, including the proposed Council Tax rate; and
- (ii) draft figures on the predicted financial position of the Council for the following four years.

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee considered the draft budget proposals at its meeting on 21 January 2014. Although there were no specific amendments proposed by the Committee, a number of comments were made in connection with the proposals relating to the Mayoralty, the use of New Homes Bonus, Shopmobility, increased fees for pitch fees and open spaces, Council Tax, Deane Helpline and play equipment inspections.

The Council Tax calculation and formal tax setting resolution was to be considered separately. The proposed budget for Taunton Deane contained a proposed 1.99% Council Tax increase for 2014/2015 which would mean that the Band D Council Tax would increase to £137.88. The Band D taxpayer would therefore receive all the services provided by the Council in 2014/2015 at a cost of £2.69 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 2015/2016 and beyond and a summary of this position was reflected in the following table:-

	2014/15 £k	2015/16 £k	2016/17 £k	2017/18 £k	2018/19 £k
Net Expenditure	10,860	10,239	11,103	11,644	12,325
<i>Financed By:</i>					
Retained Business Rates	(2,346)	(2,411)	(2,471)	(2,533)	(2,596)
Revenue Support Grant	(2,766)	(1,901)	(1,309)	(720)	(324)
Tax Freeze Grant	0	0	0	0	0
Council Tax	(5,748)	(5,846)	(5,980)	(6,118)	(6,260)
<b>Predicted Budget Gap</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>1,343</b>	<b>2,273</b>	<b>3,145</b>

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

- Revenue Support Grant (RSG) for 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 was as set out in the Provisional Finance Settlement. It was then projected to diminish to nil by 2020.
- Retained Business Rates for 2014/2015 was currently based on the provisional forecasts for 2014/2015 – but final estimates needed to be reviewed once final guidance was received from the Government. Broadly, funding in subsequent years was projected to increase in line with inflation.
- Council Tax was assumed to increase by 1.99% in 2014/15, then subsequently increase by 2% per year.

It was proposed that the minimum acceptable reserves position should be retained at £1,500,000, or £1,250,000 if funds were allocated to ‘invest to save’ initiatives.

The current Budget for 2014/2015 would maintain reserves above this minimum, but following a number of allocations from reserves agreed during 2013/2014 there was limited ‘headroom’ in the current estimated balance. This would significantly limit the Council’s ability to fund ‘up front’ service and transformation investment from revenue reserves.

Based on the MTFP position set out above the General Reserves forecast was summarised as follows:-

#### **General Reserves Forecast**

	2014/15 £k	2015/16 £k	2016/17 £k	2017/18 £k	2018/19 £k
Estimated Balance B/F	(1,697)	(1,697)	(1,616)	(273)	2,000
Predicted Budget Gap	0	<b>81</b>	<b>1,343</b>	<b>2,273</b>	<b>3,145</b>
<b>Estimated Balance C/F</b>	<b>(1,697)</b>	<b>(1,616)</b>	<b>(273)</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>5,145</b>

Clearly the Council would need to ensure that further action was taken in future to balance the budget and maintain a sustainable reserves position.



The Budget proposal for 2014/2015 plus the savings that would be delivered through the Joint Management and Shared Services in 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 meant that the reserves forecast for the next two years would remain above the minimum requirement.

However reserves were currently projected to fall below the acceptable minimum in 2016/2017 if no further action was taken. The Council would need to continue to plan to deliver a sustainable financial position as part of the Corporate Business Plan and supporting financial strategy.

The estimated Special Expenses chargeable to the non-parished area of Taunton in 2014/2015 amounted to £42,290, which represented a 1.99% increase in the special expenses per Band D equivalent of £2.98 per property per year in the Unparished Area.

In line with the Policy recently agreed by Full Council, it was proposed to 'top up' the budget for the Unparished Area by allocating £6,220 of the Council Tax Support Grant Funding to increase the budget for the new financial year to £48,510.

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 continuing costs of their borrowing.

The proposed Policy for 2014/2015 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 2014/2015 budget to be robust.

Moved by Councillor Williams, seconded by Councillor Mrs Adkins, that the budget proposals be amended as follows:-

Wiveliscombe Town Council and Milverton Parish Council had called for more time to deliver a workable solution to keeping the public toilet facility open in their areas. Proposed to offer a one-off sum to these parishes to deliver a local solution to keeping the facilities open. This would cost Taunton Deane £20,950 (£9,350 for Milverton; £11,600 for Wiveliscombe) to be funded from an 'in year' under spend.

In accordance with Standing Order 18(6), the Mayor called for a formal roll call of votes to be taken and recorded in the Minutes.

The amendment was put and was carried with forty Councillors in favour, six Councillors voting against and five abstaining, as follows:-

<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
Councillor Mrs Adkins	Councillor Henley	Councillor Mrs Govier
Councillor Mrs Allgrove	Councillor Prior-Sankey	Councillor Mrs Hill
Councillor Beaven	Councillor P Smith	Councillor Mrs Lees
Councillor Bishop	Councillor Mrs Waymouth	Councillor Miss Smith
Councillor Bowrah	Councillor A Wedderkopp	Councillor Wren
Councillor Cavill	Councillor D Wedderkopp	
Councillor Coles		
Councillor Denington		
Councillor D Durdan		
Councillor Miss Durdan		
Councillor Edwards		
Councillor Farbahi		
Councillor Mrs Floyd		
Councillor Gaines		
Councillor A Govier		
Councillor Hall		
Councillor Hayward		
Councillor Mrs Herbert		
Councillor C Hill		
Councillor Horsley		
Councillor Hunt		
Councillor Miss James		
Councillor R Lees		
Councillor Ms Lisgo		
Councillor Meikle		
Councillor Mrs Messenger		
Councillor Ms Palmer		
Councillor D Reed		
Councillor Mrs Reed		
Councillor Gill Slattery		
Councillor T Slattery		
Councillor Mrs Smith		
Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams		
Councillor Stone		
Councillor Swaine		
Councillor Tooze		
Councillor Mrs Warmington		
Councillor Watson		
Councillor Ms Webber		
Councillor Williams		

(Councillor Mrs Waymouth left the meeting at 8.15 p.m.)

(Councillor Mrs Hill declared a personal interest as a trustee of

Hestercombe House and stated that she would take no part in the discussion of the following amendment.)

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

**Hestercombe Gallery** - That the sum of £10,000 be earmarked from the under spend in 2013/2014 towards matching the £48,000 grant received from the Arts Council England to meet the cost of holding a Modern Art Exhibition in the newly acquired building to begin the process of establishing Hestercombe as a venue of national as well as regional significance.

The amendment was withdrawn following the provision of information that the Executive was already looking to provide some match funding.

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

**Car Parking at Firepool/Tree Planting** – That a temporary joint venture be entered into with Premium Parking Solutions Limited to use the appropriate part of the Firepool site to act as an overspill car park for passengers who used the railway station. The Business Plan for a 50% split in the income derived was estimated to bring about a net income of £24,000 in a year. It was further proposed that the net proceeds be used for a comprehensive tree planting aimed at helping the long term strategy to build up flood defences.

In accordance with Standing Order 18(6), the Mayor called for a formal roll call of votes to be taken and recorded in the Minutes.

The amendment was put and was carried on the casting vote of the Mayor with twenty five Councillors in favour and twenty five Councillors voting against, as follows:-

<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
Councillor Coles	Councillor Mrs Adkins	
Councillor Farbahi	Councillor Mrs Allgrove	
Councillor Mrs Floyd	Councillor Beaven	
Councillor Gaines	Councillor Bishop	
Councillor A Govier	Councillor Bowrah	
Councillor Mrs Govier	Councillor Cavill	
Councillor Henley	Councillor Denington	
Councillor Mrs Hill	Councillor D Durdan	
Councillor Horsley	Councillor Miss Durdan	
Councillor Miss James	Councillor Edwards	
Councillor R Lees	Councillor Hall	
Councillor Mrs Lees	Councillor Hayward	
Councillor Ms Lisgo	Councillor Mrs Herbert	

Councillor Mrs Messenger	Councillor C Hill
Councillor Prior-Sankey	Councillor Hunt
Councillor Gill Slattery	Councillor Meikle
Councillor T Slattery	Councillor Ms Palmer
Councillor Miss Smith	Councillor D Reed
Councillor Mrs Smith	Councillor Mrs Reed
Councillor P Smith	Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams
Councillor Stone	Councillor Mrs Warmington
Councillor Swaine	Councillor Watson
Councillor Tooze	Councillor Ms Webber
Councillor A Wedderkopp	Councillor Williams
Councillor D Wedderkopp	Councillor Wren

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

**Shopmobility** - Proposed that the 12 months notice be withdrawn so that further discussions and negotiations could take place, involving the Community Scrutiny Committee, before an irreversible decision was taken by the operators and the Council to terminate the service.

In accordance with Standing Order 18(6), the Mayor called for a formal roll call of votes to be taken and recorded in the Minutes.

The amendment was put and was lost with twenty three Councillors in favour, twenty five Councillors voting against and one abstaining, as follows:-

Yes	No	Abstain
Councillor Coles	Councillor Mrs Adkins	Councillor Mrs Govier
Councillor Farbahi	Councillor Mrs Allgrove	
Councillor Mrs Floyd	Councillor Beaven	
Councillor Gaines	Councillor Bishop	
Councillor Henley	Councillor Bowrah	
Councillor Mrs Hill	Councillor Cavill	
Councillor Horsley	Councillor Denington	
Councillor Miss James	Councillor D Durdan	
Councillor R Lees	Councillor Miss Durdan	
Councillor Mrs Lees	Councillor Edwards	
Councillor Ms Lisgo	Councillor A Govier	
Councillor Mrs Messenger	Councillor Hall	
Councillor Prior-Sankey	Councillor Hayward	
Councillor Gill Slattery	Councillor Mrs Herbert	
Councillor T Slattery	Councillor C Hill	
Councillor Miss Smith	Councillor Hunt	
Councillor Mrs Smith	Councillor Meikle	
Councillor P Smith	Councillor Ms Palmer	
Councillor Stone	Councillor D Reed	

Councillor Swaine  
Councillor Tooze

Councillor Mrs Reed  
Councillor Mrs Stock-  
Williams

Councillor A Wedderkopp  
Councillor D Wedderkopp

Councillor Mrs Warmington  
Councillor Watson  
Councillor Ms Webber  
Councillor Williams  
Councillor Wren

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

**Grass Cutting and Dog Wardens** - Proposed that the sum of £10,000 was applied towards the grass cutting of verges in Taunton to supplement the twice a year cut that was undertaken by Somerset County Council. This sum to be matched by an application to the Unparished Area Fund which, if successful, would increase the sum available to £20,000. Further proposed that a sum of £5,000 be applied to maintain the frequency of collection and disposal from dog bins in the town with an equal amount sought from the Unparished Area Fund.

In accordance with Standing Order 18(6), the Mayor called for a formal roll call of votes to be taken and recorded in the Minutes.

The amendment was put and was carried unanimously, as follows:-

**Yes**

**No**

**Abstain**

Councillor Mrs Adkins  
Councillor Mrs Allgrove  
Councillor Beaven  
Councillor Bishop  
Councillor Bowrah  
Councillor Cavill  
Councillor Coles  
Councillor Denington  
Councillor D Durdan  
Councillor Miss Durdan  
Councillor Edwards  
Councillor Farbahi  
Councillor Mrs Floyd  
Councillor Gaines  
Councillor A Govier  
Councillor Mrs Govier  
Councillor Hall  
Councillor Hayward  
Councillor Henley  
Councillor Mrs Herbert  
Councillor C Hill  
Councillor Mrs Hill

Councillor Horsley  
Councillor Hunt  
Councillor Miss James  
Councillor R Lees  
Councillor Mrs Lees  
Councillor Ms Lisgo  
Councillor Meikle  
Councillor Mrs Messenger  
Councillor Ms Palmer  
Councillor Prior-Sankey  
Councillor D Reed  
Councillor Mrs Reed  
Councillor Gill Slattery  
Councillor T Slattery  
Councillor Miss Smith  
Councillor Mrs Smith  
Councillor P Smith  
Councillor Mrs Stock-  
Williams  
Councillor Stone  
Councillor Swaine  
Councillor Tooze  
Councillor Mrs Warmington  
Councillor Watson  
Councillor Ms Webber  
Councillor A Wedderkopp  
Councillor D Wedderkopp  
Councillor Williams  
Councillor Wren

(Councillor Ms Webber left the meeting at 9.05 p.m.)

(Councillors D Durdan and Mrs Hill declared prejudicial interests in the following amendment as Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayor Elect respectively and left the meeting during its consideration.)

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

**The Mayoralty** - Proposed that the £17,200 saving identified be reinstated in full. This was recognition that the First Citizen of Taunton Deane should be supported properly or not at all. He/she was the town's ambassador and needed that status if the role was to be maintained. Also proposed that thought and research should be put into seeing what opportunities there were to seek commercial advantage from this prestigious position.

In accordance with Standing Order 18(6), the Mayor called for a formal roll call of votes to be taken and recorded in the Minutes.

The amendment was put and was carried with twenty eight Councillors in favour, eighteen Councillors voting against and one abstaining, as follows:-

<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
Councillor Bowrah	Councillor Mrs Adkins	Councillor Beaven
Councillor Cavill	Councillor Mrs Allgrove	
Councillor Coles	Councillor Bishop	
Councillor Farbahi	Councillor Denington	
Councillor Mrs Floyd	Councillor Miss Durdan	
Councillor Gaines	Councillor Edwards	
Councillor A Govier	Councillor Mrs Herbert	
Councillor Mrs Govier	Councillor C Hill	
Councillor Hall	Councillor Hunt	
Councillor Hayward	Councillor Meikle	
Councillor Henley	Councillor Ms Palmer	
Councillor Horsley	Councillor D Reed	
Councillor Miss James	Councillor Mrs Reed	
Councillor R Lees	Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams	
Councillor Mrs Lees	Councillor Mrs Warmington	
Councillor Ms Lisgo	Councillor Watson	
Councillor Mrs Messenger	Councillor Williams	
Councillor Prior-Sankey	Councillor Wren	
Councillor Gill Slattery		
Councillor T Slattery		
Councillor Miss Smith		
Councillor Mrs Smith		
Councillor P Smith		
Councillor Stone		
Councillor Swaine		
Councillor Tooze		
Councillor A Wedderkopp		
Councillor D Wedderkopp		

Members went on to discuss the substantive Budget of the Council.

(Councillors D Durdan, Gill Slattery and T Slattery declared prejudicial interests as owners of property which would benefit from the proposed dredging of local rivers and left the meeting during the consideration of this issue.)

(Councillors Mrs Messenger and Swaine left the meeting at 9.15 p.m.)

In accordance with Standing Order 18(6), the Mayor called for a formal roll call of votes to be taken and recorded in the Minutes.

On the motion of Councillor Williams, the substantive Motion, which is detailed below, was put and was carried with forty four Councillors in

favour and three abstaining:-

**Resolved** that the budget for General Fund services for 2014/2015 as shown in the original report to Full Council and as amended above, be approved and that:-

- (a) The Section 151 Officer's Statement of Robustness, which applies to the whole budget including General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Budget proposals be noted and that the recommended minimum acceptable level of reserves at £1,500,000 or £1,250,000 if funds are allocated to invest to save initiatives, be approved;
- (b) The General Fund Revenue Budget 2014/2015, including a Basic Council Tax Requirement budget of £5,192,970 and Special Expenses of £48,512 be approved;
- (c) The transfer of any under/overspend in the 2013/2014 General Fund Revenue Account Outturn to/from the General Fund reserves be approved;
- (d) The Budget Savings Proposals for 2014/2015 – with the exception of those relating to the Mayoralty - as set out in the report to the Executive be approved and the Equalities Impact Assessments provided as part of the budget decision process be noted;
- (e) (i) A Supplementary Estimate of £72,500 in 2013/2014 to provide funding for the estimated redundancy costs related to the Savings Proposals be approved; (ii) A Supplementary Estimate from the General Fund Reserves of £17,500 in 2014/2015 be approved to fund the reinstated savings on the Mayoralty; (iii) A sum of £20,950 from 2013/2014 in-year under spends be set aside to fund payments to Milverton Parish Council and Wiveliscombe Town Council with regard to public conveniences; and (iv) A sum of £15,000 from the 2013/2014 in-year under spends be set aside to fund additional grass cutting / dog bins,
- (f) The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy with MRP calculated as follows, be approved:-
  - for supported borrowing, 4% on outstanding debt;
  - 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 1/25<sup>th</sup>) per year on a straight line basis; and
- (g) The General Reserves position (including an additional supplementary estimate of £17,200) and the Medium Term Financial Plan projections, and the continuing financial challenge to address the Budget Gap for future years be noted.



The details of the recorded vote was as follows:-

<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
Councillor Mrs Adkins		Councillor A Govier
Councillor Mrs Allgrove		Councillor Mrs Govier
Councillor Beaven		Councillor Henley
Councillor Bishop		
Councillor Bowrah		
Councillor Cavill		
Councillor Coles		
Councillor Denington		
Councillor D Durdan		
Councillor Miss Durdan		
Councillor Edwards		
Councillor Farbahi		
Councillor Mrs Floyd		
Councillor Gaines		
Councillor Hall		
Councillor Hayward		
Councillor Mrs Herbert		
Councillor C Hill		
Councillor Mrs Hill		
Councillor Horsley		
Councillor Hunt		
Councillor Miss James		
Councillor R Lees		
Councillor Mrs Lees		
Councillor Ms Lisgo		
Councillor Meikle		
Councillor Ms Palmer		
Councillor Prior-Sankey		
Councillor D Reed		
Councillor Mrs Reed		
Councillor Gill Slattery		
Councillor T Slattery		
Councillor Miss Smith		
Councillor Mrs Smith		
Councillor P Smith		
Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams		
Councillor Stone		
Councillor Tooze		
Councillor Mrs Warmington		
Councillor Watson		
Councillor A Wedderkopp		
Councillor D Wedderkopp		
Councillor Williams		
Councillor Wren		

(Councillors A Govier, Mrs Govier, Hall, Hayward, Henley, C Hill, Meikle, Ms Palmer, D Reed, Mrs Reed and D Wedderkopp all left the meeting at 9.25 p.m.)

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

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

#### **(b) Capital Programme Budget Estimates 2014/2015**

The Executive had also recently considered the proposed General Fund (GF) and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programmes for 2014/2015.

Full Council had previously approved the prioritisation framework for capital schemes, reflecting the issues flagged by Members as being important during the Corporate Business Plan review process. The prioritisation system had been developed in order to ensure that the Council's very limited Capital Resources were channelled at key projects. This framework had been applied in arriving at the proposed Capital Programme for 2014/2015:-

Priority	
1	Business Continuity (corporate / organisational)
2	Statutory Service Investment (to get to statutory minimum / contractual / continuity)
3	Growth (top 5)
4	Transformation
5	Others

The Council approved a Capital Programme for General Fund schemes totalling £3,930,000 in February 2013. Slippage from the previous year plus supplementary budget approvals during the year had increased the current Budget to £17,469,000.

Approval had also recently been given for £2,040,000 of capital expenditure for 2014/2015 (and £264,000 for 2015/2016) for the Firepool Access, Section 106 Agreement Affordable Housing schemes and the Chapel Roof (Taunton Cemetery).

Further bids for capital expenditure have been received for 2014/2015 and these had been considered against the prioritisation framework. The proposed additions to the General Fund Capital Programme for 2014/2015 total £684,000.

Funding of capital investment in the future would rely upon a variety of sources including Capital Receipts, Grant Funding, Capital Contributions, Revenue Budgets or Reserves and through Borrowing.

In addition to the above programme, the Corporate Management Team had prioritised the 'Top 5' growth-related capital projects as those schemes that would be recommended to Members assuming the necessary funding sources could be identified.

These were large schemes that were not currently affordable from existing capital resources. However, the Executive had included a recommendation in the General Fund Revenue Budget report to allocate £1,600,000 of the 2014/2015 New Homes Bonus Grant to support growth and regeneration priorities which would provide a potential source of funding towards the identified schemes.

The proposed Draft HRA Capital Programme 2014/2015 totalled £7,750,000 for Maintenance and Improvement schemes plus £500,000 for the Social Housing Development Programme. This was part of a Five-Year Capital Expenditure Estimate of some £37,900,000 for the period 2014/2015 to 2018/2019. The programme reflected the priorities set out in the updated 30-Year HRA Business Plan.

It was proposed that the HRA Capital Programme for 2014/2015 would be fully funded from revenue resources, including the Major Repairs Reserve, Revenue Contributions to Capital Outlay and the Social Housing Development Fund.

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

On the motion of Councillor Williams, it was

**Resolved** that:-

- (a) The additional General Fund Capital Programme Budget of £684,000 be approved; and
- (b) The Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme of £8,250,000 for 2014/2015 also be approved.

**(c) Council Tax Setting 2014/2015**

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.

The Town and Parish Council Precepts for 2014/2015 totalled £545,755. The increase in the average Band D Council Tax for Town and Parish Councils, including Special Expenses for the Unparished Area, was 3.80% and resulted in an average Band D Council Tax figure of £14.49 for

2014/2015.

The Police and Crime Commissioner had recently announced a 1.99% increase. The confirmed Precept was £6,454,303 which resulted in a Band D Council Tax of £171.37. The precept would be adjusted by a Collection Fund contribution of £39,010.

The Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority had recently announced a 1.99% increase. The confirmed Precept was £2,895,906 which resulted in a Band D Council Tax of £76.89. The Precept would be adjusted by a Collection Fund contribution of £17,500.

Somerset County Council had announced a 0% increase. The confirmed Precept was £38,691,169, which resulted in a Band D Council Tax of £1,027.30. The Precept would be adjusted by a Collection Fund contribution of £238,490.

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 £329,630. Taunton Deane's share of this amounted to £34,630, and this had been reflected in the General Fund Revenue Estimates.

In accordance with Standing Order 18(6), the Mayor called for a formal roll call of votes to be taken and recorded in the Minutes.

On the motion of Councillor Williams, the substantive Motion, which is detailed below, was put and was carried unanimously:-

**Resolved:-**

- (a) That the following formal Council Tax Resolution to reflect the proposed 1.99% increase in Council Tax in 2014/2015 be approved:-
- (1) That it be noted that on 15 January 2014 the Council calculated the Council Tax Base for 2014/2015:-
    - (i) for the whole Council area as 37,662.97 [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 Appendix B below;
  - (2) That the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2014/2015 (excluding Parish precepts) be calculated as £5,192,970;

(3) That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2014/2015 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:-

- (i) £92,573,475 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) £86,834,750 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) £5,738,725 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) £152.37 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) £545,755 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as in Appendix B below). *(Parish Precepts and Special Expenses).*
- (vi) £137.88 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 2014/2015 for each part of its area and for each category of dwellings;

(6) To determine that the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2014/2015 was not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB Local Government Finance Act 1992; and

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

	2013/14	2014/15	Increase
	£	£	%
Taunton Deane Borough Council	135.19	137.88	1.99%
Somerset County Council	1,027.30	1,027.30	0.00%
Police and Crime Commissioner	168.03	171.37	1.99%
Devon and Somerset Fire Authority	75.39	76.89	1.99%
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>1,405.91</b>	<b>1,413.44</b>	<b>0.54%</b>
Town and Parish Council (average)	13.96	14.49	3.80%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,419.87</b>	<b>1,427.93</b>	<b>0.57%</b>

The details of the recorded vote was as follows:-

**Yes**

**No**

**Abstain**

Councillor Mrs Adkins  
 Councillor Mrs Allgrove  
 Councillor Beaven  
 Councillor Bishop  
 Councillor Bowrah  
 Councillor Cavill  
 Councillor Coles  
 Councillor Denington  
 Councillor D Durdan  
 Councillor Miss Durdan  
 Councillor Edwards  
 Councillor Farbahi  
 Councillor Mrs Floyd  
 Councillor Gaines  
 Councillor Mrs Herbert  
 Councillor Mrs Hill  
 Councillor Horsley  
 Councillor Hunt  
 Councillor Miss James  
 Councillor R Lees  
 Councillor Mrs Lees  
 Councillor Ms Lisgo  
 Councillor Prior-Sankey  
 Councillor Gill Slattery  
 Councillor T Slattery  
 Councillor Miss Smith

Councillor Mrs Smith  
Councillor P Smith  
Councillor Mrs Stock-  
Williams  
Councillor Stone  
Councillor Tooze  
Councillor Mrs Warmington  
Councillor Watson  
Councillor A Wedderkopp  
Councillor Williams  
Councillor Wren

**APPENDIX  
A**

<b>Valuation Bands</b>								
<b>Council Tax Schedule 2014/15</b>	<b>Band A £</b>	<b>Band B £</b>	<b>Band C £</b>	<b>Band D £</b>	<b>Band E £</b>	<b>Band F £</b>	<b>Band G £</b>	<b>Band H £</b>
Taunton Deane Borough Council *	91.92	107.24	122.56	137.88	168.52	199.16	229.80	275.76
Somerset County Council	684.87	799.01	913.16	1,027.30	1,255.59	1,483.88	1,712.17	2,054.60
Police and Crime Commissioner	114.25	133.29	152.33	171.37	209.45	247.53	285.62	342.74
Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority	51.26	59.80	68.35	76.89	93.98	111.06	128.15	153.78
Parish / Town only (a)*	9.66	11.27	12.88	14.49	17.71	20.93	24.15	28.98
Parish / Town & District (b)*	101.58	118.51	135.44	152.37	186.23	220.09	253.95	304.74
<b>Total (c) *</b>	<b>951.95</b>	<b>1,110.61</b>	<b>1,269.27</b>	<b>1,427.93</b>	<b>1,745.25</b>	<b>2,062.57</b>	<b>2,379.88</b>	<b>2,855.86</b>
<b><u>Parish:</u></b>								
Ash Priors	942.30	1,099.34	1,256.40	1,413.44	1,727.54	2,041.63	2,355.74	2,826.88
Ashbrittle	955.41	1,114.64	1,273.88	1,433.11	1,751.58	2,070.04	2,388.52	2,866.22
Bathealton	946.20	1,103.89	1,261.60	1,419.29	1,734.69	2,050.08	2,365.49	2,838.58
Bishops Hull	955.43	1,114.66	1,273.91	1,433.14	1,751.62	2,070.09	2,388.57	2,866.28



Bishops Lydeard/Cothelstone	962.80	1,123.26	1,283.73	1,444.19	1,765.12	2,086.05	2,406.99	2,888.38
Bradford on Tone	955.15	1,114.33	1,273.53	1,432.71	1,751.09	2,069.46	2,387.86	2,865.42
Burrowbridge	958.61	1,118.37	1,278.15	1,437.91	1,757.45	2,076.98	2,396.52	2,875.82
Cheddon Fitzpaine	957.43	1,116.99	1,276.57	1,436.13	1,755.27	2,074.40	2,393.56	2,872.26
Chipstable	953.69	1,112.63	1,271.59	1,430.53	1,748.43	2,066.32	2,384.22	2,861.06
Churchstanton	958.89	1,118.69	1,278.52	1,438.32	1,757.95	2,077.57	2,397.21	2,876.64
Combe Florey	954.75	1,113.87	1,273.00	1,432.12	1,750.37	2,068.61	2,386.87	2,864.24
Comeytrowe	950.19	1,108.55	1,266.92	1,425.28	1,742.01	2,058.73	2,375.47	2,850.56
Corfe	949.85	1,108.14	1,266.46	1,424.76	1,741.38	2,057.98	2,374.61	2,849.52
Cotford St Luke	956.31	1,115.68	1,275.08	1,434.45	1,753.22	2,071.98	2,390.76	2,868.90
Creech St Michael	961.17	1,121.35	1,281.56	1,441.74	1,762.13	2,082.51	2,402.91	2,883.48
Durston	949.09	1,107.27	1,265.46	1,423.63	1,739.99	2,056.35	2,372.72	2,847.26
Fitzhead	958.63	1,118.39	1,278.17	1,437.93	1,757.47	2,077.00	2,396.56	2,875.86
Halse	951.83	1,110.45	1,269.10	1,427.73	1,745.01	2,062.27	2,379.56	2,855.46
Hatch Beauchamp	952.85	1,111.64	1,270.46	1,429.26	1,746.88	2,064.48	2,382.11	2,858.52
Kingston St Mary	950.92	1,109.40	1,267.89	1,426.37	1,743.34	2,060.31	2,377.29	2,852.74

Langford Budville	955.44	1,114.67	1,273.92	1,433.15	1,751.63	2,070.10	2,388.59	2,866.30
Lydeard St Lawrence/Tolland	955.16	1,114.34	1,273.55	1,432.73	1,751.12	2,069.49	2,387.89	2,865.46
Milverton	958.69	1,118.47	1,278.26	1,438.03	1,757.59	2,077.15	2,396.72	2,876.06
Neroche	954.47	1,113.53	1,272.62	1,431.69	1,749.85	2,067.99	2,386.16	2,863.38
North Curry	957.07	1,116.57	1,276.09	1,435.59	1,754.61	2,073.62	2,392.66	2,871.18
Norton Fitzwarren	960.81	1,120.94	1,281.08	1,441.21	1,761.48	2,081.74	2,402.02	2,882.42
Nynehead	959.75	1,119.70	1,279.67	1,439.62	1,759.54	2,079.45	2,399.37	2,879.24
Oake	952.71	1,111.49	1,270.28	1,429.06	1,746.63	2,064.19	2,381.77	2,858.12
Otterford	942.30	1,099.34	1,256.40	1,413.44	1,727.54	2,041.63	2,355.74	2,826.88
Pitminster	955.43	1,114.66	1,273.91	1,433.14	1,751.62	2,070.09	2,388.57	2,866.28
Ruishton/Thornfalcon	958.50	1,118.24	1,278.00	1,437.74	1,757.24	2,076.73	2,396.24	2,875.48
Sampford Arundel	967.92	1,129.23	1,290.56	1,451.87	1,774.51	2,097.14	2,419.79	2,903.74
Staplegrove	952.88	1,111.68	1,270.51	1,429.31	1,746.94	2,064.55	2,382.19	2,858.62
Stawley	954.30	1,113.34	1,272.40	1,431.44	1,749.54	2,067.63	2,385.74	2,862.88
Stoke St Gregory	959.34	1,119.22	1,279.12	1,439.00	1,758.78	2,078.55	2,398.34	2,878.00
Stoke St Mary	953.15	1,112.00	1,270.87	1,429.72	1,747.44	2,065.15	2,382.87	2,859.44

Taunton	944.29	1,101.66	1,259.05	1,416.42	1,731.18	2,045.93	2,360.71	2,832.84
Trull	954.37	1,113.42	1,272.49	1,431.54	1,749.66	2,067.77	2,385.91	2,863.08
Wellington	958.93	1,118.75	1,278.58	1,438.39	1,758.03	2,077.67	2,397.32	2,876.78
Wellington Without	955.17	1,114.36	1,273.56	1,432.75	1,751.14	2,069.52	2,387.92	2,865.50
West Bagborough	952.49	1,111.23	1,269.99	1,428.73	1,746.23	2,063.72	2,381.22	2,857.46
West Buckland	954.19	1,113.22	1,272.26	1,431.28	1,749.34	2,067.40	2,385.47	2,862.56
West Hatch	953.74	1,112.69	1,271.65	1,430.60	1,748.51	2,066.42	2,384.34	2,861.20
West Monkton	958.82	1,118.61	1,278.43	1,438.22	1,757.83	2,077.42	2,397.04	2,876.44
Wiveliscombe	958.23	1,117.92	1,277.64	1,437.33	1,756.74	2,076.14	2,395.56	2,874.66

**APPENDIX  
B**

**TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL PRECEPTS**

Parish/Town Council	2013/14			2014/15			Council Tax Increase*
	Tax Base	Precept Levied	Council Tax Band D	Tax Base	Precept Levied	Council Tax Band D	
		£	£		£	£	
Ash Priors	81.46	-	-	77.15	-	-	0.00%
Ashbrittle	86.74	2,000	23.06	91.49	1,800	19.67	-14.67%
Bathealton	84.83	500	5.89	85.52	500	5.85	-0.81%
Bishops Hull	1,052.00	20,750	19.72	1,066.11	21,000	19.70	-0.13%
Bishops Lydeard/Cothelstone	1,021.90	28,489	27.88	1,051.08	32,321	30.75	10.30%
Bradford on Tone	285.01	5,500	19.30	285.36	5,500	19.27	-0.12%
Burrowbridge	196.21	4,700	23.95	200.22	4,900	24.47	2.17%
Cheddon Fitzpaine	598.80	9,843	16.44	612.72	13,900	22.69	38.01%
Chipstable	129.81	2,150	16.56	130.11	2,223	17.09	3.16%
Churchstanton	342.98	8,126	23.69	348.93	8,681	24.88	5.01%
Combe Florey	116.50	2,250	19.31	120.42	2,250	18.68	-3.26%

Comeytrowe	1,967.11	23,290	11.84	1,955.60	23,154	11.84	0.00%
Corfe	132.02	1,500	11.36	132.54	1,500	11.32	-0.39%
Cotford St Luke	752.62	15,300	20.33	764.65	16,065	21.01	3.35%
Creech St Michael	937.95	26,544	28.30	952.22	26,948	28.30	0.00%
Durston	58.64	607.37	10.36	58.89	600	10.19	-1.63%
Fitzhead	113.55	2,832	24.94	116.15	2,844	24.49	-1.82%
Halse	139.03	1,800	12.95	139.93	2,000	14.29	10.40%
Hatch Beauchamp	249.16	4,000	16.05	252.87	4,000	15.82	-1.47%
Kingston St Mary	424.73	5,496	12.94	425.85	5,508	12.93	-0.05%
Langford Budville	225.54	4,500	19.95	228.27	4,500	19.71	-1.20%
Lydeard St Lawrence/Tolland	199.03	3,839.23	19.29	204.14	3,938	19.29	0.01%
Milverton	562.51	12,650	22.49	569.28	14,000	24.59	9.36%
Neroche	239.15	4,446	18.59	245.73	4,484	18.25	-1.85%
North Curry	692.23	15,366	22.20	692.49	15,342	22.15	-0.19%
Norton Fitzwarren	903.16	25,871	28.64	904.74	25,122	27.77	-3.06%
Nynehead	165.34	4,250	25.70	162.35	4,250	26.18	1.84%

Oake	317.34	5,000	15.76	320.09	5,000	15.62	-0.86%
Otterford	165.11		-	168.69		-	0.00%
Pitminster	435.08	8,885	20.42	451.84	8,899	19.70	-3.56%
Ruishton/Thornfalcon	574.63	14,000	24.36	576.15	14,000	24.30	-0.26%
Sampford Arundel	121.94	4,800	39.36	124.91	4,800	38.43	-2.38%
Staplegrove	708.57	10,000	14.11	743.74	11,800	15.87	12.42%
Stawley	132.17	2,460	18.61	133.37	2,400	18.00	-3.32%
Stoke St Gregory	356.14	10,000	28.08	352.08	9,000	25.56	-8.96%
Stoke St Mary	198.25	3,008	15.17	198.81	3,236	16.28	7.28%
Taunton	14,115.83	41,218	2.92	14,206.18	42,292	2.98	1.95%
Trull	992.02	18,000	18.14	994.65	18,000	18.10	-0.26%
Wellington	4,290.56	97,396	22.70	4,355.37	108,666	24.95	9.91%
Wellington Without	293.61	5,500	18.73	292.04	5,640	19.31	3.10%
West Bagborough	154.78	2,500	16.15	163.53	2,500	15.29	-5.35%
West Buckland	424.77	7,580	17.84	419.36	7,483	17.84	-0.01%
West Hatch	136.11	2,330	17.12	135.80	2,330	17.16	0.23%

West Monkton	1,077.78	27,664	25.67	1,105.07	27,379	24.78	-3.47%
Wiveliscombe	1,027.90	23,500	22.86	1,046.48	25,000	23.89	4.49%
Totals	37,280.60	520,441	13.96	37,662.97	545,755	14.49	3.80%

\* Please note that when this is run through the Council Tax system there could be small rounding differences on the percentage shown.

**(d) Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy**

At its last meeting, the Executive considered a report which detailed the Treasury Management and Investment Strategies for the 2014/2015 financial year.

The Council's debt was currently £94,200,000. 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 Financial Services (Banking Reform) Act 2013 changes – which included the bail-in provisions – were reflected within the Treasury Management Strategy Statement.

The Strategy had taken account of the Government's predictions for growth, advice from the Council's Treasury advisors Arlingclose including their predictions on interest rates and changes in legislation governing financial institutions.

The Strategy looked to reduce the levels of investment per counterparty but included more counterparties with whom the Council could invest any cash surpluses. To reduce exposure to risk and volatility Taunton Deane would continue to:-

- (1) Consider security, liquidity and yield, in that order;
- (2) Consider alternative assessments of credit strength;
- (3) Spread investments over a range of approved counterparties; and
- (4) Only invest 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 impacted directly on the Council's budget.

The Council's General Fund Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) for 2014/2015 was £11,908,000 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 2016/2017 of £10,777,000.

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 the Appendix to the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy be also approved.



**(e) Council Tax Base 2014/2015 and Business Rates Retention and the National Non-Domestic Rates Return 2014/2015**

At its January meeting, the Executive had been asked to consider reports on the:-

- (a) Council Tax Base – which had to be calculated for each financial year and was used to determine the Band D Council Tax for the year. The calculation was in accordance with the requirements of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base (England) Regulations 2012. The responsibility to approve the Council Tax Base was currently delegated to the Executive; and
- (b) Business Rates Retention and the National Non-Domestic Rates Return (NNDR1) 2014/2015 – Under the Business Rates Retention funding system, the Council was required to approve the NNDR1 for 2014/2015 by the end of January each year. The responsibility to approve the NNDR1 Return was currently delegated to the Executive.

As the Tax Base was largely a factual matter together with adjustments applied through approved policies, the Executive was of the view that the approval of the Tax Base should be delegated to the Section 151 Officer in future years.

The production of the NNDR1 this year had caused significant issues due to the late issue of the NNDR1 form template and guidance by the Department of Communities and Local Government. To comply with the deadline to submit the NNDR1 Return by 31 January 2014, the Executive had agreed to delegate the completion and submission of the Return to the Section 151 Officer. In addition, it was agreed that delegated authority should be sought to enable the Council's Section 151 Officer to approve the NNDR1 Return in future years too.

On the motion of Councillor Williams, it was

**Resolved** that:-

- (1) The requirement to approve the Council Tax Base be delegated to the Section 151 Officer in future years; and
- (2) Authority be formally delegated to the Council's Section 151 Officer to approve the National Non-Domestic Rates Return in future years too.

**(f) Housing Revenue Account Estimates 2014/2015**

The Executive had given consideration to the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) estimates for the 2014/2015 Financial Year. It also included details of the proposed increase in Average Weekly Rent for the year where a 6.23% increase had been recommended.

The Proposed Budget was based on assumptions and estimates on

expenditure requirements and income projections, in order to deliver the updated Business Plan.

Dwelling rents for approximately 6,000 properties provided annual income of over £24,000,000 for the HRA.

Local authorities had both the power and duty to set their own rent. However, in December 2000 Central Government set out a policy for social rents in England to be fair, affordable and less confusing for tenants. Local Authorities and Housing Associations were required 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 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. However, the Government had recently amended its guidance in this respect and full convergence could not now be obtained.

The final year that a convergence factor could be included in the rent calculation would now be 2014/2015 and the continuing budget impact of this change was that the Council would lose the potential to increase rent income by approximately £250,000 per year from 2015/2016 onwards.

From 2015/2016 the Government had proposed to alter the basis for calculation of guideline rent increases, from RPI plus ½%, to CPI plus 1% but the full impact of this change could not yet be predicted.

Increasing the actual average weekly rent paid by tenants to the target rent would make the rent paid higher than the guideline rent. It was therefore proposed that the average weekly rent for dwellings for 2014/2015 should be set at the guideline rent of £82.06, an increase of 6.23% or £4.81 per week.

The dwelling rents formed the major element of income for the HRA. Each ½% rent increase was equivalent to approximately £117,300. 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 3.2% increase.

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee considered the 2014/2015 draft budget at its meeting on 21 January 2014 where no formal recommendations to change the HRA budget were made. The Tenants Services Management Board had also considered the report.

On the motion of Councillor Mrs Adkins, it was

**Resolved** that:-

(1) The Average Weekly Rent increase of 6.23% be approved; and

(2) The Housing Revenue Account budget for 2014/2015 be agreed.

**(g) Introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy in Taunton Deane – Regulation 123 List and Governance Arrangements**

Full Council had previously approved the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in Taunton Deane with effect from 1 April 2014.

Under Regulation 123 of the CIL Regulations, the Council was required to publish a list of the projects that it intended to finance using CIL receipts. The purpose of the list was to ensure that developers did not end up paying twice for the same piece of infrastructure.

The draft Regulation 123 list had now been prepared and included measures believed to be those most important for the delivery of the Council's Core Strategy. Affordable Housing was not within the scope of CIL and would continue to be delivered through Section 106 Agreements.

The Council would need to publish the Regulation 123 List on its website in time for the introduction of CIL on 1 April 2014. The list would be reviewed on a regular basis and an annual report on the collection, management and distribution of the CIL receipts would also need to be prepared.

It was recognised that the Council needed to have a process to determine how the CIL receipts should be spent, to agree on the timing of spend and to arrange the distribution of funds to partner organisations.

This was likely to take the form of a 'Governance Board' made up of Members to which an officer group would report. It had been agreed that the precise composition of the Board should be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation and the Shadow Portfolio Holder.

On the motion of Councillor Edwards, it was

**Resolved that:-**

- (1) Both the proposed Regulation 123 List and the suggested governance arrangements for the delivery of infrastructure and spending of CIL receipts, specifically the proposed Governance Board, be endorsed; and
- (2) The Regulation 123 List be formally adopted.

(The Chief Executive (Penny James), the Section 151 Officer (Shirlene Adam) and the Assistant Chief Executive (Shirlene Adam) all declared prejudicial interests in the following item and left the meeting during its consideration.)

**(h) 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 in 2012 and was considered by Scrutiny and the Executive before approval by Full Council. However, due to the fact that the document was largely unchanged for the third year, the 2014/2015 Statement had again been reported directly to Full Council.

The 2014/2015 Statement covered the 'joint working' arrangements with West Somerset Council and the approvals made by Council on 12 November 2013.

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

The Statement was also required to:-

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

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

**Resolved** that the Pay Policy Statement for 2014/2015 be approved.

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

Due to the lateness of the hour, the Mayor suggested that responses to questions asked of the Executive Councillors should be made in writing outside of the meeting and circulated to all Members. This was agreed.

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

Councillor Williams's report covered the following topics:-

- Flooding Events;
- Budget Setting;
- The Brewhouse Theatre and Arts Centre;
- Taunton Town Centre Rethink;
- Orchard Centre Development Proposals;
- Sale of former Taunton Youth and Community Centre Site;
- West Park Employment Site, Chelston; and
- Taunton Forward.

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

The report from Councillor Cavill covered:-

- The Brewhouse Theatre;
- New Inward Investment Website;
- Business Investment;
- Business Survey;
- Events;
- Taunton Town Centre Company and BID (Business Improvement District);
- Hinkley C;
- Somerset Growth Plan;
- Hestercombe House, Cheddon Fitzpaine, Taunton; and
- Asset Management.

(iii) **Environmental Services and Climate Change (Councillor Hunt)**

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

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

(iv) **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.

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

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

- Council House Building; and
- Housing Revenue Account Maintenance Contracts.

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

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

- Corporate and Client Services;
- Corporate Health and Safety;
- Customer Contact Centre;
- Health and Wellbeing;

- Legal and Democratic Services; and
- Revenues and Benefits.

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

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

- Planning Policy;
- Monkton Delivery Board;
- Duty to Cooperate – Mid Devon;
- Sandhill Park, Bishops Lydeard;
- Car Parking; and
- Communications.

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

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

- Flooding;
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- Halcon One Team – “Think differently, do differently”; and
- Other Priority Areas.

13. **Appointment of Civic Marshall**

Following the withdrawal of Councillor Mrs Adkins’s nomination, the item was deferred for further consideration.

(The meeting ended at 10.04 pm.)

# Appendix

## Voting \*

18. (1) All motions and amendments, unless the law otherwise requires, shall be decided by affirmation or by a show of hands, as the Mayor shall choose.
- (2) If before the Mayor calls for the vote, either,
- (a) the mover and seconder of the motion - or of the amendment, or,
  - (b) any councillor supported by the votes of at least a quarter of the councillors present,
- request that a Recorded Vote be taken, then votes shall be publicly declared, and recorded in the minutes.
- (3) In addition to the option under SO 18 (2), any member may require - immediately after a vote is taken - that the manner in which that member's vote was cast (for, against or abstaining) shall be recorded in the minutes.
- (4) Where a vote is taken upon the choice of more than two candidates for an appointment and there is not an absolute majority in favour of one candidate, the candidates receiving the least number of votes shall be excluded and a further vote taken, the procedure being continued until there is an absolute majority in favour of one candidate.
- (5) (a) in the case of an equality of votes, the Mayor shall have a second or casting vote.
- (b) The Mayor shall have unfettered discretion as to its use for against the proposition.
- (6) (a) Immediately after any vote is taken at a budget decision meeting there must be a recorded vote in the minutes of the proceedings of that meeting the names of the persons who cast a vote for the decision or against the decision or who abstained from voting.
- (b) "budget decision meeting" means the meeting at which the Council makes a calculation (whether originally or by substitute) in accordance with any sections 31A, 31B 34 to 36A, 42A 42B, 45 to 49, 52ZF, 52ZJ of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 or

## **Usual Declarations of Interest by Councillors**

### **Full Council**

- **Members of Somerset County Council – Councillors Mrs Baker, Coles, A Govier, Henley, Hunt, Prior-Sankey, A Wedderkopp and D Wedderkopp**
- **Employees of Somerset County Council – Councillors Mrs Hill 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 and Clerk to Milverton Parish Council – Councillor Wren**
- **Somerset Waste Board representatives – Councillors Hunt and 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 and a member of Taunton Forward – Councillor Farbahi**



- **Member of Taunton Forward – Councillor Horsley**
- **Director of the Taunton Town Centre Company – Councillor D Reed**
- **Employee of Somerset College – Councillor Miss James**

## **Standards Committee – Hearings Panel – 17 February 2014**

Present: Councillor Gwil Wren (Chairman)  
Councillors Jean Allgrove, Paul Tooze and Alan Wedderkopp

Officers: Bruce Lang (Monitoring Officer), Roy Pinney (Legal Services Manager) and Richard Bryant (Democratic Service Manager and Corporate Support Lead)

(The meeting commenced at 10 a.m.)

### **1. Complaint against Councillor Jefferson Horsley**

(The Hearings Panel considered the report of the former Monitoring Officer, Tonya Meers, in the absence of Councillor Horsley.)

Considered report previously circulated, which detailed the investigation undertaken by the former Monitoring Officer, Tonya Meers (“the Investigator”), into a complaint received in October 2013 against Councillor Horsley.

On 22 October 2013 a letter purporting to be from the Leader of the Council was sent to the press by Councillor Horsley via e-mail. The e-mail confirmed that he was sending private and confidential information.

Later the same day a complaint was received from the Leader of the Council, Councillor John Williams, stating that he wanted to make a complaint to the Standards Committee against Councillor Horsley who it was alleged had leaked what had turned out to be a fake letter to the press.

On the 24 October 2013 Councillor Mark Edwards used Public Question Time at the meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee to put the following questions to the Chairman, Councillor Horsley:-

- (a) Could the Chairman inform the meeting who sent him the forged letter purported to be from Councillor John Williams to Councillor Taylor of West Somerset Council which he then sent to the press?
- (b) Why did he not realise it was not an authentic letter as there were so many errors and why did he not make an effort to check to see if it was authentic?
- (c) Assuming that he actually believed that the fake letter was real being marked private and confidential, why did he then send the forged letter to the press?

Councillor Horsley had responded by stating that he would not reveal his sources. He said he regretted that he had not checked the letter’s authenticity but confirmed that he had sent it to the press as he believed the public had a right to know. He stated that he had withdrawn the letter when he realised it was a fake.

The report of the Investigator had concluded that there appeared to have been a breach of the Code of Conduct in respect of the following paragraphs:-

Paragraph 1.11 of the Code stated that a Member must not disclose information given to them in confidence by anyone, or information that is acquired by which they believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, except where –

- (a) they had the consent of a person authorised to give it;
- (b) they were required by law to do so;
- (c) the disclosure was made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agreed not to disclose the information to any other person; or
- (d) the disclosure was –
  - (i) reasonable and in the public interest; and
  - (ii) made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the Council; and
- (e) they had consulted the Monitoring Officer prior to its release.

In addition, Paragraph 1.13 of the Code stated that a Member should not conduct themselves in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing their office or the Council into disrepute.

In response to the complaint Councillor Horsley had sent an e-mail to the Investigator admitting to sending it to the press. However he had stated that he had sent it from his personal e-mail account and was therefore acting in his private capacity.

The Code of Conduct applied to Councillors when acting in their official capacity which included whenever they conducted business of the authority, claimed to act, or gave the impression they were acting in their official capacity or as a representative of the authority.

In this particular case, the letter clearly referred to Council business and, regardless of the fact that Councillor Horsley had used his private e-mail account this in itself did not mean that he was not acting as a Councillor when he sent it to the press as he regularly used his private e-mail account when conducting Council business.

The letter clearly related to the Business Case that was prepared concerning the sharing of services and management with West Somerset Council. Councillor Horsley sat on the Joint Members Advisory Panel connected to this project and was Leader of the opposition Group.

In addition, there was also evidence that Councillor Horsley had sent a copy of the letter to the other Members of his Political Group therefore it was clear that he was acting in his official capacity as a Councillor.

The Investigator had therefore recommended that the matter be referred straight to the Hearings Panel of the Standards Committee as Councillor Horsley had publicly admitted to sending confidential information to the press.

The Hearings Panel considered the Investigator's report in great detail although the absence of Councillor Horsley prevented the Panel from obtaining Councillor Horsley's input on aspects of his justification for his actions, in particular the issue of whether he had been acting in a private capacity or whether there was a case for the public to know about the contents of the letter.

Following much deliberation the Hearings Panel accepted that Councillor Horsley had not been acting in his private capacity and that he had not followed the procedures set out in the Code of Conduct, in particular by not consulting with the Monitoring Officer before releasing the confidential information.

In the view of the Legal Services Manager the Hearings Panel therefore had two options open to it:-

- (1) To accept the Investigator's view that Paragraph 1.11 of the Code of Conduct had been breached; or
- (2) To accept that Councillor Horsley had disclosed confidential information but that its disclosure was reasonable and in the public interest and had been made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the Council.

On the Chairman's casting vote, the Hearings Panel accepted Option (1), that there had been a breach of the Members' Code of Conduct.

After further discussions the Hearings Panel decided that the appropriate sanctions in this matter would be:-

- (a) To publish its findings, via the minutes of the meeting, which would be circulated to all Councillors;
- (2) To report its findings in a report to Full Council; and
- (3) For Councillor Horsley to attend a 'coaching session' with the Council's Monitoring Officer, Bruce Lang, to reinforce Councillor Horsley's understanding of the provisions of the Code of Conduct as far as the release of confidential information was concerned.

(The meeting ended at 12.10 p.m.)

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Council Meeting – 8 April 2014

### Part I

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

### Councillor Williams

#### South West Audit Partnership Governance Arrangements

Just over twelve months ago, Full Council supported the formation of the company South West Audit Partnership Limited.

Since the Company was formed, the representation on the Members Board has been undertaken by the Chairman of the Corporate Governance Committee.

Representation at officer level, as a Director on the Board, has been undertaken by the Deputy Section 151 Officer (with the Client and Corporate Services Manager acting as Alternate).

Clearly with the new Joint Management Team arrangements now in place the Council needs to amend this to reflect new roles and responsibilities.

This matter was considered by the Corporate Governance Committee on 10 March 2014 when it was agreed that the Assistant Director – Corporate Services who is responsible for the audit function should now be this Council's Director on the South West Audit Partnership Limited and that the "Alternate" should be the Assistant Director – Resources.

In the circumstances, it is **recommended** that the nominations of:-

- (a) The Assistant Director – Corporate Services (currently Richard Sealy) as this Council's Director on the Board of South West Audit Partnership Limited be approved; and
- (b) The Assistant Director – Resources (currently Paul Fitzgerald) as the Alternate Director be also approved.

# **Council Meeting – 8 April 2014**

## **Report of Councillor John Williams – Leader of the Council**

### **1. Flooding – Recovery Action**

- 1.1 Across Somerset we have now officially moved into “Recovery” mode so we now set about helping people through the difficult time ahead and ensure the Somerset Levels and Moors 20 year Action Plan is implemented so mitigating the risk in future years.
- 1.2 Somerset County Council is the lead authority on this and have already set up a “Leaders Implementation Group” with a whole range of relevant partners that will meet monthly to begin with to monitor progress. This will be supported by a “Programme Group” of senior officers of all authorities and partners meeting fortnightly who in turn will direct the “Delivery Group” who will report back fortnightly to officers on progress or any issues affecting workstreams.
- 1.3 As you will be aware from regular newsletters the organisation of dredging is well in hand and by the time of our meeting should have commenced. Also consideration of the design for the proposed alterations to the Sovey/Kings Sedgemoor Drainage System is already in hand with an aim to at least commence works by the end of 2014 and complete by April 2015. A challenging timescale but necessary!
- 1.4 The construction of a tidal barrier or sluice is now also recognised as being a major part of the solution to mitigate long term flooding of the Levels and Moors. Although a longer term project, it is very much part of the planning process to implement by 2024. A major barrier to overcome will be the substantial funding required for whatever design is proposed and this is where we will need Central Government support.
- 1.5 Government Ministers have taken a close interest in the plight of those suffering to date and have made it clear that they will be closely monitoring progress of the agreed 20 year Action Plan. This can only be good as it will allow us to feed back any issues or problems arising that Central Government need to help resolve.
- 1.6 In terms of the recovery to date as a Council we have ensured that all the various financial aid schemes announced by Government have been rolled out locally as soon as possible and the application forms made simple. Our sympathies are with those so badly afflicted by flooding or the affect of it so we have tried to ensure we do not add to the problems by layers of “red tape”!

- 1.7 In this respect I thank our officers for designing and rolling out the forms for the various schemes and then visiting the affected areas to promote and assist with completion of them. This to ensure funding was made available to those in need as soon as possible with the least fuss.

## **2. The Brewhouse Theatre and Arts Centre**

- 2.1 Taunton Theatre Association (TTA) has been busily working on The Brewhouse Theatre and is definitely on track for an April opening.
- 2.2 A plug for the first show booked - The Gang Show 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary showing 8-12 April 2014 - tickets available through Taunton Tourist Information Centre. This has always been recognised as a high quality, high energy, production. Do try and attend.
- 2.3 Following this is the Young Musical Theatre Company (YMTC) production of High School Musical on 16-19 April 2014, involving youth groups based in Taunton. Bookings available from web site <http://www.ymtcgroup.com/> and again a high quality production I commend to you.
- 2.4 Without wishing to steal the Mayor's thunder the Mayor's Variety Show is also booked into The Brewhouse for two performances on Saturday 26 April 2014. Details of the programme to follow but I understand it will be headlined by Howard Jones.
- 2.5 The formal opening and full programme is planned for around September 2014 to give time to plan events and secure the future but a series of smaller events are planned over the summer period so please do check on the TTA web site.

## **3. Taunton Town Centre Rethink**

- 3.1 The proposals put forward in the above document have generally been welcomed by many but obviously not universally welcomed by all. Any proposals made are yet to be considered through a planning application and the full consultation process associated with it. One thing is certain that all our studies show that Taunton needs a substantial increase in retail space from now until 2028, this from a Retail Impact Study carried out in 2013.
- 3.2 The risk of not making adequate provision is that applications for "out of town" retail uses would be very difficult to resist and this could impact on us as early as 2016.
- 3.3 The estimated increase in retail space requirements is as follows:-
- 2013 to 2018 about 41,600 sq ft;

2019 to 2023 about 125,000 sq ft; and

2024 to 2028 about 188,000 sq ft.

- 3.4 This projected requirement is the imperative to allocate provision of suitable, viable and achievable town centre sites by 2016, unless we want to run the risk of some major stores seeking to relocate out of town. The result of this would be an inevitable detrimental impact on our town centre retail trade so all must be done to avoid this.

#### **4. Sale of Taunton Youth and Community Centre (TYCC) Site**

- 4.1 LIDL are now fully signed up, subject to planning consent, for the purchase of the redundant Youth Centre site and it has been approved by Executive 12 March which is now the subject of a “call in” to be heard 24 April 2014.
- 4.2 We will need to hear the arguments why the Executive decision should not be supported before we can decide the way forward but in the meantime no further action can be taken to progress this vital regeneration site and bring in substantial income for the TYCC Trustees and this Council.

#### **5. West Somerset Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council Shared Services**

- 5.1 This project is proceeding well and on track to deliver the annual net savings of £1,880,000 for both Councils. Our progress is being followed by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Association and feedback is very positive about what has already been achieved and our programme for the future. This is very heartening to receive considerable support from these sources.
- 5.2 A brief summary of where we are:-
- Business Case fully approved and Joint Chief Executive in place.
  - Joint Senior Management structure now in place with savings to General Fund of approx 22% per year.
  - Service managers and supervisory structure designed and ready to be implemented by summer 2014.
- 5.3 The changes outlined above and the next steps in joining our officer structures are delivering the initial £1,880,000 savings but for the future we are confident we can achieve further substantial savings by the transformation of delivery of services across both Councils. We are



also actively seeking opportunities to share services on a much wider basis across Somerset and even wider across County boundaries. At present Legal Services and Building Control are being progressed with other authorities.

## **6. COACH Project**

6.1 COACH (Centre for Outdoor Activities and Community Hub) is a new voluntary organisation that certainly supports the aims and aspirations of the Council for healthy living and to promote the River Tone as an important venue for sporting and recreational activities.

6.2 We have already supported the project by agreeing a 125 year lease on land for the proposed club house and centre and £45,000 towards the design and a planning application which has now been granted. The aims of the COACH are:-

- All about establishing and developing a youth, community, activity and education hub;
- Engaging with young people of all abilities and the wider community, in healthy and active lifestyles, outdoor and/or community activities; and
- Engaging with other local providers and partners to meet the needs of the community.

6.3 These aims and aspirations of COACH have been fully supported by the Trustees of the old TYCC who have entrusted us to disburse their capital receipt for the TYCC on youth related projects within Taunton Deane. Once the call in is resolved about the decision to sell the TYCC site we can then determine how we move forward and bring details to Members for consideration.

## **7. Firepool, Taunton**

7.1 The planning application for reserved matters on 49 dwellings at Firepool has now been approved and work on these will commence when Somerset County Council no longer need the car park for the NIDR works. It is estimated that this will be around September 2014 which we welcome. This will take up most of the existing car park so trigger the requirement for our development partner, St Modwen, to provide 200 spaces elsewhere on the market site.

7.2 We are in the process of resolving land ownership problems so we can construct the new access to the site off the NIDR and ensure ownership of land for potential development planned under the Taunton Town Centre Rethink plan.

## **8. Hinkley Deal**

- 8.1 Discussions are still continuing with the Government to finalise a 'deal' to capture wider economic and infrastructure benefits associated with the new nuclear development at Hinkley Point. The deal has been developed in partnership with the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership and was submitted to the Government earlier this year.
- 8.2 Many of the schemes within the Taunton Growth Prospectus and Somerset Growth Plan (such as enhancement of Taunton Railway Station) feature in the Hinkley Deal and will provide an important platform for external funding bids to bring these projects to fruition.
- 8.3 Further details on the Hinkley deal will be reported as discussions with the Government approach a conclusion in the coming weeks.

Councillor John Williams

# Council Meeting - 8 April 2014

## Report of Councillor Jane Warmington - Community Leadership

1. I thought it might be interesting to record one of the Community Updates which were coming out daily during the worst of the flooding but now are updated every few days when something changes. General Advice on Recovery is also available and appears very comprehensive.

Taunton Deane Staff are continuing to help and two of our Revenue and Benefits Staff were some of the first visitors to Burrowbridge once they could safely wade there to visit all the residents.

### **Community Update – Somerset Levels Flooding**

**Wednesday, 26 March 2014**

For the latest version of this update, visit [www.somersetnewsroom.com](http://www.somersetnewsroom.com)

For latest weather forecasts, visit the Met Office [www.metoffice.gov.uk](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk)

For flood warnings, visit [www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk) or call 0345 988 1188.

**\*\*\*Latest news\*\*\***

#### **Flood drop-in surgery at Canalside**

The weekly flood drop-in surgery will take place at the Canalside Conference this evening. The sessions run from 6pm-8pm and are an opportunity for anyone affected by the flooding of the Levels and Moors to get advice and practical support from a variety of organisations.

The Flood Assistance Centre is now also at the Canalside, from 4pm-8pm, providing help with everything from insurance claims to emotional support.

Representatives from BT will be at the meeting this evening to deal with enquiries from residents and businesses.

#### **Environment Agency**

Dredging is on target to start at the beginning of next week. It will start near Moorland House Farm and machines are due to start arriving at the site from midweek this week.

#### **A372 will reopen**

The A372 at Seven Bends near Othery will reopen after 5pm today. Traffic lights will be used for a few days to allow the final repairs to be completed.

#### **Burrowbridge – Taunton Deane Borough Council presence**

Help HQ at the Old School in Burrowbridge is staffed Monday to Saturday from 9am-5pm. A Taunton Deane Borough Council officer will be there on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, this week from 10am-4pm.

### **Donations centre**

The Donations Centre at the old Somerfield distribution centre at Huntworth Business Park, Bridgwater for the victims of the flooding has reduced its opening hours to 10am-3pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. The centre is no longer open on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. If you have been affected by the flooding and need supplies, the Centre has a variety of items that may be useful to you - from food and toiletries, to clothes and bedding. Please bring ID with you just so that we can confirm your address.

## **2. Family Focus (Troubled Families Programme)**

- 2.1 Taunton Deane/West Somerset (TD/WS) Family Focus (FF) continues to exceed the Government target for the number of families attached to the Troubled Families Programme. There are now 290 attached (target 262 by March 2015) with an additional £60,000 of attachment funding to support continuing work.
- 2.2 We know from the work the Halcon One Team are doing that there are many more families in need than were initially identified from the Government statistics.
- 2.3 Two new FF Workers started work on 18 March 2014 and are based at Hillside Children's Centre in Priorswood bringing the total up to eight across TD/WS. This is to develop relationships and encourage referrals from North Taunton.
- 2.4 Project activity has now been extended into the West Deane Area and families have now begun to be attached from Wiveliscombe.
- 2.5 Successful outcomes so far include reducing (and sustaining reduced) anti-social behaviour and truancy, 117 cases in TD (47 in WS). These have been submitted to Government this April to draw down around £144,000 (of success money) to continue to work with more families.
- 2.6 Both FF Leaflets published for Practitioners and Families are proving popular.
- 2.7 Work is continuing in particular to explore and quantify critical gaps in service provision with specialist support services (such as Mental Health) with a combined push from FF Strategic Group, Halcon One Team and West Somerset Council and is now starting to see results; to develop a Family Exit Strategy and to agree a means of capturing and measuring 'soft success' (such as improved self esteem, parenting skills, routines and general well-being).

## **3. Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Plan 2014-2017 - Be Safe Feel Safe**

- 3.1 The Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner has produced one overall Police and Crime Plan and one each for all nine of the Local Authorities across the Force Area. A copy of the Taunton Deane Police and Crime Plan can be found in the Members Room or viewed at:-

<http://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/Document-Library/Police-and-Crime-Plan-14/TAUNTONDEANE.pdf>

## **4. Voluntary and Community Sector Grants**

- 4.1 Fifty two applications have been received totalling bids for £198,000 with twenty nine of these scoring above average and prioritised for funding. Four awards have been allocated already from the small amount remaining in this years budget.
- 4.2 In order to maximise Taunton Deane's support for the Voluntary Sector, appropriate grant applications are first passed to the Tenants Forum for consideration and the Taunton Unparished Fund Panel (those scoring below average were also shared). The latter now considers all bids for Youth Funds as well.
- 4.3 The few health related bids have been initially directed to the Taunton Deane Partnership's (one off gifted) Health and Wellbeing Fund. Any remaining unfunded (above average scoring) bids are then supported from the Strategy Budget. This enables the most appropriate budget to contribute and more of the bids to be supported.
- 4.4 Announcements will be made in the Weekly Bulletin later in the month after the Taunton Unparished Fund Panel has met again. Last year, the Voluntary Sector received small grants support totalling nearly £90,000.

## **5. Somerset Health Map**

- 5.1 The LINK Legacy Document (March 2013) has in it a rather useful map/tool to find your way around the myriad of organisations that contribute to making up our Health Service:-

[www.somersetlink.org.uk](http://www.somersetlink.org.uk); Click on - The Story of Somerset LINK: Our Legacy Document. The Map is on Page 24.

- 5.2 “The LINK legacy is the story and impact of the Local Involvement Network. It is the benefits, learning and achievements that the LINK will pass on when it ceases to exist as a statutory network in April 2013. This legacy will continue the journey of promoting the voice of local people in the future of health and social care. Many of these benefits will have particular relevance for community engagement initiatives going forward but there will also be wider significance to commissioners, service providers and local accountability mechanisms.” Department of Health.
- 5.3 The Somerset LINK Legacy Document is part of the handover to Healthwatch Somerset. This document summarises what the LINK has learnt. It captures the ‘organisational memory’ to be passed on to the new Healthwatch organisation. It helps to ensure a smooth transition from the old organisation – the Somerset LINK – to the new organisation – Healthwatch Somerset. This Legacy Document presents key lessons for the future and captures the knowledge of local people who have been involved in the LINK at all levels. A legacy is important because it captures what we have learnt, celebrates what we have achieved, supports our transition to a new organisation and avoids the feeling of ‘unfinished business’.

## **6. Children's Centres**

- 6.1 Somerset County Council has almost finished consulting across the Children's Centres where locally there were concerns that these might close. Two sessions were arranged at each, morning and evening for anyone to drop into and make their views known.
- 6.2 There is a plan to develop those Children's Centres serving our more disadvantaged areas into Early Help Hubs co-locating a number of different frontline agencies in them to better serve the local communities. Both TD Senior Officers and the Portfolio Holder have had an input into this County Council process.

## 7. Voluntary and Community Sector Support

- 7.1 **Engage** is pleased to announce that it will be working in partnership with Taunton Deane Borough Council to provide a package of support services to Voluntary and Community Groups in the Taunton Deane area. Engage's support and development services are available now and include:-
- Advice on funding sources and preparing an effective application;
  - Help with business and financial planning;
  - Advice on legal structures and governance;
  - Provision of model policies and templates;
  - Provision of general advice, guidance and information; and
  - Signposting to services and other similar groups for further support
- 7.2 The service is independent and tailored to the particular needs of each group. For more information please call: 01643 707123 or email: [jan@engagews.org.uk](mailto:jan@engagews.org.uk).
- 7.3 Periodic information will be sent out via email. If you would like to register for updates, please e-mail John on: [information@engagews.org.uk](mailto:information@engagews.org.uk) with your organisation name and contact details.
- 7.4 Other services that will commence during April are:- Volunteer Centres at both Taunton Library on Tuesdays from 9.30am to 12.30pm and at Careers South West, 3 Mendip House, High Street, Taunton on Tuesdays from 1pm to 4pm to promote volunteering opportunities and processing of applications for the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.
- 7.5 They are currently setting up these services and will be updating their website. They are also in the process of creating a database of volunteering opportunities. If you would like more information or to register your organisation and volunteering opportunities, please call: 01643 707123 or [tauntonvolunteers@engagews.org.uk](mailto:tauntonvolunteers@engagews.org.uk).

Councillor Jane Warmington

# **Council Meeting – 8 April 2014**

## **Report of Councillor Norman Cavill – Economic Development, Asset Management, Arts and Tourism**

### **1. Business Support and Networking**

#### **Investor Forum**

- 1.1 On Tuesday, 25 March 2014 the Council hosted a forum for local commercial property agents and employment land developers. 13 businesses attended the event to discuss with the Leader of the Council and the Director for Growth and Development the future development prospects in Taunton Deane, and the obstacles that investors sometimes confront. The event was well received by the businesses present and officers will follow up the meeting with continuing dialogue on a 1:1 basis.

#### **Procurement event**

- 1.2 A very successful event promoting local procurement opportunities was held on Wednesday, 26 March 2014 at the Cricket Club. 97 businesses registered for the event which was designed to give local businesses the opportunity to get an insight to public sector procurement.
- 1.3 The audience were told of websites and portals where they need to register their businesses to be in for a chance of winning public sector contracts, were informed about the tender process itself and given some top tips for a successful application. The speakers were Southwest One, Musgrove Park Hospital (re NHS) and Somerset Chamber (re EDF). The 92 businesses that attended were very positive in their comments of the event and of Taunton Deane.

#### **Inward Investment Enquiries**

- 1.4 Since 1 January 2014 there have been 13 Inward investment enquiries – two have come to fruition creating four jobs. There are still four continuing enquiries looking for suitable premises, with good potential for larger employment.
- 1.5 In Taunton Town Centre Paddy Power is in the process of opening a new betting shop on North Street, and Warren James, Jewellers, has opened a unit in The Orchard Centre.

#### **Business Grants**

##### **New Business Grant and Rural Retailer awards**

- 1.6 Applications to the New Business Grant are considered on a quarterly basis. During the most recent round, ending on 28 February 2014, I agreed to support the following applications:-

- £500 to Rah Cattell of Wiveliscombe towards the cost of a laptop and marketing for her dance business;
- £500 to Mrs Lucilia Santos of Bishops Hull towards the cost of vital equipment for a new Portuguese Restaurant being set up in Taunton Town Centre. The equipment to be purchased includes a cash register, dishwasher and a meat slicing machine;
- £500 to the Taunton Theatre Association towards the cost of a new server system to ensure all business areas are fully integrated to enable the necessary future marketing to take place;
- £500 to Florica Tiplea of St Andrew's View, Taunton towards the cost of marketing materials and a website for her Trust Inventory business;
- £500 to Nia Lawrence of Allington Close, Taunton towards the cost of a new studio light, a back-drop and some publicity for her photography business "Fun 'n' fotos";
- £500 to Nicole Kirbyshire of Albemarle Road, Taunton towards the cost of a new sewing machine for her business 'Vintage Happiness';
- £500 to Matthew Mears of Macky Bikes, Milverton towards the cost of some tools to enhance his business offer;
- £500 to Simon Atkinson of Chez Amis Restaurant, Bridge Street, Taunton towards the cost of a new till system and cash Register;
- £243 to Thomas Vick of Ducks Go Quack, Wells Close, Taunton towards the cost of promotional items that will help raise the profile of his new clothing business;
- £350.75 to Liz Hutchin of Busylizzie Art and Literacy Limited, Waterleaze, Taunton towards the cost of a website and promotional materials which will increase the brand awareness of the company;
- £500 to Becky Shaw of Artistrokes, Milton Road, Taunton, towards the cost of a website to launch her new business that offer her clients sensory development to succeed in their lives whilst experiencing learning and physical disabilities; and
- £500 to Emma Rickards-Tilley, Youngs Oak, Wrantage towards the cost of a new treatment couch for her acupuncture business.

At the time of writing the following three businesses await the end of the call-in period:-

- £200 to Jane Birch of Arundells Way, Creech St Michael towards the cost of a bread making machine for her new business;
- £500 to Nicola Everett of Moor Lane, Churchinford, towards the cost of a laptop for her new marketing business; and
- £500 Peter Markiewicz, Massington Park towards the cost of a website for his business 'Buy my Shrimp'.

A grant has also been made from the Council's Rural Retail Fund:-

- £2,000 to Ruth Barclay of The Rock Inn, Waterrow, Nr Wiveliscombe towards the cost of a new website that will deliver savings to the business and enhance their presence on the worldwide web;



- 1.7 These grants bring the year's awards to a total of £16,000 from the Business Grant Fund and £6,000 from the Rural Retail Fund. A contribution of £2,000 has also been made to a business mentoring programme, delivered by Cornerstone Enterprise Support Limited, offering mentoring to businesses across Taunton Deane.

### **Investment Grant**

- 1.8 £72,000 has been committed to businesses to date (£40,000 to Ministry of Cake and £32,000 for Rigid).
- 1.9 The grant is a valuable source of assistance to attract investors to Taunton Deane. One such conversation is currently underway with a potential investor who is hoping to buy property near Taunton with a view to creating 46 jobs in the construction sector.

### **Flooding Business Support Grant**

- 1.10 The Economic Development Team has been busy visiting businesses affected by the recent flooding on the Somerset Levels. In excess of 60 businesses were visited during the first week of March 2014 to promote the new Business Support Grant. The grant is available to all small and medium sized businesses that have been affected by the floods and suffered an adverse effect on their activities/lost a significant amount of trade.
- 1.11 Officers are working closely with colleagues in our Revenues and Benefits Team to ensure Taunton Deane businesses are benefiting from the relevant schemes open to them at this difficult time. To date 34 have been approved, 28 have sent for payment and we are waiting for bank details from six more. Should there be funding left we have applications from another two businesses that fall outside of the priority parishes.

## **2. Taunton Town Centre Company and BID (Business Improvement District)**

- 2.1 Members will be aware that the proposal for a BID in Taunton Town Centre was rejected in the ballot of businesses at the end of February 2014. The Council gave its strong support for the BID, seeing it as an opportunity to deliver an extensive programme of events and marketing activities, with the £1,400,000 that it could have raised. It is therefore disappointing that businesses have rejected the BID proposal.
- 2.2 Subsequent to the BID result the Leader and I met with representatives of the Taunton Town Centre Company (TTCC) Board to discuss the way forward. The onus was on the company to demonstrate a realistic plan to deliver town centre management, drawing upon the Council's financial input, its own earned income, and other sources of finance. The Company was unable to achieve that and took the decision to cease trading. The company will be

formally liquidated in mid April 2014 and is currently disposing of the assets in its ownership.

- 2.3 The Council's HR Team is offering confidential support to those members of the TTCC team who are affected by the closure of the company.
- 2.4 I am discussing with officers in the Economic Development Team and others for the way forward to support events and marketing in the town centre. Councillor David Reed, who was formerly the Council's representative on the TTCC Board, has kindly agreed to continue to play a role in coordinating our involvement in the Taunton Town Centre. Councillor Reed will work with officers' to agree a strategy on how we might continue to support external organisations that plan to deliver events.

### **3. The Brewhouse Theatre**

- 3.1 The Taunton Theatre Trust (TTA) is currently operating under a Tenancy at Will agreement that expires at the end of April 2014 and a Funding Agreement regarding £46,000 start up funding from the 2013/2014 financial year. Officers are liaising with the TTA over a 10 year lease and a longer term funding agreement. Both documents are still to be completely agreed and will be resolved before the end of April.
- 3.2 The TTA has had access to The Brewhouse since mid February, and during that time has undertaken extensive cleaning to the property and renewal of contents and equipment, drawing upon an army of volunteers from Taunton. Three shows are planned in April, namely, The Gang Show, High School Musical and The Mayor's Variety Show (Tone Talent). The Tourist Information Centre is acting as ticket agent for the Gang Show and the Musical.

### **4. Marketing and Tourist Information, Ticket and Travel Centre (TIC) Update**

#### **Marketing activities and business support**

- 4.1 A £2,000,000 severe weather response fund was established by Visit England in late February in response to the impact the bad weather and media coverage was having on business and bookings. The fund contained a number of strands including a series of Business Support workshops and a "Book England" campaign in the run up to Easter.
- 4.2 The Marketing and Tourist Information Lead and Economic Development Projects Officer have been working with the Somerset Tourism Association (STA) who is coordinating the activities in the County to ensure our accommodation providers and attractions are represented at both the workshops and promoted in any of the marketing campaigns.
- 4.3 Willows and Wetland Centre – Councillor Slattery and I visited the centre in

early March with officers from the Economic Development team to discuss ways we could help and support their plans for expansion in the future.

- 4.4 Meetings have been held with Apple FM, the 'COOL' Tourism Project, Hestercombe Gardens, Museum of Somerset, Taunton Shakespeare Festival, a possible new cultural festival in Taunton in 2015, Tone FM and "Love Weston" to discuss opportunities and how we can help promote their events and activities taking place in the area and work together.
- 4.5 A new Tourism website for Taunton Deane is planned and will go live before the summer.
- 4.6 Social media continues to be a good way of getting our message out (especially during the flooding and now we are all open for business), the @TauntonBusiness account now has 860 followers, @TauntonTIC 2,080 followers.

### **TIC Update**

- 4.7 The TIC has had its annual refresh in preparation for the new season ahead. New displays and tourism material have arrived and will all be in place before Easter.
- 4.8 The TIC Team hosted a Travel and Tourism Student from Bridgwater College in late March on a two week work placement and are keen to support students looking for work experience.
- 4.8 The re-opening of The Brewhouse Theatre in April 2014 has seen a very positive reaction from customers to the TIC who is acting as the box office for a number of the events taking place since the TTA took over the Theatre. This has included enquiries from people looking to volunteer and help. Tickets for the Mayor's Tone Talent Variety Show on the 26 April 2014 are now on sale in the office.

### **TIC visitor numbers and spend**

- 4.9 Despite the poor weather, the TIC has maintained a steady throughput and income over the last few months. Customer spend is encouraging and initiatives are planned by the TIC Team to try and grow this throughout the year. This will include participating in the Visit England 'Holidays at Home are GREAT' campaign which encourages people to stay and holiday at home.

Councillor Norman Cavill

# **Council Meeting – 8 April 2014**

## **Report of Councillor James Hunt – Environmental Services and Climate Change**

### **1. Environmental Health / Licensing**

- 1.1 The new Dog Warden Service, which will be operated by Somerset Dog Wardens, part of St Giles Kennels and Cattery based in Wrantage, is due to have gone live on Tuesday, 2 April 2014.
- 1.2 As mentioned in the last report the Food Teams continue to be on course for completing all of the 'High Risk' inspections (those rated A-C) for the 2013-2014 period.
- 1.3 The team is being proactive on food safety and Senior Environmental Health Officer Sarah Khan has visited St. Georges Primary School to provide a talk on food hygiene to the children.

### **2. Deane DLO / Flooding**

- 2.1 The Somerset Levels 'Major Incident' officially moved from the Response phase into Recovery on 14 March 2014. This saw Avon and Somerset Constabulary hand the lead co-ordinator baton to Somerset County Council (SCC).
- 2.2 SCC has established a 'Recovery Working Group' involving all agencies and authorities. Activities are being channelled through four work streams:-
  - Health and Housing;
  - Business Help;
  - Waste and Transport; and
  - Communications

which is underpinned by a Support Group. We are represented on all four, with Ian Timms (Assistant Director Business and Development) leading on our behalf.

- 2.3 In some ways 'Recovery' is more complicated than 'Response' as we try to provide the appropriate continuing assistance communities and individuals need - in an environment which is producing a number of challenges and perceptions. It is a priority for the Council and we must not lose sight of this as we happily lose sight of the floodwaters themselves.
- 2.4 Quite a few of our service teams have been involved on both Response and Recovery. To try and name them all would inevitably mean missing some. However, I would like to highlight all those at Deane DLO who were our

frontline with the community in delivering sandbags, temporary toilets and other items in all winds and weathers and at all times of day and night. They are now dealing with the physical aspects of the clear up, collecting sandbags, road sweeping and litter picking.

- 2.5 I would particularly like to mention John Lewis, Parking and Civil Contingencies Manager, for the many additional hours he has worked and his dedication to his task during this period.

### **3. Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP)**

- 3.1 The Waste Board met last month and considered reports on service reviews, fees and charges and quarterly performance. We examined a very comprehensive Risk Register showing what the main issues for continuing service delivery are, (unsurprisingly) the state of Local Government finance and the commercial environment in which the service provider operates.
- 3.2 The Board approved the extension of the Strategic Partnering agreement between SCC and Viridor to 2021. This gives SWP the ability to discuss with Viridor how the service, particularly the disposal side, will develop over the coming years with the aim of embracing new technologies to reduce our dependence on landfill.
- 3.3 On the ground SWP have resumed all services, full kerbside recycling, refuse, clinical, assisted and paid for garden waste collections. In areas still disrupted by flooding or where there are obstructions, recycling and refuse collections are being rerouted to reach as many houses as possible.
- 3.4 SWP is also arranging the provision of communal waste skips, at central points as directed by the local communities where appropriate to aid with the clean-up, although these are not being provided to individual households.

Councillor James Hunt

# **Council Meeting – 8 April 2014**

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

### **1. Parks**

- 1.1 The parks are looking remarkable considering the wet winter. I think that Spring is perhaps when they look their best with the bright bulbs, blossom and fresh green buds about to burst.
- 1.2 At the recent Friends of Vivary meeting I was pleased to hear of their plans for the Easter Egg Hunt on Easter Sunday. They also agreed to fund the replacement of two trees that have been lost over the winter.
- 1.3 A new group has recently met for the second time – the Vivary Park Partnership has been formed as a forum for the main partners of the park to meet and discuss issues and plan major events that will affect all. The group has agreed to meet quarterly.

### **2. Community Leisure and Play**

- 2.1 Station Road Pool Refurbishment – Work has been progressing very well but has been a little delayed by a couple of leaky valves that required divers to carry out a difficult replacement of the valves affected. All of the water treatment plant and air treatment plant is now complete; the vast filters have been fully refurbished and now contain a lorry load of new sand! And I have never seen such large smart red boilers! Areas taking shape now are the reception area, the steam room & sauna and the changing village. Tiling is also started in the pool hall, but as the ceiling is still being finished this is carrying on around the scaffolding. Tone have been shown work in progress and are very pleased with the quality of finish, the pool manager is excited to get in and looking forward to opening.

### **3. Tone Leisure (Taunton Deane) Limited Activities**

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

#### **Active Lifestyles**

##### 321 Running Initiatives

- 3.2 In partnership with Somerset County Council and Run England, Tone has set up routes in Vivary Park to encourage more people to engage in running. These routes are for people to follow individually and at their own convenience. The routes consist of 1 km, 2 km and 3 km and will be live by Easter.

### Boccia for Older People

- 3.3 Tone has taken on delivery of Boccia in active living centres and groups across Taunton Deane. Somerset Activity Sports Partnership (SASP) is kindly providing the equipment needed to offer this. This has been rolled out in partnership with Knightstone Housing and Somerset You Can Do.

### Children's Centres

- 3.4 Tone is working with Young Parents' groups in three children's centres in Taunton Deane to encourage a healthy lifestyle and increased physical activity levels for the parents and the children; providing Change4life resources to the families and offering nutritional support and advice with follow ups every six months.

### **Facility News**

#### Wellsprings Leisure Centre

- 3.5 A new three year contract has been agreed with Food4You to continue supplying the catering and bistro service for the Taunton Contract.
- 3.6 The Friday Vibe youth night continues to grow and, through funding, two new table tennis tables have been purchased.
- 3.7 James Quirk celebrated 10 years of his Circuit class which is part of the Pro Active Phase 4 Cardiac Rehabilitation. This made the Somerset County Gazette, which also included Robert Rowling who was the first to sign up 10 years ago and is still attending!

#### Blackbrook Pavilion

- 3.8 The Sport Relief event took place at Blackbrook Pavilion on Sunday, 23 March 2014. Over 150 people turned up to walk, skip or run the various distances.

#### Wellington Sports Centre

- 3.9 Handover for the new Health Suite and Reception redevelopment is set for early April. The front-of-house has been significantly revamped, with the introduction of two new Fast Track terminals that will allow customers quick entry into classes and the gym.
- 3.10 The final phase of these works to upgrade the vending area, funded by Section 106 Agreement monies, will commence after the Easter holidays.

Councillor Catherine Herbert

# **Council Meeting – 8 April 2014**

## **Report of Councillor Mrs Jean Adkins – Housing Services**

### **1. Housing Enabling**

#### **1.1 Parmin Close**

The decant is almost complete. This scheme is to provide Extra Care Housing for which Government Grant has been awarded. It has been in the pipeline for a number of years and I would like to pay tribute to the tenacity of our Enabling Team and also our partners, Knightstone Housing Association.

#### **1.2 Victoria Gate Phase 2**

This is on course for completion in March 2015, providing 48 units.

### **2. Affordable Housing Target**

2.1 Year End completions are likely to be in the region of 170 – 180 Affordable Homes. FirstBuy stopped in June 2013 and Help to Buy is not a qualifying product which has impacted on the figures.

2.2 Around 25 units have been delayed owing to a variety of reasons including the recent poor weather conditions and technical issues.

2.3 This is a little short of the target of 200, but does not represent a loss of homes, merely that they cannot be counted towards the 2013/2014 target as they cannot be handed over in year.

### **3. Local Authority Housing Review: Call for Evidence**

3.1 An independent review that is examining the role that local authorities can play in supporting housing supply has launched a call for evidence and all local housing authorities are invited to participate.

The call for evidence can be accessed through the review's homepage at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/policy-advisory-groups/review-of-local-authorities-role-in-housing-supply>



#### **4. Estates Management – Welfare Reform**

- 4.1 The number of tenants affected is 373 as at February 2014, however this is subject to change on a daily basis due to tenants going on or coming off of Benefits. Due to year end we have yet to have an updated list for March although this is due to be produced soon.
- 4.2 100 tenants have now been identified as wanting to downsize:-
- One Direct Match approved and completed;
  - 33 successful moves on Choice Based Lettings completed;
  - One successful bid pending a move on Choice Based Letting;
  - One Mutual Exchange being processed; and
  - 16 Mutual Exchanges completed.
- 4.3 Welfare Reform Support Guidance has now been put in place to assist tenants wishing to mutual exchange. We will be offering help and support to them and in certain cases we may help to reduce/clear any debts owing to the Council which would normally be a barrier to them completing an exchange.

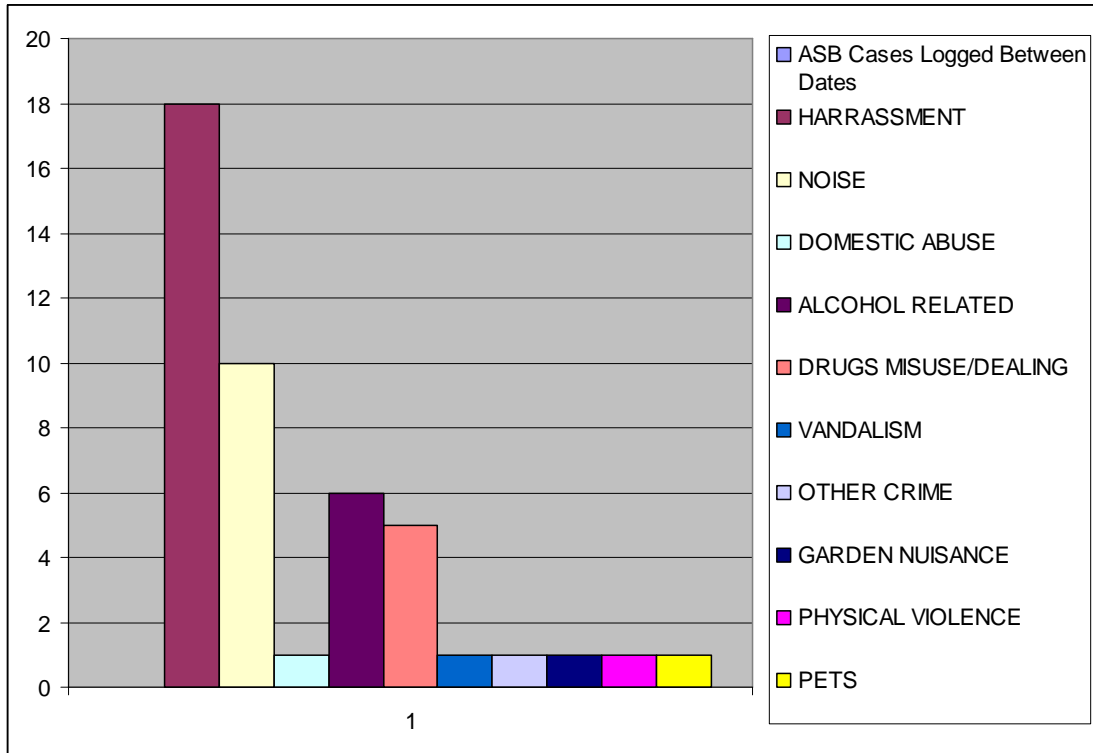
#### **5. Estates Management – Rent Arrears**

- 5.1 In previous reports I stated that as anticipated the Welfare Reforms have had an effect on tenant arrears which rose from £32,094 in April 2013 with 94 of the affected tenants already in rent arrears. May, June and July saw arrears rise, as expected, reaching a peak of £51,881.25.
- 5.2 However the next two months saw a reduction and small fluctuations thereafter, standing at £38,960.40 on 1 February 2014. I am hopeful that this will be further reduced by year end.
- 5.3 The fact that our rent arrears have been controlled in this way is due to the hard work put in by the Welfare Reform Officer and the Estates Team.

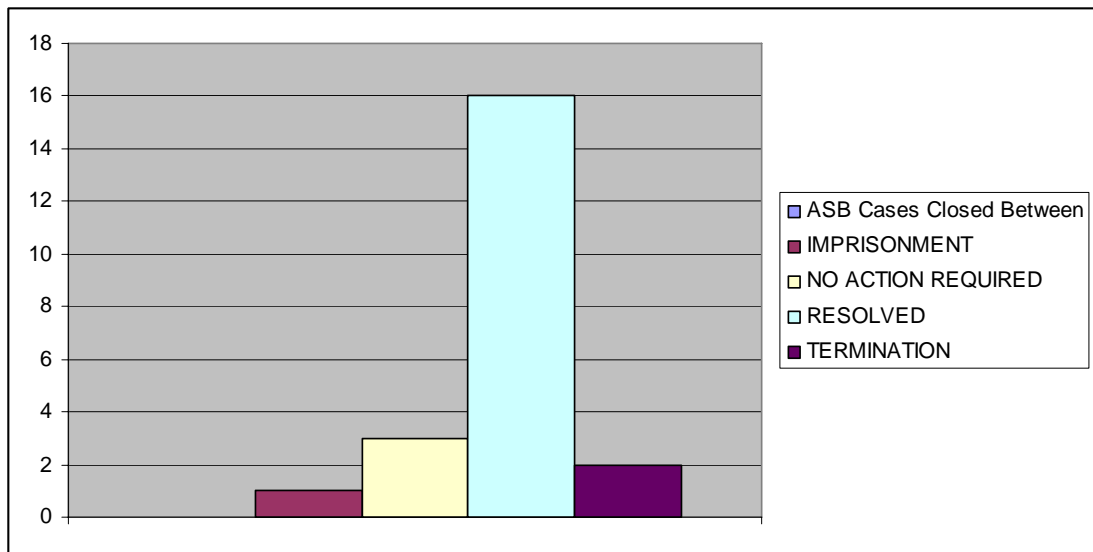
#### **6. Estates Management- Antisocial Behaviour**

See next page.

### 6.1 ASB cases recorded between 01/11/13 – 31/01/14



### 6.2 ASB Cases Closed between 01/11/13 – 31/01/14



6.3 These graphs tell the story better than I can. I am very happy that the majority of cases are resolved, rather than punitive action being required.

NB "Termination" means ending the tenancy!!

Councillor Mrs Jean Adkins

# **Council Meeting - 8 April 2014**

## **Report of Councillor Mrs Vivienne Stock-Williams - Corporate Resources**

### **1. Corporate and Client Services**

#### **Corporate Services**

- 1.1 The focus for the past couple of months has been on continuing to consolidate the functions moving into the new joint Corporate Services theme and on completing the design of the tiers 4/5 structure. The latter has been completed and will be released for consultation in early April 2014.

#### **Client Team**

- 1.2 The Client Team continue to monitor day-to-day service delivery of the services remaining in Southwest One. In addition, we are continuing to monitor the potential impact of the IBM/SYNNEX deal. Work is being progressed with all the Southwest One partners to look at succession planning options for the end of the contract in 2017.

#### **Corporate Performance and Risk Management**

- 1.3 The Corporate Risk Registers for both Taunton Deane and West Somerset Council have now been amalgamated and agreed with the Joint Management Team (JMT). This joint register was reviewed by the Corporate Governance Committee on 10 March 2014. Work is currently progressing in relation to refreshing the corporate performance reporting processes to take account of the restructure of services.

#### **HR**

- 1.4 The key focus for the HR Team has remained the day-to-day provision of the HR service and providing significant HR support for the Joint Management and Shared Services project.

#### **Strategic and Retained ICT**

- 1.5 The Retained Strategic ICT Officer continues to provide strategic ICT support to the Authority, manage the ICT functions not provided by Southwest One and to assist in monitoring the ICT element of the Southwest One contract.

- 1.6 Work is progressing in relation to IT support for a number of key projects (Joint Management and Shared Services, the rollout of the Windows 7 upgrade and PSN compliance).

## **2. Corporate Health and Safety**

### **Corporate Health and Safety Team**

- 2.1 The Health and Safety Advice service was brought back into Taunton Deane from Southwest One at the start of 2013. Catrin Brown and Kate Woollard have been providing Health and Safety advice to the organisation since January 2013. The service is now situated within the Environmental Health function.

### **Corporate Health and Safety Strategy**

- 2.2 The Health and Safety Management System has been under review during this period, in order to develop a strategy for the organisation to enable effective monitoring of health and safety performance. The strategy has been approved by Joint Management Team and the Health and Safety Committee, and will be implemented from 1 April 2014.
- 2.3 Key features of the strategy include increasing awareness of accident reporting and learning lessons, a prioritised plan of Health and Safety inspections and increasing accessibility to Health and Safety information.

### **Key Activities Period 2013-2014**

- 2.4 Improving the Corporate Governance Committee reporting format to include a greater analysis of accident data and more detail for Members.
- 2.5 Review of the accident reporting policy, with new procedures to be implemented from 1 April 2014 to ensure all accident data are captured accurately.
- 2.6 Regular Health and Safety tours have been undertaken at the Deane DLO Depot, with housekeeping standards having improved as a result.
- 2.7 All statutory training has been undertaken. In total, four sessions of Health and Safety training for Managers have now been run with 32 Managers attending. All Deane DLO Managers have completed the IOSH Managing Safely course. All relevant Deane DLO employees have received toolbox talks on manual handling operations.
- 2.8 The staff Health and Safety intranet site has been updated enabling employees to access relevant up-to-date Health and Safety information.

- 2.9 In addition, a significant amount of time was spent on ensuring that The Brewhouse Theatre met with essential safety standards in order to open for the Taunton School pre-Christmas performance. The Health and Safety Team compiled the Health and Safety file essential for use of the building. They also ensured that the necessary safety testing and certification for the equipment and services had been carried out.
- 2.10 Time was also spent co-ordinating the refurbishment activities for The Brewhouse Theatre. The team established a safe working environment and facilitated communication channels. They ensured that the appropriate legal and insurance measures were in place. It was also important to ensure that suitable and sufficient risk assessments and safe working practices had been developed by the contractors and the school.

### **3. Customer Contact Centre**

#### **Performance Indicators**

- 3.1 The service has continued to perform well in line with its contractual performance indicators, with only one failure since the last update. This failure was for KPI 1 (% calls answered within 20 seconds) for the month of February. The target for this KPI is 80% and February's result was 77.16%. The failure was directly attributed to the increase in unpredicted demand as a result of the adverse weather conditions affecting Somerset.
- 3.2 Whilst this target was not met, the teams worked extremely hard, facing unprecedented challenges and still maintained an excellent level of service to our customers. This is most appropriately illustrated by the fact the not one customer complaint was received throughout January and February and customer satisfaction and resolution at first point of contact results remained significantly above industry average.
- 3.3 I should like to take this opportunity to thank the Customer Contact Centre Team for their commitment and outstanding contribution to helping Somerset residents during the prolonged flooding conditions.

#### **New Telephony Technology**

- 3.4 The implementation of the new Siemens Contact Centre continues to be extremely positive news, with no interruptions to service experienced.
- 3.5 March has seen the implementation of a new 24/7 automated telephony payments service for the Council. Customers can now pay for Council Tax, Rent, Business Rates and other invoice payments using an automated voice recognition service. The service was launched on 11 March 2014 and so far there have been around 170

payments made through the automated system. Take-up for this service is about 50%.

### **Our World at Work**

- 3.6 The Our World at Work (OWAW) Team is currently considering options for reward and recognition for exceptional calls. The Training and Quality Team has brought several options forward, including the possibility of a 'Golden Call' scheme - where one call will be recognised each month and rewarded with Southwest One's formal Reward and Recognition scheme. We are currently awaiting feedback from the OWAW team on this suggestion.

### **Service Development Plan 2014/2015**

- 3.7 The Service Development Plan (SDP) for 2014/2015 is currently in draft form and has been distributed to Client Services. The focus of the SDP for 2014/2015 is on channel shift. The Customer Contact Team aim to support Taunton Deane's corporate channel shift and customer access strategies by utilising new automated telephony technology and the Council's website.

### **Digital Customer Access and Twitter**

- 3.8 On the 1 January 2014, the Council launched its new corporate Twitter account. The Customer Contact Team has been supporting Taunton Deane with handling Inbound and Outbound messaging and the account already has 393 followers. Having a Customer Contact presence on Twitter will allow us to help people using the service by signposting them to the right place, helping them complete online services or by answering their questions directly.

## **4. Health and Wellbeing**

### **Health and Wellbeing Audit**

- 4.1 Officers have completed an audit of the Council's services and their impact on health and wellbeing, linking this back to the County Health and Wellbeing Strategy. This audit has been taken through the Community Scrutiny Committee and will be going to the Executive in April 2014. The audit includes a set of actions to help further promote the health and wellbeing agenda in Taunton Deane.

### **Better Care Fund**

- 4.2 Officers from Taunton Deane have ensured that Taunton Deane has a voice within the development of the NHS / Adult Social Care Better Care Fund. This has included direct input, as well as a presentation to the Health and Wellbeing Board on 27 March 2014 outlining the

contribution of Housing Services. A presentation on the importance of the Better Care Fund will be made at a Members Briefing on 10 April 2014.

### **Prostate Cancer**

- 4.3 The Council has committed to raising the issue of Prostate Cancer within Taunton Deane. Prostate Cancer is the leading cause of death through cancer in men. We have displayed posters around the building and last week included an article in the Deane Dispatch promoting awareness

### **Dementia Friendly Council**

- 4.4 The Council has committed to becoming a Dementia Friendly Council and training is being rolled out to front line staff. The training is short and focussed, ensuring that staff recognise the signs of dementia and know how to adjust their customer service to better meet the needs of customers. A training session was provided to Members at the Members Briefing on 25 March 2014.

### **Mental Health Support**

- 4.5 Officers from the Council have met with representatives from the Somerset Partnership, who have committed additional resource to provide social worker and occupational health support to help address mental health and wellbeing issues within the Halcon One Team area, as a pilot scheme.

## **5. Legal and Democratic Services**

### **Legal Shared Services**

- 5.1 Considerable work has been undertaken in exploring the development of a Business Case for a Countywide Legal Shared Service.
- 5.2 The basic principles underpinning such a business case are:-
- Provide savings of 15%;
  - Improve resilience for all partners;
  - The partnership to be flexible / extendable to other partners joining in the future; and
  - Levels of service will be maintained as a minimum.
- 5.3 Information continues to be collected to inform the Business Case including:-
- Resetting staffing structures and potential service structures for a countywide partnership;
  - Existing volumetrics, workloads, service standards and budgets; and



- Current ICT set up and options for a single Case management system
- 5.4 South West Audit Partnership are undertaking work with the partners to develop a risk assessment/register for the Business Case.
- 5.5 The Somerset Monitoring Officers' Group, operating as the Project Board, met in January, February and March with a view to submitting a paper to the Countywide Shared Services Task and Finish Group meeting on 4 April 2014.

### **In-house Legal Team**

- 5.6 The In-house Legal Team continues to be extremely busy. The Legal Services Manager is holding one-to-one meetings with all team members to clarify workloads and introduce appropriate processes to help manage work pressures going forward.

### **Electoral Services**

- 5.7 Since the previous report, Helen Dobson has been appointed as the Electoral Services Officer and Natasha Williams as the Electoral Services Assistant. Thus, the whole team will be in place with effect from 1 April 2014.
- 5.8 Both Taunton Deane and West Somerset now operate on the same Electoral Services computer system, which should greatly assist the ability of the new team to provide an efficient Electoral Service across both Council areas.
- 5.9 Work is now well underway in preparation for the European Elections to be held on 22 May 2014.
- 5.10 The other major project for Electoral Services is the introduction of the Individual Electoral Registration system. All members of the new team have attended formal training relating to this matter. It is also intended to arrange an appropriate Members Briefings in due course.

### **Possible Joint Independent Panel on Members' Remuneration**

- 5.11 All Councils are required to have an Independent Panel to report on Members' remuneration.
- 5.12 Somerset County and West Somerset District Councils already use a Joint Independent Panel for this purpose. Both Councils have agreed to the principle of a possible further expansion of the Panel to include other Somerset District Councils, should they wish to join.

- 5.13 At present, the Joint Independent Panel comprises of five Somerset County Council panel representatives and one West Somerset District Council panel representative.
- 5.14 The membership could be further expanded with an additional panel member per District Council nominated by that Council. Membership rules would be as follows:-
- Members shall serve the maximum of two consecutive three year terms of office;
  - Membership terms of office shall be staggered to ensure both continuity of membership and a regular turnover of members;
  - The panel membership shall always include one member appointed by each District Council according to that Council's own appointment process; and
  - The overall membership shall be agreed by all the constituent Councils.
- 5.15 Each Council would be responsible for agreeing and paying allowances to its nominated panel members to cover attendance at meetings.
- 5.16 Such a Joint Independent Panel would continue to advise each Council on its respective Members Allowances scheme. This arrangement would enable each individual participating Council to retain its independent decision-making sovereignty on the issue.
- 5.17 Taunton Deane Borough Council has expressed an interest in joining the Joint Independent Panel. The Authority would benefit from greater efficiencies of officer time for managing the process.
- 5.17 For this matter ultimately to progress, a report will need to be submitted to Council outlining the potential new arrangements, including the appointment of Taunton Deane's representative on the Joint Independent Panel.

## **6. Resources**

### **Procurement**

- 6.1 The Resources Team continues to monitor delivery of the Procurement Transformation Project and day-to-day Procurement Service by Southwest One.
- 6.2 As reported in the Quarter 3 monitoring report to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee in March 2014, in excess of £1,842,000 savings have been delivered to the Council through the signed-off procurement related initiatives.
- 6.3 A further £1,336,000 of savings are scheduled to be delivered from these signed-off initiatives during the remainder of the Southwest One

contract.

- 6.4 The Strategic Procurement Service is working on a number of additional projects and savings initiatives, which should increase the value of savings delivered. For example, procurement of a new commercial waste contractor for the Council's premises is underway.

## **Finance Services**

- 6.5 The Finance Advisory service transferred back to the Council on 1 February 2014. The transition has gone smoothly, and 'business as usual' finance support to the Council has continued without interruption.
- 6.6 The Strategic Finance Officer and Insurance Officer now report to the Assistant Director Resources, and continue to support the 'client' function to monitor the remaining finance services element of the Southwest One contract.
- 6.7 Following Council's approval of the Budget in February, the service has been gearing up for the financial year end and the start of the new financial year.
- 6.8 The team also provides support to the Assistant Directors and the Joint Management and Shared Services (JMASS) Project Team. They need to ensure financial information and costings for the evolving management and shared services structures are robust.
- 6.9 There have been a number of staff changes in the Advisory Team, but we have been able to recruit successfully to the posts of Interim Financial Services Manager, Principal Accountant and Accounting Technician, thus ensuring the service continues to operate safely in the coming months.

## **7. Revenues and Benefits**

### **Council Tax and Business Rates**

- 7.1 During early March, the team successfully completed annual billing for Council Tax and Business Rates for 2014/2015.
- 7.2 Council Tax bills were accompanied by a consultation booklet seeking views on options and proposals for changing the Council Tax Support scheme in 2015/2016.
- 7.3 Business Rates customers received information on the discounts for retail premises.

- 7.4 In addition to the annual billing for more than 50,000 properties, staff wrote to all Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support recipients telling them of their new entitlement from April 2014.
- 7.5 At the end of February 2014, the Authority had collected 97.23% of Council Tax due for 2013/2014. This is slightly behind our target for in-year collection, but it is not unexpected.
- 7.6 Under the old Council Tax Benefit scheme, support was available at 100% of the Council Tax liability. We provided help of £6,900,000 towards Council Tax payments in 2012/2013.
- 7.7 Our current local Council Tax Support scheme limits the maximum help available for working-age people to 80%. In 2013/2014, it is estimated we will pay support of £5,900,000. This means that in 2013/2014, significant numbers of working-age households are paying Council Tax for the first time. Thus, the Revenues and Benefits Service has to collect an extra £1,000,000 from benefit recipients.

### **Corporate Fraud Policy**

- 7.8 On 10 March 2014, the Corporate Governance Committee recommended the adoption of the Authority's new Corporate Fraud Policy. The policy will provide a framework for staff and Members to allow for effective deterrence, detection and investigation of fraud and corruption.

### **Flooding Relief**

- 7.9 Revenues and Benefits staff have been visiting some of those affected by the severe flooding to offer advice and assistance. The team are doing all they can to support people whose lives have been so disrupted by the terrible weather and are providing much needed relief from Council Tax and Business Rates.
- 7.10 I should like to take this opportunity also to thank the Revenues and Benefits Service Team for their commitment and outstanding contribution to helping Somerset residents during the prolonged flooding conditions.

Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams

# **Council Meeting – 8 April 2014**

## **Report of Councillor Mark Edwards - Planning, Transportation and Communications**

### **1. Planning Policy**

- 1.1 The Council's Report of Public Consultation on the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (SADMP) Preferred Options has now been published on our website. This summarises the key messages coming back through the consultation period and provides an initial response to the issues raised.
- 1.2 The Policy Team are now starting to work on the Draft Plan stage and anticipate that this will be published in August (subject to all the transport modelling being completed in ample time). There are a number of key pieces of evidence still being progressed and these include the Infrastructure Delivery Plan Review and the Viability Study.

### **2. St Augustine's School, Taunton**

- 2.1 I have written on behalf of the Council to both the Diocese of Bath and Wells / Catholic Church as landowners of the school buildings and the County Council who own the playing fields at St Augustine's School. This follows recent moves by Colliers CRE acting on behalf of the Churches to notify the Council of their intention to demolish the school buildings and market the site as a redevelopment opportunity.
- 2.2 Taunton Deane has been clear that this site should be reserved for educational uses and proposes to safeguard the entire site in the SADMP for such purposes and we felt it important to re-emphasise this to the site's owners.
- 2.3 We know that the infrastructure bill arising from education alone is potentially double the likely receipts from the Community Infrastructure Levy over the period up to 2028 and therefore it is critical that opportunities to reuse the St Augustine's site are maximised.

### **3. Revised Statement of Community Involvement**

- 3.1 The Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has recently been updated and will be adopted shortly. The SCI sets out how Taunton Deane will involve the community and stakeholders in the preparation, alteration and review of local planning policy and the consideration of planning applications.

- 3.2 The SCI was subject to consultation itself recently (at the same time as the SADMP Preferred Options) and the Policy Team has taken on board and responded to the comments made to it.

#### **4. Monkton Delivery Board**

- 4.1 The Monkton Heathfield Delivery Board met for the second time on 14 March 2014. Tim Burton updated the Board in respect of the various work streams funded through the Large Sites Capacity Fund and, in particular, the commissions providing legal, valuation and viability advice.
- 4.2 A particular focus of discussion related to the land north of the A3259, where Tim Baker of Strategic Land Partnerships was able to update on progress of the Hartnells Farm planning application.
- 4.3 The developers present also committed to starting a discussion around master planning of the Core Strategy site. The other main area of debate was around the alternative Western Relief Road alignments as well as the applications to vary the Section 106 Agreements on the Consortium land and how these could potentially assist in the early delivery of the road.

#### **5. National Planning Policy Guidance**

- 5.1 On 6 March 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) launched this planning practice guidance web-based resource.
- 5.2 For the first time, planning practice guidance is now available entirely online in a usable and accessible way. Important information for any user of the planning system previously only published in separate documents can now be found quickly and simply. You can link easily between the National Planning Policy Framework and relevant planning practice guidance, as well as between different categories of guidance.
- 5.3 All guidance will also go through a regular review process to ensure it is relevant, usable and up-to-date. Anyone can stay up-to-date on any changes to national planning practice guidance by email alerts.

#### **6. Duty to Cooperate - Mid Devon**

- 6.1 The Council has expressed concern at this proposal and the potential impact on Taunton and Wellington Town Centres as well as the development plan strategy for Taunton Deane.

- 6.2 The proposal also does not appear to be justified in relation to the evidence base prepared by Mid Devon District Council.
- 6.3 We have jointly commented our concerns on this proposal along with Exeter City Council and Devon County Council
- 6.4 As the Plan emerges officers will report back to Members on progress in addressing this Council's concerns over these proposals.

## **7. Taunton Railway Station Enhancement**

- 7.1 Members that have attended briefings over the past year or so will be aware of Network Rail's ambitions to enhance Taunton Railway Station. It is very encouraging to see that these plans have gained renewed impetus following their inclusion in the Growth Prospectus for Taunton and the Taunton Rethink.
- 7.2 A memorandum of understanding has now been developed with all partners, including the Council, who are committed to working together to bring these enhancements to fruition. This is much more than just a station improvement. Different phases of the overall masterplan will see new public realm and a public transport interchange on the south side of the station - fronting onto Firepool and the newly created Northern Inner Distributor Road, a new booking hall, hotel, retail and office provision and improved car parking provision.
- 7.3 The station enhancement will create a fantastic new gateway to Taunton for the travelling public, businesses and new investors. The enhancement will create many jobs and economic benefits in its own right, and will also act as a beacon for new investment into Taunton.
- 7.4 The Council is working closely with Network Rail as part of a wider partnership team to facilitate the new development and identify funding opportunities for different phases of this project. I will report back to members as the project moves forward.

## **8. Communications**

- 8.1 Flooding has, inevitably, dominated communications for the past two months. Taunton Deane has been active in the communications group, including shifts in the media centre set up during the rescue phase.
- 8.2 The agencies and authorities continue to keep in daily touch as the recovery gets under way, feeding in to the Community Update. The affected district councils – Taunton Deane, Sedgemoor and South Somerset – are working together on publicising issues such as business support and Council Tax relief.

- 8.3 Communications is now also working actively with West Somerset Council under the Joint Management and Shared Services initiative, preparing press releases and responding the media enquiries.
- 8.4 Internal communications is also busy with the launch of a new, joint newsletter for staff and Members at both councils. This also involves a team of staff volunteers whose help has been invaluable in formulating the One Team publication.
- 8.5 As of mid-March the number of Twitter followers was heading for the 400-mark. We aim to tweet at least twice daily and have generated interest through Throwback Thursday with old pictures. It has been a really useful tool through the flooding as we are able to provide up-to-the-minute information.
- 8.6 Customer Contact and Word Processing are providing vital help in ensuring we can link quickly to news releases and answer queries.

Councillor Mark Edwards



## **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 8 April 2014 at 6.30 p.m.

**Present** The Mayor (Councillor Ms Lisgo)  
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor D Durdan)  
Councillors Mrs Adkins, Mrs Allgrove, Mrs Baker, Beaven, Bishop, Bowrah, Cavill, Denington, Miss Durdan, Edwards, Farbahi, Mrs Floyd, Gaines, A Govier, Hall, Hayward, Mrs Herbert, Mrs Hill, Horsley, Hunt, Miss James, R Lees, Mrs Lees, Meikle, Morrell, Nottrodt, Ms Palmer, Prior-Sankey, D Reed, Mrs Reed, Ross, Gill Slattery, T Slattery, Miss Smith, Mrs Smith, P Smith, Mrs Stock-Williams, 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 25 February 2014, copies having been sent to each Member, were signed by the Mayor.

### **2. Apologies**

Councillors Coles, Mrs Gaden, Mrs Govier, Henley, C Hill, Mrs Messenger and Stone.

### **3. Declaration of Interests**

Councillors Mrs Baker, A Govier, A Wedderkopp and D Wedderkopp declared personal interests as Members of Somerset County Council. Councillor Hunt declared personal interests both as a Member of Somerset County Council and as one of the Council's representatives on the Somerset Waste Board. Councillor Prior-Sankey declared personal interests as a Member of Somerset County Council and as her husband was now employed by A-4-E. Councillors Mrs Hill 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. Councillor Nottrodt declared a personal interest as a Director of Southwest One. Councillor D Durdan declared a prejudicial interest as a Tone Leisure Board representative. Councillor Gill Slattery declared personal interests as a member of the Board of Governors at Somerset College, a Patron of the Supporters of Taunton Women's Aid and as one of the Council's representatives on the Parrett Internal Drainage Board. Councillor Farbahi declared a personal interest as a local owner of land in Taunton Deane. Councillor D Reed declared a personal interest as a Director of the Taunton Town Centre Company. Councillor Mrs Herbert declared a personal interest as an employee of Job Centre Plus.

#### 4. **Public Question Time**

Mr Paul Partington asked the following questions:-

(i) Future of swimming provision in Taunton Deane

(a) Is there provision of £5,400,000 in the Council's 2014/2015 capital budget for the provision of new swimming facilities at the Blackbrook Pavilion Sports Centre to replace the St James Street Pools?

(b) What is the progress by the Council for the provision of the new swimming facilities?

(c) When will the facilities be opened to the public?

In response, Councillor Mrs Herbert stated that a Project Team was in place who were currently considering final designs for the new swimming pool. A public consultation with local residents would be undertaken shortly and work towards submitting a planning application was also being done.

(ii) Superfast Broadband in Taunton Deane

(a) What tangible work has Taunton Deane done with BT towards the provision of Superfast Broadband?

(b) The Council owned land such as open spaces, some of which has been the result of housing development. Will Taunton Deane allow this land to be used by BT for the provision of Superfast Broadband cabinets and cabling?

In response the Leader of the Council, Councillor Williams, reported that the roll out of Superfast Broadband was being undertaken commercially by way of a contractor appointed by BT. Taunton Deane had worked with BT to facilitate the works where this has been possible including the siting of new Broadband cabinets.

(iii) Station Farm Housing Development at Bishops Lydeard

What was the Council doing about the repositioning of the hedge outside the Greenway Housing Estate opposite the junction of the Station Road Housing Development and the Ash Priors Road to improve pedestrian safety?

Councillor Williams undertook to look into this matter and would send Mr Partington a written response in due course.

#### 5. **Update on The Rifles**

The Mayor introduced Lieutenant Colonel (Ret'd) Mike Motum DL who stated that it was a great pleasure to be given the opportunity to update Taunton Deane Borough Council on the progress of The Rifles.

The Rifles remained exceedingly grateful for the granting of the Freedom of

the Borough of Taunton Deane in 2007 and the support it received from all within Taunton Deane. Such support had been evident in recent times when the Band and Bugles Sounded Retreat on Castle Green last September and when it was needed most, at the funeral of Corporal Tom Gaden in early 2009. It was also clear that the same support remained ever present as The Rifles continued to serve on operations overseas.

Since 2007 Operations had been the single most important factor in the life of the Regiment. Initially deployments were focused on Iraq and thereafter shifted to Afghanistan.

Today the main effort for Defence remained operations in Afghanistan however, increasingly the focus of attention was the extraction of the force in good order.

Force levels would continue to reduce towards the end of the year. Meanwhile the national focus of The Rifles would change to the development of a new officer training academy near Kabul. A contingent from 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion The Rifles was already dedicated to that project. In addition 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion The Rifles would deploy later in the year and form the final Battle Group around which redeployments took place. With five regular Battalions and two Army Reserve Battalions the Regiment had served on operations, almost continually, since its beginning in February 2007.

This commitment had come at great cost with 62 Riflemen Killed in Action; some 30 had lost limbs; two Riflemen had been fully blinded; and, a further two were in neurological units and would remain there for the rest of their lives. There were also approximately 300 soldiers with serious injuries.

Mindful of regimental responsibilities an appeal had been launched about five years ago known as 'Care for Casualties'. Some £300,000 of regimental grants were awarded each year to those in need. The appeal was enabling The Rifles to keep pace with the requirement at regimental level while complementing the outstanding work of those much larger charities such as Help for Heroes.

Lieutenant Colonel Motum went on to say that apart from the drawdown in Afghanistan it was a time of great change for Defence. Notably 2013 saw an end to the term, Territorial Army. We now had Army Reserves and evolving policy would see a much greater reliance placed on those Reserves by 2020.

Change to both Reserves and Regulars was already having an effect on Somerset. For the first time in over a generation Somerset now had a major Army unit based within its boundaries. This was 1 Regiment Army Air Corps now forming at the Royal Naval Air Station, Yeovilton.

The proximity of Taunton to Yeovilton was a major factor in the decision to recently re-role B Company of 6 Rifles at Bishops Hull. The company had now become 675 (Rifles) Squadron Army Air Corps.

Although losing the regimental Reserve link in Somerset was a great pity, it also provided an opportunity. The new squadron retained Rifles in its title and

both Regular and Reserve Riflemen remained keen to be at the forefront of training alongside the Army Air Corps.

So what would come after Afghanistan? Clearly this was not known because so much time was spent training for the unexpected. However what was termed “forward engagement” in part to avoid problems downstream was being practiced whilst other elements prepared and trained for the unknown.

Closer to home the Army Cadets within The Somerset Cadet Battalion continued to inspire and achieve. There was no doubt that Somerset Army Cadet Force, with its Headquarters here in Taunton, was an exceptional Force.

The Rifles continued to play its part alongside colleagues within the Museum of Somerset, Heritage Services and support to Project Taunton. Many visitors from The Rifles had been to Taunton to see for themselves the outstanding example of integration of Regiment and community. All agreed that it came together to great effect.

In conclusion, Lieutenant Colonel Motum thanked the Council for its support and continued interest. The Rifles remained very proud to be Somerset’s County Regiment while furthering links with the County Town and Taunton Deane.

The Mayor thanked Lieutenant Colonel Motum for his very interesting presentation, the contents of which would be noted.

## **6. Complaint against Councillor Jefferson Horsley**

The Chairman of the Standards Committee, Councillor Wren, made reference to the minutes of the Committee’s Hearings Panel which had met on 17 February 2014 to consider a complaint made by Councillor Williams against Councillor Horsley. A copy of the minutes had been circulated to all Members for information.

The Hearings Panel had concluded that Councillor Horsley had breached the Code of Conduct and had requested that its findings should be published by way of the minutes of the meeting, that a report on the matter be made at a future meeting of Full Council and that Councillor Horsley attended a ‘coaching session’ with the Monitoring Officer to reinforce his understanding of the provisions of the Code of Conduct regarding the release of confidential information.

Councillor Wren reported that the Hearings Panel had deliberated long and hard in respect of the first complaint made against a Councillor under the new Standards regime. He regretted the fact that Councillor Horsley had chosen not to participate in the proceedings.

He went on to say that Standards was under scrutiny both nationally and locally. The current regime was the only one the Council had and, as Chairman of the Standards Committee, he would endeavor to see it operated

both openly and fairly.

Members were reminded of the seven principles of public life – Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership – which were considered vital to the continued functioning of the Council.

**Resolved** that the report be noted.

## 7. **Written Questions to Members of the Executive**

### **From Councillor Prior-Sankey to Councillor Cavill – Opening of a new Betting Shop in Taunton**

Could the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development explain in simple English what there is to be proud of announcing under Item 1.5 of the Economic Development report to Full Council that Paddy Power “is in the process of opening a new betting shop in North Street (Taunton)” ....?

Is this a late April Fool or is he serious that encouraging a betting shop into the heart of the shopping zone of the town centre is the way forward?

Is this the best that they can do for Inward Investment for Taunton? Can they now understand why there is a need for a change at the top in our approach towards regeneration and why Taunton Forward is so badly needed to replace the tired, unimaginative and static leadership of the town? On the back of the failure of the Business Improvement District (BID) campaign to find money to promote the town centre do they acknowledge that there is a crisis around the corner stemming from the competition which is coming from Exeter, Bristol and even Junction 27 of the M5?

**Reply** - Regarding Paddy Power, had this question been made more of when the planners recommended refusal it might have added weight to their argument at appeal - an appeal which was lost. Our main argument was that it should not happen in the main retail area.

Having gained their permission we then advise them as required. Hence this is a matter of report.

As a Councillor, have you already forgotten that the Taunton Town Centre Company was a separate entity and that the BID was run by them? The businesses within the town obviously did not feel that the BID would offer value for money or the promotion required of the town centre, otherwise they would have supported it.

As to the vibrancy of the town where we are directly involved, shop vacancy rates continue to reduce and there are a number of very live enquiries that we are assisting to find premises. One such is the new main occupier of the Market House where we are on the point of agreeing a lease. The Brewhouse Theatre is up and running again with its first show going on as we

speak.

All such things help to make Taunton an attractive place of interest and value, a place to visit, do business and for some to set up their business.

With regard to the application adjacent to Junction 27, Taunton Deane is making representation against that proposed development and Exeter City Council has already done so.

## 8. **Recommendation to Council from the Executive**

### **South West Audit Partnership Governance Arrangements**

Full Council had previously supported the formation of the company South West Audit Partnership Limited.

Since then the representation on the Members Board had been undertaken by the Chairman of the Corporate Governance Committee.

Representation at officer level, as a Director on the Board, had been undertaken by the Deputy Section 151 Officer (with the Client and Corporate Services Manager acting as “Alternate”).

With the new Joint Management Team arrangements now in place the Council needed to amend this representation to reflect new roles and responsibilities.

This matter had recently been considered by the Corporate Governance Committee when it had been agreed that the Assistant Director – Corporate Services who was responsible for the audit function should now be this Council’s Director on the South West Audit Partnership Limited and that the “Alternate” should be the Assistant Director – Resources.

On the motion of Councillor Williams, it was

**Resolved** that the nominations of:-

- (a) The Assistant Director – Corporate Services as this Council’s Director on the Board of South West Audit Partnership Limited be approved; and
- (b) The Assistant Director – Resources as the Alternate Director be also approved.

## 9. **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:-

- Flooding – Recovery Action;

- The Brewhouse Theatre and Arts Centre;
- Taunton Town Centre Rethink;
- Sale of former Taunton Youth and Community Centre Site;
- West Somerset Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council Shared Services;
- COACH Project;
- Firepool, Taunton; and
- Hinkley Deal.

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

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

- Flooding – Community Updates;
- Family Focus (Troubled Families Programme);
- Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Plan 2014-2017 – Be Safe Feel Safe;
- Voluntary and Community Sector Grants;
- Somerset Health Map;
- Children’s Centres; and
- Voluntary and Community Sector Support.

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

The report from Councillor Cavill covered:-

- Business Support and Networking;
- Taunton Town Centre Company and BID (Business Improvement District);
- The Brewhouse Theatre; and
- Marketing and Tourist Information, Ticket and Travel Centre (TIC) Update.

(iv) **Environmental Services and Climate Change (Councillor Hunt)**

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

- Environmental Health / Licensing;
- Deane DLO / Flooding; and
- Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP).

During the discussion of this report, Members raised a number of questions relating to the recent closure of public conveniences in the

Taunton Deane area. Councillor Hunt undertook to follow up these concerns.

(v) **Sports, 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;
- Affordable Housing Target;
- Local Authority Housing Review : Call for Evidence;
- Estates Management - Welfare Reform;
- Estates Management – Rent Arrears; and
- Estates Management – Anti-social Behaviour.

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

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

- Corporate and Client Services;
- Corporate Health and Safety;
- Customer Contact Centre;
- Health and Wellbeing;
- Legal and Democratic Services;
- Resources; and
- Revenues and Benefits.

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

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

- Planning Policy;
- St Augustine's School, Taunton;
- Revised Statement of Community Involvement;



- Monkton Delivery Board;
- National Planning Policy Guidance;
- Duty to Cooperate – Mid Devon;
- Taunton Railway Station Enhancement; and
- Communications.

(Councillors A Govier, Hall, P Smith, Ms Palmer, D Wedderkopp, Ms Durdan and Mrs Baker left the meeting at 7.18 pm, 7.26 pm, 7.34 pm, 7.40 pm, 7.45 pm, 8.19 pm and 8.22 pm respectively. Councillors D Reed, Ms Webber and Wren all left the meeting at 8.28 pm. Councillor Mrs Herbert left the meeting at 8.45 pm and Councillor Mrs Floyd at 8.53 pm.)

(The meeting ended at 10.04 pm.)