

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 22 July 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 Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 8 May 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 Freedom of the Borough – Councillor Clifford William Bishop. Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (attached).
- 8 Appointment of a replacement Non-Voting Independent Co-optee to the Council's Standards Committee. Report of the Monitoring Officer (attached).
- 9 Superfast Broadband Extension - Request for Match Funding. Report of the Assistant Director - Business Development (attached).
- 10 Accelerating Growth Delivery. Report of the Director – Growth and Development (attached).
- 11 Shared Services Structure for Housing and Community Development – Request for approval for one-off Housing Revenue Account (HRA) redundancy costs. Report of the Assistant Director - Housing and Community Development (attached).

- 12 Approval of Redundancies. Report of the Retained HR Manager (attached). See also the Confidential Appendices A and B at agenda item No. 14.
- 13 Part I - To deal with written questions to, and receive the following recommendations from, the Executive:-
- (a) Councillor John Williams - Recommendations relating to the Financial Outturn 2013/2014;
  - (b) Councillor Catherine Herbert - Recommendations relating to the Centre for Outdoor Activity and Community Hub (COACH) Project;
  - (c) Councillor Norman Cavill - Recommendations relating to Council Accommodation.
- 14 Part II - To receive reports from the following Members of the Executive:-
- (a) Councillor John Williams - Leader of the Council;
  - (b) Councillor Mark Edwards - Planning, Transportation and Communications;
  - (c) Councillor Jane Warmington - Community Leadership;
  - (d) Councillor Norman Cavill - Economic Development, Asset Management, Arts and Tourism;
  - (e) Councillor James Hunt - Environmental Services and Climate Change;
  - (f) Councillor Catherine Herbert - Sports, Parks and Leisure;
  - (g) Councillor Jean Adkins - Housing Services; and
  - (h) Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams - Corporate Resources.

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

- 15 Approval of Redundancies - Confidential Appendices A and B (attached). See also agenda item No 11. Paragraph 1 - Information relating to an individual.

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 the Annual meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council, held at the Taunton Rugby Club, Hyde Lane, Bathpool, Taunton on Thursday 8 May 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, Miss Durdan, Edwards, Farbahi, Mrs Floyd, Gaines, A Govier, Mrs Govier, Hall, Hayward, Mrs Herbert, C Hill, Mrs Hill, Horsley, Hunt, Miss James, R Lees, Mrs Lees, Meikle, Morrell, Nottrodt, Ms Palmer, Prior-Sankey, D Reed, Mrs Reed, Ross, Mrs Slattery, T Slattery, Miss Smith, Mrs Smith, P Smith, Mrs Stock-Williams, Stone, Tooze, Mrs Warmington, Watson, Mrs Waymouth, Ms Webber, A Wedderkopp, D Wedderkopp, Williams and Wren.

The meeting was preceded by a Prayer offered by the Reverend Mike Haslam.

### 1. **Election of Mayor**

On the motion of Councillor Hayward, seconded by Councillor Miss Durdan, it was **resolved** unanimously that Councillor David William Durdan be elected Mayor of Taunton Deane for the ensuing year. Councillor D Durdan made and signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

### 2. **Deputy Mayor**

On the motion of Councillor Horsley, seconded by Councillor Coles, it was **resolved** that Councillor Marcia Jane Hill be elected as Deputy Mayor for the ensuing year. Councillor Mrs Hill made and signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

### 3. **Councillor Elizabeth Susan Lisgo MBE**

On the motion of Councillor Ross, seconded by Councillor Mrs Warmington, it was **resolved** that the best thanks of the Council be accorded to Councillor Elizabeth Susan Lisgo MBE for the manner in which she had discharged the duties of the Office of Mayor during her term of office.

Councillor Ms Lisgo replied.

### 4. **Past Mayor's Badge**

The Mayor presented Councillor Ms Lisgo with her past Mayor's badge.

### 5. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 8 April 2014,

copies having been circulated to each Member, were signed by the Mayor.

6. **Apologies**

Councillors Mrs Baker, Henley, Mrs Messenger and Swaine.

7. **Appointment of the Executive 2014/2015**

**Resolved** that membership of the Executive would continue to comprise 8 Members for the ensuing year.

8. **Appointment of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee**

The appointment of a Corporate Scrutiny Committee for the ensuing year was agreed as follows:-

15 Members, 7 Conservatives, 6 Liberal Democrats, 1 Labour and 1 Independent.

9. **Appointment of the Community Scrutiny Committee**

The appointment of a Community Scrutiny Committee for the ensuing year was agreed as follows:-

15 Members, 7 Conservatives, 6 Liberal Democrats, 1 Labour and 1 Independent.

(Note: The Chairmanship and Vice-Chairmanship of both of the Scrutiny Committees would be by Members who were not part of the controlling administration).

10. **Appointment of Regulatory Committees and the Staffing Board**

(a) The appointment of a Planning Committee for the ensuing year was agreed as follows:-

15 Members, 7 Conservatives, 6 Liberal Democrats, 1 Labour and 1 Independent.

(b) The appointment of a Licensing Committee for the ensuing year was agreed as follows:-

15 Members, 7 Conservatives, 6 Liberal Democrats, 1 Labour and 1 Independent.

(c) The appointment of a Corporate Governance Committee for the ensuing year was agreed as follows:-

15 Members, 7 Conservatives, 6 Liberal Democrats, 1 Labour and 1 Independent.

- (d) The appointment of a Staffing Board for the ensuing year was agreed with membership being selected on a proportional basis, from a pool of Councillors.

**11. Standards Committee 2013/2014**

The appointment of a Standards Committee for the ensuing year was agreed, with membership to consist of 5 Councillors (2 Conservatives, 2 Liberal Democrats and 1 Independent), an Independent Person (Mrs L Somerville-Williams), 2 non-voting Parish Members (Mr M Marshall and Mr B Wilson) and 3 non-voting independent co-optees (Mr T Bowditch, Mrs A Elder and one vacancy) .

**12. Intercessional Prayer**

The meeting was closed at 8.43 pm with a prayer offered by the new Mayor's Chaplain, the Reverend Rebecca Harris.



## **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**
- **Employee of Somerset County Council – Councillor Mrs Hill**
- **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**

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Full Council – 22 July 2014

### Report of the Assistant Chief Executive

#### Freedom of the Borough – Councillor Clifford William Bishop

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Mrs Vivienne Stock-Williams)

#### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask Members to consider supporting a proposal to admit Councillor Clifford William Bishop, as an Honorary Freeman of the Borough.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1 The Local Government Act 1972 (amended by the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980) allows a Borough or City Council to admit “persons of distinction and persons who have in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the City, Borough or Royal Borough” as Honorary Freemen.
- 2.2 Under the terms of the Council's Constitution a resolution passed by not less than two thirds of the Members voting at a specially convened meeting is required to admit the Honorary Freeman but this does not confer any rights upon them.
- 2.3 However, the conferring of the title of Honorary Freeman is the highest honour that a Council of a City or Borough can bestow and, in the view of many, should not be given too often.
- 2.4 Taunton Deane Borough Council has granted this honour on only four previous occasions. To the Light Infantry (now 'The Rifles') to mark its long association with the area, to Sir Edward du Cann to mark his many years as Member of Parliament for Taunton, to 40 Commando Royal Marines and, most recently (in 2004), to Councillor J R G Meikle MBE.

#### 3. Councillor Clifford William Bishop

- 3.1 Councillor Bishop has been an elected Councillor for over 50 years both at both district and parish level.
- 3.2 During that time he has made a significant contribution to the local community of Taunton Deane generally and of the Bradford on Tone, Langford Budville, Nynehead and Oake Parishes in particular.

- 3.3 Amongst many achievements, Councillor Bishop is the longest serving Member on Taunton Deane's Planning Committee occupying the position of Chairman for many years. His vast experience in matters relating to both Planning and Housing has been key to Taunton Deane hosting regular meetings of 'ROOM@RTPI' (Royal Town Planning Institute) which attracts Councillors, officers and professionals from across the South-West.
- 3.4 On a local level Councillor Bishop was involved in projects which resulted in the successful implementation of a flood alleviation scheme at Hillfarrance after years of negotiation and the replacement of a very dated village hall in Oake with the purpose built premises which are now in almost constant use. Last year, Councillor Bishop was very pleased to see the opening of the very first village hall in Langford Budville – again after years of campaigning and fund raising.
- 3.5 These examples are just a few of the many initiatives that Councillor Bishop has been involved in during his 50+ years as a Councillor. However, these do give a 'flavour' of the eminent service he has given.
- 3.6 For these reasons, the Political Group Leaders all agree that Councillor Bishop should be made a Freeman of the Borough.

#### **4. What happens now?**

- 4.1 Should Members agree to grant this honour to Councillor Bishop there is a procedure, laid down in statute, which has to be followed.
- 4.2 The Freedom resolution is passed at a special meeting of the Council when a formal presentation is made. It would be necessary, however, for Members to agree that they will pass that formal resolution well in advance of that ceremony.
- 4.3 After passing the resolution the newly admitted Freeman may take the appropriate Freeman's Oath and sign the Freeman's Roll with the signature being witnessed by the Mayor and Chief Executive.
- 4.4 A sealed and illuminated certificate of the grant of the Honorary Freedom, incorporating a copy of the formal resolution, contained in a suitable Scroll Holder is then usually presented to the newly appointed Freeman by the Mayor with the recipient being given an opportunity to reply.
- 4.5 If support from Members is forthcoming, a Special Council meeting will be arranged, on a date to be agreed, at which the formal resolution to confer the title is passed.
- 4.6 It is anticipated that the Council would arrange a reception for guests following the special Full Council meeting.

#### **5. Finance Comments**

5.1 It is anticipated that the cost of these proposals can be met from within existing budgets.

## **6. Legal Comments**

6.1 There are no legal implications.

## **7. Links to Corporate Aims**

7.1 Not applicable.

## **8. Environmental Implications**

8.1 Not applicable.

## **9. Community Safety Implications**

9.1 There are no known implications related to this report.

## **10. Equalities Impact**

10.1 There are no known implications related to this report.

## **11. Risk Management**

11.1 Not applicable.

## **12. Partnership Implications**

12.1 Not applicable.

## **13. Recommendation**

13.1 It is **recommended** that Full Council supports the proposal that Councillor Clifford William Bishop be made an Honorary Freeman of the Borough in recognition of the eminent service rendered by him to the Taunton Deane community.

Bruce Lang  
Assistant Chief Executive

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Full Council – 22 July 2014

### Report of the Monitoring Officer

#### Appointment of a replacement Non-Voting Independent Co-optee to the Council's Standards Committee

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Mrs Vivienne Stock-Williams)

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 The Council has previously agreed the composition of the Council's Standards Committee to include three non-voting independent co-optees.
- 1.2 Earlier in the year, Mr Adrian Cox notified the Council that he wished to resign his position on the Committee.
- 1.3 At its most recent meeting on 9 July 2014, the Standards Committee considered the replacement of Mr Cox and decided to offer the vacant position to Mr Lynn Rogers who, under the former Standards Regime, served the Standards Committee as one of its independent members.
- 1.4 The other two non-voting independent co-optees are currently Mrs Anne Elder and Mr Terry Bowditch.

#### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 It is **recommended** that Mr Lynn Rogers be appointed to the Council's Standards Committee as a non-voting independent co-optee.

Bruce Lang  
Monitoring Officer

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Full Council - 22 July 2014

### Superfast Broadband Extension - Request for Match Funding

#### Report of the Assistant Director Business Development, Ian Timms

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

#### 1. Executive Summary

The Current Superfast Rollout programme within Devon and Somerset is set to deliver 90% coverage by the end of 2016. As outlined by this report the Government has made available further funding to extend average coverage from 90% to 95% across the Devon and Somerset area (although coverage will vary in specific areas). In order to deliver this extension of coverage there are requirements to contribute to the funding package that cover all local authorities within the programme area. This has led to the request for Taunton Deane Borough Council to provide £380,000 to secure the rollout to an additional 3,634 premises.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1 As members will be aware widening the availability of superfast broadband has become vitally important for all elements of the community particularly businesses in the Taunton Deane area. The current challenges around road infrastructure combine with the perceived shortage of employment land to present a significant challenge to the growth agenda in Taunton and inward investment potential. Superfast Broadband is therefore an essential utility for the majority of our businesses and increasing its availability will assist with growth.
- 2.2 These improvements are required to significantly benefit a range of sectors.
- Improved broadband speeds will lead to increased productivity in respect of many existing businesses, will improve business resilience and will retain many of those indigenous companies that are considering relocation. It will also help to improve future inward investment opportunities – especially from those high value operations (such as IT specialists / Architectures / Engineers) who make relocation decisions based on the quality of life offered by the area.
  - Both the Land Based and the Tourism industries are becoming more and more reliant on the fast Broadband speeds – with DEFRA having bought in a deadline of 2015 for all applications for Single Farm



Payment to be registered on-line, and the Tourism sector needing to use a very wide range of IT related marketing tools.

- In respect of the local community, those young people in full-time education now rely on the internet for accessing education materials and interacting with the educational virtual networks. The internet has become an essential learning tool, rather than a nice to have luxury.
- General access to services is now internet dominated, with activities that range from booking appointments / paying bills / applying for tax discs and accessing substantial discounts for paying on-line for insurance / utilities etc. is now an essential part of modern day life.

2.3 The current Connecting and Devon and Somerset (CDS) Programme aims to deliver 90% superfast broadband coverage to the whole project area by the end of 2016. In Taunton this translates into a projected increase of coverage which is slightly higher than the target figure for premises. This will mean a significant projected increase in the businesses and homes in the area that will be able to access superfast broadband. The provision of Superfast Broadband in the more rural areas of Taunton Deane is challenging due to range of technical and practical factors that increase costs. Superfast broadband in the terms of this project is a speed of 24 Megabytes (MB) or more.

2.4 This current phase leaves 10% of the CDS area (Devon and Somerset) without any improvement in broadband speeds, which equates to approximately 90,000 premises. This gap in broadband provision has been recognised by Government, which under the Superfast Extension Programme (SEP) has made available an additional £250m with the objective of bringing the UK up to 95% superfast broadband coverage by the end of 2017.

2.5 On February 25<sup>th</sup> 2014 Government announced how the £250m was to be allocated across the UK. CDS was granted £22.75m - the largest single allocation made to a programme in England. To draw down this funding Government has stipulated that Local Authorities provide 50% match funding. Somerset County Council's (SCC) Senior Leadership Team (SLT) met on March 24<sup>th</sup> 2014 and took the decision to agree an in principle capital match contribution of up to £2m, which is to be put to SCC Cabinet on June 30<sup>th</sup> 2014. Devon County Council has undertaken a similar process resulting in an in principle capital match contribution of £2m.

2.6 Following this in principle decision by SCC, District Councils were briefed on SEP and asked to consider in principle their own capital contribution to support a full application to BD:UK - the deadline for which is June 30<sup>th</sup> 2014 -and asked collectively to contribute an additional £2m, matching that of SCC. The High level breakdown of all the contributions from partners is as follows:-

- |                             |         |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| ○ Allocated SEP Funding     | £22.75m |
| ○ Match Funding Requirement | £22.75m |

- HOTSW LEP Provision £4.50m
- SCC / DCC Provision £4.00m
- Broadband Suppliers Contribution £5.32m
- **Somerset Districts** **£2.00m**
- (Devon Districts, Unitary Councils and additional European funding) £6.93m

- 2.7 The Taunton Deane contribution is an element of the Somerset District's/Borough's contribution. The breakdown illustrates that the commitment in principle by Taunton Deane Borough Council of £380,000 will play a part in securing significant match funding.
- 2.8 In Taunton Deane the impact of this proposed extension, subject to the provision of appropriate funding, would increase premises coverage significantly. This in premises terms would secure coverage for an additional 3,634 premises. This would leave the remaining premises not reaching broadband speeds of 24mb per second, although broadband speeds are expected to increase to nearly all properties. It should be noted that these figures are dependent on a range of technical considerations so are still indicative until a procurement exercise is undertaken.
- 2.9 We expect that a new procurement exercise will be required to create this extension in coverage which is in addition to the rollout currently being delivered by BT. In this procurement a range of newer technologies such as wireless or 4G, could be deployed to improve connectivity on a more cost effective basis than the technology currently being used to deliver the CDS coverage. Given the nature of the geography in question, CDS expects that these technologies would be required to ensure value for money and to deliver the additional superfast broadband coverage into the deeply rural areas within Taunton Deane.
- 2.10 Members should note that this will be an open exercise allowing a range of providers to bid for the new extension contract. If the council does commit the funding outlined in this report Taunton Deane officers will be involved in this procurement process and will assist in agreeing the detailed tender requirements. Whilst the Council can look to ensure that parts of Taunton Deane not currently within the CDS programme are prioritised as part of the programme, it must be accepted that in some parts of the Borough achieving superfast connection speeds will remain cost prohibitive.
- 2.11 Any in principle commitment of funding will be formalised in a detailed partnering agreement which will include conditions that require the funding provided by Taunton Deane to be spent within the Borough boundary. This agreement and the linked involvement in the procurement exercise as described in paragraph 2.9 will enable the council to influence where this additional coverage is placed. This

creates an ability to provide the best possible increase in broadband speed for businesses and the wider communities.

- 2.12 Another important principle is that if following the procurement exercise the coverage is does not in the opinion of Taunton Deane Borough Council meet Value for Money principles then the council is able to withdraw so this does provide additional security that the money will be effectively deployed in Taunton Deane.
- 2.13 The proposal was considered by community scrutiny on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2014. The issues of providing monies for the extension was fully debated with members raising concerns around the council's choices in making any commitment in principle. Community Scrutiny recommended that when considering the inclusion of this extension proposal in the capital programme all of the funding options and implications were fully explained. This recommendation has been addressed in this report to ensure that members have appropriate information on which to base their decision.
- 2.14 The proposal was also considered by executive on the 11<sup>th</sup> June 2014 who took into account community scrutiny's recommendation and made their own recommendations to council which are outlined in section 12 of this report.

### **3. Next Actions**

- 3.1 Taunton Deane Borough Council is asked to agree in principle a capital funding commitment of £380,000. It is estimated that this will deliver an additional 3,634 superfast premises by the end of 2017 – this is in addition to the premises that will be delivered under the current CDS programme. Taunton Deane Borough Council is asked to consider this in principle capital funding commitment on the basis that it could be made available across multiple financial years up until the end of 2017.

### **4. Finance Comments**

- 4.1 The funding request of Districts has been allocated on a fairly complex formula basis which the lead officer has reviewed and is satisfied is reasonable. The proportionate share for Taunton Deane borough Council has been calculated as £380,000
- 4.2 **In order to secure this extension an agreement in principle is required to a total capital funding commitment of £380,000.** This could, for funding purposes, be spread over 3 years (£130k in 14/15, £130k in 15/16, and £120k in 16/17), recognising this may have an impact on the delivery programme.

4.3 Funding for capital schemes can come from a variety of sources (RCCO – revenue funding, borrowing, earmarked reserves, capital resources). Each of these are explored briefly below as options for Councillors to consider:

#### 4.3.1 RCCO – Revenue Funding

The Council could choose to fund this via Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay (RCCO). This has a direct impact on the annual revenue budget of the Council and simply increases the level of “budget gap” faced by the Council. The medium term financial plan is currently being updated, but the “budget gap” for future years shared in February 14 will not have reduced, indeed I am certain it will have grown.

#### 4.3.2 Borrowing

The Council could choose to fund this by “borrowing”. Again this will have a direct impact on the annual revenue budget of the Council and again simply increases the level of “budget gap” faced by the Council. The revenue impact of borrowing £380k for – say 10 years – would be an additional cost to the revenue budget of approx. £44k per annum.

#### 4.3.3 Earmarked Reserves

The Council could choose to fund this from earmarked reserves. The unallocated New Homes Bonus funding has been set aside in an earmarked reserve (Growth & Transformation) to support for the delivery of the Councils key priorities. The SEP Broadband project has clear links to the Growth agenda. Currently, this reserve has £1.5m unallocated.

#### 4.3.4 Capital Resources

The report to Full Council on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2013 presented the Councils position regarding capital and approved the current programme (which was subsequently updated as part of the budget setting reports to Full Council in February 2014).

Currently, the Council has very limited unallocated capital resources – not enough to fund this project directly. The programme will be updated over the next few months to reflect expected future capital receipts, but for now, there aren’t sufficient existing capital resources to progress this project. In addition, the list of “aspirational” capital schemes is significant and when reported to Members earlier this year totalled over £750k for non-growth schemes alone (this is repeated below for information only).

Extract From Full Council Report Feb 14

**Table 3 – Capital Bids Not Included in Proposed Capital Programme**

Project	2014/15 £k	Priority				
		1	2	3	4	5
<b>General Schemes</b>						
Grants to Clubs	46					46
Play Equipment – Grants to Parishes	20					20

Project	2014/15 £k	Priority				
		1	2	3	4	5
Disabled Facilities Grant	160					160
Wellington Cemetery	50					50
Taunton Cemetery	100					100
Crematorium Cabinet	15					15
Private Housing – Landlord Accreditation/Loans etc	320					320
Private Housing – Category 1 Hazards	24					24
Cycle Path, Hankridge	50					50
<b>Schemes with currently unknown costs:</b>						
ICT Infrastructure	?	?				
Gypsy Provision	?					?
<b>Total Funded Schemes</b>	<b>785</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>785</b>

4.4 The proposal clearly meets the Councils ambitions, but the challenge to Members is around affordability. The financial challenges facing the Council are well understood and this project places an additional “call” on the Councils already scarce financial resources. The decision is whether this is more important to the council and the community it serves than some of the other calls on resources.

4.5 Member will need to prioritise their ambitions in terms of delivering capital schemes. If Broadband is the top priority, then I recommend this is funded from the Growth & Transformation Reserve (which has the 14/15 NHB funding). The Assistant Director – Business Development will then pursue any external funding opportunities with a view to this reserve being topped up with any successful bids.

## 5. Legal Comments

5.1 The key issue for this report is linked to financing the extension. However any agreement by the council to supply this funding would need to provide a condition within the final partnering agreement that the funding provided by this council was spent and delivered with the borough boundary.

## 6. Links to Corporate Aims

The introduction of superfast broadband supports aim 2 of the corporate business plan “A vibrant Economic Environment”. The proposed provision of Superfast broadband to an additional 3634 premises further enhances this so the report directly supports the corporate aims.

## 7. Environmental Implications

There are no direct links although superfast broadband does enable more effective home working and facilitates a new way of working for

businesses using the internet as a tool. This can theoretically reduce emissions from travel.

## **8. Community Safety Implications**

There are no known implications related to this report

## **9. Equalities Impact**

Any implications will occur as the rollout advances and these will need to be factored in to the detailed project plan. The commitment of this additional funding would enable wider access for individuals to broadband which can be seen as a positive way of assisting rural communities and isolated individuals stay connected to their community.

## **10. Risk Management**

There are two key risks for the council relating to this proposal

1. Failure to commit match funding will reduce the coverage made available in the Deane area through the CDS project. This could damage business and individual prospects and affect the council's reputation negatively.
2. Funding this project will require the potential removal of another capital project from the council's commitment. This will detrimentally affect whatever project is selected.

## **11. Partnership Implications (if any)**

The inability of one partner to provide a contribution may jeopardise the entire funding of the programme. However it is not known as yet what the effect of one partner making this decision will be.

## **12. Recommendations**

### **12.1 Full Council is requested to :-**

a/ support the recommendation of the Executive to support the match funding request to progress the Superfast Broadband Extension as set out in this report.

b/ approve the sum of £380k for the SEP Broadband Project as a Supplementary Estimate in the Capital Programme, underwritten by Taunton Deane Borough Council from the Growth & Transformation Reserves (New Homes Bonus) pending the outcome of bids for external funding.

c/ Full Council request the Assistant Director (Business Development) to urgently progress bids for external funding to cover the costs underwritten by Taunton Deane Borough Council on the SEP Broadband project. An update report on progress to be shared with the Community Scrutiny Committee in 6 months time.

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# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Full Council – 22 July 2014

### Accelerating Growth Delivery

#### Report of Strategic Director – Brendan Cleere

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

#### 1. Executive Summary

The Council has established growth as a top priority and has earmarked New Homes Bonus funding for delivering its ambitions (Full Council, 5 February 2014).

There is currently an ambitious agenda for delivering major housing and employment, regeneration and physical infrastructure schemes to enable growth. These are outlined particularly in the Taunton Town Centre Rethink and Taunton Growth Prospectus documents, both approved by the Council in early 2014.

In order to accelerate and secure delivery of such schemes, Members have been advised previously that it will be necessary to make appropriate use of available New Homes Bonus funding, to commission dedicated specialist and technical support. Such funding is needed to bring schemes to a stage where they are 'shovel ready' – for example designs drawn up, business cases made, legal implications clarified and planning permission secured. In this way, we will be better placed to take advantage of significant funding opportunities offered by the Local Enterprise Partnership, Government and other agencies. Experience shows that many of these major funding opportunities arise with little time to prepare, but require a clear business case and ability to deliver within very tight timetables. Any 'unresolved' issues – such as planning and property/legal concerns - can rule a potential scheme 'out of the running' for consideration, due to the time needed to give the necessary assurance of 'deliverability'.

This report proposes that a contribution of £550k is made from the 2014/15 New Homes Bonus allocation, towards technical and specialist support for accelerating delivery of growth ambitions.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1 The background to this report is described in the Executive Summary. The following section proposes use of New Homes Bonus funding for a range of priorities and projects associated with the Council's growth agenda



### 3. Proposed New Homes Bonus Funding (NHB) to Accelerate Growth

Table 1: NHB Profile of Spend to Accelerate Growth

Priority	Description	14/15 (£k)	15/16 (£k)	16/17 (£k)	17/18 (£k)	Total (£k)
<b>Highways &amp; Transport Capacity</b>	This funding would provide additional transport and highways related support to accelerate the delivery of major schemes which are essential to realising economic growth potential and also to speed up essential highways input to the planning process.	50	50	50	50	<b>200</b>
<b>Legal Capacity</b>	This funding would provide additional capacity for legal input and expertise, dedicated to growth and regeneration schemes and projects.	30	30	0	0	<b>60</b>
<b>Property &amp; Estates Capacity</b>	This funding would enable dedicated property and estates support to resolve issues and accelerate delivery of growth and regeneration projects.	145	145	0	0	<b>290</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>225</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>550</b>

- 3.1 It is proposed that the full £550k sum is found from the 2014/15 New Homes Bonus allocation. This would leave £0.58m in this reserve for 2014/15.
- 3.2 In addition to the schemes listed in Table 1, members are asked to note that a bid has been submitted for Government funding under the Homes and Communities Agency's 'Large Scale Infrastructure Programme', towards a dedicated team to accelerate delivery of major housing growth in Taunton. Major urban extensions elsewhere have such resources to accelerate delivery and overcome day-to-day and complex matters associated with such large scale development. The outcome of this bid is expected over the summer period.
- 3.3 In proposing the items in table 1, Members are also asked to note and support the following principles:
- That the items proposed do not comprise 'bricks and mortar'. Further requests for use of New Homes Bonus funding will be made for such purposes, as growth schemes and opportunities come forward.
  - That the funding amounts and periods suggested for each priority are based on best estimates and knowledge of requirements at this time. Any significant variations or additional requirements resulting in a change in the total funding requested will be reported to Members. Expenditure on these items will also be reported on a regular basis to the Project Taunton Steering Group as part of their role in monitoring delivery of the Growth Programme.

#### **4. Finance Comments**

- 4.1 This report is requesting that £550k of New Homes Bonus (NHB) funding is allocated to the estimated budget requirement for delivering the priority schemes as indicated within this 'Accelerating Growth Delivery' report, over the next five years.
- 4.2 The figures provided in Table 1 have been thoroughly scrutinised with the Director - Growth and Development. The total of £550k is sufficient for the plans within this report.

#### **5. Legal Comments**

- 5.1 None.

#### **6. Links to Corporate Aims**

- 6.1 This proposal will accelerate delivery of the Council's priority for growth.

#### **7. Environmental Implications**

- 7.1 None

#### **8. Community Safety Implications**

- 8.1 None

#### **9. Equalities Impact**

- 9.1 Equality implications of specific schemes will be assessed as they come forward. At this stage there are no specific equality implications from the proposals.

#### **10. Risk Management**

- 10.1 A key purpose of this report is to mitigate the risks of growth schemes not reaching 'delivery' stage due to insufficient up front investment and/or lack of readiness of schemes to take advantage of external funding opportunities.

#### **11. Partnership Implications**

- 11.1 Whilst there are no specific partnership implications arising from this report, allocating funds in the manner proposed will send a clear message to partners and potential funding bodies that the Council is serious about delivering growth.

## **12. Recommendation**

- 12.1 Full Council is recommended to approve the commitment of New Homes Bonus from 2014/15 to be transferred to new Earmarked Reserves for the purposes identified in Table 1, and be allocated to the Revenue Budget in each of the relevant financial years as the funds are used.

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# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Full Council – 22 July 2014

### Shared Services Structure for Housing and Community Development – Request for approval for one-off Housing Revenue Account (HRA) redundancy costs

#### Report of Simon Lewis - Assistant Director - Housing and Community Development

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Mrs Jean Adkins)

#### Executive Summary

A proposed new structure for Housing and Community Development has been developed to meet the requirements for the Joint Management and Shared Services (JMASS) project. The JMASS project focussed on identifying savings for the General Fund and gained approval through Full Council for use of General Fund reserves to cover redundancy costs. Approval is now sought for use of HRA reserves to cover one-off redundancy costs to put in place the HRA element of the new structures. The biggest proportion of these costs relates to the Housing and Community Development structure, however some cost also relates to other redundancies across the Council where a proportion of an officer's time is attributed to HRA work. This paper additionally seeks approval for an earmarked provision for further redundancy costs that may be required for Tier 6 redundancies across the Council once these proposals have been developed. This is an estimated figure provided by Finance based on modelling which was applied for earlier JMASS work.

The opportunity was taken to review the HRA structure as part of the JMASS project as it was sensible to consider both GF and HRA at the same time to provide the optimum structure to best meet the needs of tenants. Whereas with General Fund services, a significant focus was on making financial savings, the approach taken for the HRA services was very different with emphasis placed on having the right structure to invest in better outcomes for tenants, rather than to make savings for the HRA.

Although the redundancy costs borne by the HRA are fairly significant, the structure will deliver significant benefits to tenants through providing joined-up partnership working on the ground that will deliver far more effectively than the current piecemeal (silo) public sector model currently in place. The Community Area Working model proposed in the new structure uses the Halcon One Team model as an exemplar and the anticipated outcomes clearly justify this one-off cost over the HRA Business Plan lifetime.

Council are requested to approve the one-off costs from the HRA for the Tier 4 and 5 restructures of Housing and Community Development and the other Tier 4 and 5 JMASS restructure areas that require a contribution to redundancy costs from the HRA. Council is also asked to support approval of a supplementary estimate for Tier 6 redundancy costs that could be required for the next phase of both the Housing and Community Development structure and other JMASS structures.

## 1. Background

- 1.1 A proposed new structure for Housing and Community Development has been developed to meet the requirements for the Joint Management and Shared Services (JMASS) project. The structure report focussed on 'Tier 4 and 5' management positions however by its nature set out the shape of the organisation beneath it.
- 1.2 Although the focus of the JMASS project was primarily on General Fund (GF) services and only required a reduced cost envelope for the GF, it was sensible for JMT members whose services included Housing Revenue Account (HRA) funded services to review these as well. In the case of 'Housing and Community Development' this was done to achieve the aspirations of portfolio-holders to deliver a future service that was fit for purpose across both the GF and HRA.
- 1.3 A key principle that shaped the HRA proposed staffing structure was the ambition to formally adopt the collaborative front-line staff working model, so successfully demonstrated by the 'Halcon One Team'. This model of requiring officers from housing estates, community development, anti-social behaviour and tenant debt and benefits advisers to work closely with officers from other agencies on the ground, in areas of high demand, has shown real tangible benefits to the community. The new structure proposed to roll this model out across Taunton Deane, with a particular focus on East Taunton, North Taunton and Wellington, whilst ensuring that all HRA housing estates and tenants in both urban and rural areas continue to receive a good service.
- 1.4 The new structure also brings supported housing into the area team model. This strengthens the model by ensuring that estates officers, anti-social behaviour officers, community development officers, adult's social care and others are able to quickly and collaboratively respond to issues of Supported Housing tenants within their area. It also helps ensure that Supported Housing tenants are not isolated from the wider community and provides an opportunity to better utilise supported housing meeting halls for the benefit of scheme residents and the wider community.
- 1.5 A further analysis of the reasons why the Council should push forward with this collaborative front-line model is described in the next section.
- 1.6 The proposal report was consulted on through the following means:
  - Joint Members Advisory Panel
  - Joint UNISON Board
  - All members briefing
  - Tenants Services Management Board
  - 1-1 meetings with all Tier 4 and 5 staff prior to developing proposal
  - Briefings to all staff within Housing and Community Development
  - Formal consultation period for staff to respond on the draft proposal report
- 1.7 As a result of the consultation, and through feedback from managers, staff and the Tenants Services Management Board, a number of changes were made to the proposed structure. This was considered by the members Joint Partnership Advisory Group on 6 May 2014. The final proposed structure is attached as Appendix 1 and the current structure as Appendix 2.

- 1.8 The final proposed structure placed 'at risk of redundancy' nine officers, five of whom were funded by the HRA. The proposed structure included seven posts that these officers were ring-fenced to apply for. The redundancy cost section of the proposal report had highlighted the full potential range of costs but had assumed that all posts would be filled internally by 'at risk' staff.
- 1.9 The deadline for 'at risk officers' to submit their preference forms for which jobs they wanted to apply for was on 21<sup>st</sup> May. At this time it became clear that four HRA funded officers had requested to apply for redundancy rather than be redeployed into the new posts.
- 1.10 The Council is now in a clear position to identify the one-off redundancy costs that would fall on the HRA to allow this new 'Housing and Community Development' structure to be enacted. This totals £199k.
- 1.11 We are also able to identify where officers from other services will be made redundant through JMASS, where although the HRA will benefit from an ongoing saving through no longer needing to fund these posts, there will be a requirement for a contribution from the HRA toward the redundancy costs. This totals £28k.
- 1.12 Finally it is recognised that there will be further potential costs to the HRA if redundancies were required from Tier 6 (both from Housing and Community Development and a contribution toward officers from other Council Service areas through JMASS). Finance has provided an estimated provision for this of £120k.
- 1.13 For comparison purposes, the provision made by the General Funds of TDBC and WSC for potential redundancies due to the JMASS project totalled £1.2m.
- 1.14 This report recommends Community Scrutiny seek formal approval from Full Council to approve a Supplementary Estimate from HRA general reserves of:
  - 1.14.1 £199k toward the Tier 4 and 5 Housing and Community Development structure
  - 1.14.2 £28k to allow the JMASS project to proceed in other parts of the Council for Tier 4 and 5, and
  - 1.14.3 £120k as a supplementary estimate of potential future Tier 6 redundancy costs across Housing and Community Development and other Council areas

## **2 Is there a strong enough business case for restructuring Housing to introduce Area Community Teams?**

- 2.1 In short – Yes. The net gains to our tenants:- individuals, households and communities of collaborative front-line agency working are a proven result of this model as demonstrated by the Halcon One Team. Additionally, the savings through collaborative working to the public sector as a whole through both reduced demand and duplication far outweigh the one-off cost. It should be noted that this cost will put in place a fit-for-purpose management structure to deliver community benefits to tenants across the lifetime of the 30-year business plan.

- 2.2 Through being joined-up at the point of delivery, better decisions can be made, public sector money spent more effectively and duplication reduced. This approach is very much in line with the government agenda for joined up public services. Furthermore, the County Council and Avon and Somerset Police are aligning their services in this way – the first time that all three major Taunton public sector agencies are having the conversation for joined up working at the same time. Health Visitors are also keen to align working to this approach. It is not an opportunity that the Council can afford to miss!
- 2.3 The Halcon One Team model has been working on this basis for around two years and has delivered considerable results for the Halcon community that not only have provided immediate benefits to families and agencies, but has set the groundwork for change that will reduce dependency of families on the public sector for years to come.
- 2.4 Examples of tangible successes have been:
- Recorded crime has reduced in the ward by 31% in 2013/14
  - Anti-social behaviour has fallen by 13% (2012/13) and a further 8% (2013/14). By comparison crime and anti-social behaviour has increased in North Taunton over this time.
  - The Acorns Children Centre historically struggled to engage with the local community. As a result of Halcon One Team working, in 2013/14 48% of Taunton Deane children centre referrals were made to the Acorns.
  - Evictions fell from 10 (2011/12) to 3 (2013/14) saving the HRA and homeless service an estimated £165k pa (Shelter benchmark)
  - CAB provided debt advice to 86 clients in the Halcon One Team surgery securing £112k in unclaimed benefits
  - Housing officers have reduced rent arrears, despite Welfare Reform changes
  - Provided an enhanced model of working to tackle ‘troubled families’ (now integrated into the Halcon One Team). The Government has costed the average ‘troubled family’ at £75,000 pa each to the public sector.

Longer term benefits include:

- We are currently working closely with the primary school to address safeguarding and security concerns to allow teachers to spend more time teaching. This should lead to improved education and prospects for children
  - Supporting victims of domestic violence to help break cycles of abuse
  - Established community voluntary workforce which has provided work experience, formal qualifications and confidence. Four volunteers have since moved into full time work, taking them off benefits.
  - Improved parenting skills through Children’s Centre support and direct courses providing numerous benefits and improved prospects to children
- 2.5 The benefits of collaborative working in this way are too numerous to mention. Many of these benefits come through shared conversations and inter-agency co-operation. One simple example was the intention of Housing Options to house a family in a vacant HRA property until one of the partners pointed out that the neighbours had had a long-standing feud with the family. This therefore averted potentially hundreds of hours of work of Housing Estates Officers, PCSOs and



the Police, Environmental Health and even potentially health services as well as a huge social cost to the local community.

- 2.6 From tenants perspective, public sector services should be more responsive and the solutions more integrated and comprehensive. Many issues raised by tenants to members of the Halcon One Team require a solution that involves more than one agency and the model allows these solutions to be enacted relatively quickly and easily.
- 2.7 To further demonstrate our confidence in this approach, we have submitted the Halcon One Team as a model of national best practice to be showcased at the LGA District Council's network in Bournemouth in July under 'New Ways of working'
- 2.8 The Vision for the TDBC Housing and Community Service is to now establish Area Community Managers and teams to work within three areas of Taunton Deane and to focus resources on the areas of highest demand and work collaboratively with other agencies to address the key areas in those communities.
- 2.9 Although to move to this structure will incur some costs and changes to staff and the way that we work, the opportunity is too important to let slip and the potential gain to the community and public sector agencies far outweigh the one-off costs.

### **3 HR comments**

- 4.1 The need to obtain the appropriate approvals for HRA expenditure will delay the implementation of part of the Housing and Community Development staffing structure by approximately one month.
- 4.2 Details of this process have been provided to the Joint UNISON Board and affected staff. In addition to a clear explanation there may be the need to provide appropriate support to the affected staff.

### **4 Financial Comments**

- 4.1 The original proposals for the restructure of Housing and Community Development included estimated figures for the costs of redundancy, which assumed that many posts would be filled internally by "at risk" staff, although the report highlighted that these costs could be higher. Following the deadline for "at risk" officers to submit their preference forms a clear position for one-off redundancy costs for Phase 1 of Tiers 4 and 5 is now known.
- 4.2 The cost of the four HRA funded officers, within the Housing and Community Development area, who have requested redundancy and which we would be minded to support to enable the new structure is £199.3k. Savings for the HRA within this area for Tiers 4 and 5 are £16.2k, giving a payback period of 12.3 years. Although this payback period is above normal acceptable boundaries, as described within this report, the review of the structure will provide service improvement for the HRA over the life of the Business Plan and is therefore acceptable.

- 4.3 Redundancy costs of £28k have also been identified from other services within Phase 1 Tiers 4 and 5 for services which help support the HRA. These fall within Property & Development and Corporate Services.
- 4.4 It should also be noted that there is potential for further one-off redundancy costs to materialise for the HRA at the next stage of the JMASS project - Phase 2 Tiers 4 and 5 and Tier 6 for all services – as well as potential for ongoing savings to the HRA through the efficiency delivered by the project. These costs and savings will not be known until the final design of staffing structures are known, though it would be prudent to earmark some monies from HRA reserves now for potential one-off costs. It is recommended that a further £120k is earmarked to cover these potential future costs, any underspend being returned to reserves. Efficiency savings can be built into the budget and business plan once identified.
- 4.5 The current budgeted balance for HRA General Reserves is £2.20m. It is recommended that the known and estimated one-off redundancy costs of £347.3k are funded from HRA General Reserves leaving the balance as £1.853m, which is above the minimum acceptable balance of £1.80m.
- 4.6 It should be noted that this is not a traditional “restructure” where the redundancy costs would be covered by ongoing savings and Members would expect to see a reasonable payback on their investment. This is a longer term investment in delivering better outcomes for our community as set out in the earlier sections of the report. The Assistant Director is clear that this level of change is required if the Council wishes to see these improved outcomes.

Summary of HRA Service Development and JMASS One-off Costs:

	<u>£k</u>
<u>Redundancy costs related to Housing &amp; Community Development service enhancement</u>	<u>199.3</u>
<u>Share of redundancy costs (from JMASS – other Council Services) – Tier 4/5 Phase 1</u>	<u>28.0</u>
<u>Provision for share of redundancy costs – From Housing and Community Development Tier 6 and other JMASS Council Services Tier 4 and 5 Phase 2 plus Tier 6</u>	<u>120.0</u>
<u>Total Proposed Use of HRA Reserves</u>	<u>347.3</u>

- 4.7 For comparison a supplementary estimate of £1,193 was set aside by TDBC and WSC for the one off redundancy costs for the General Funds for JMASS.

## 5 **Link to Corporate Priorities**

- 5.1 A vibrant social, cultural and leisure environment – The structure has a renewed focus on addressing community issues through more collaborative front-line services; health and wellbeing; and supporting communities and the voluntary and community sector
- 5.2 A transformed Council – The structure delivers a more collaborative model of service delivery, aligning better with other agencies and expected to reduce the overall cost to the public sector.

## **6 Equalities Impact Assessment**

- 6.1 An Equality Analysis was included as part of the original structure proposal and has been reproduced under Appendix 3.

### **Risk Management**

- 6.2 The key risk of members not supporting the one-off costs being funded from the HRA would be that the proposed structure could not progress, making it extremely difficult to provide a collaborative partnership solution to better support our tenants. The impact of this would be that tenants and housing estates would not receive the wider benefits of this approach.

## **7 Partnership Implications**

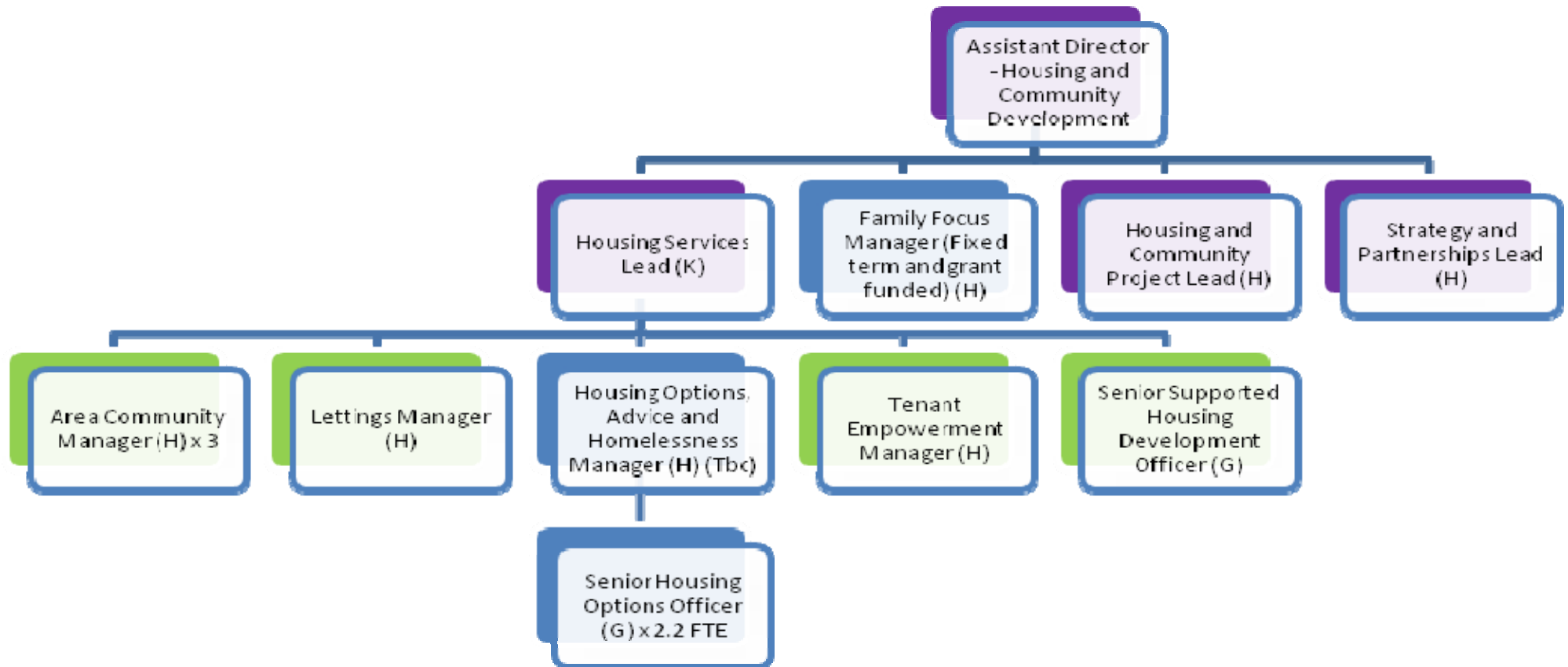
- 7.1 The proposals within this report have been tested with the Tenants Services Management Board (16/6/14) who although had some concerns around the costs of redundancy did support the recommendations
- 7.2 Community Scrutiny voted unanimously to support the recommendations.
- 7.3 The new structure will require Area Community Managers to collaborate closely with the community and other agencies on the ground including the Children Centres, Police, PCSOs, GPs, SCC Social Care and other relevant bodies
- 7.4 Conversations have started with the SCC Early Help Commissioner for 'Get Set Services' – the County Council's approach to joining up services through their Children's Centres and with the Avon and Somerset Constabulary. They are extremely supportive of the proposals and keen to work closely with us moving forward.

## **8 Recommendations**

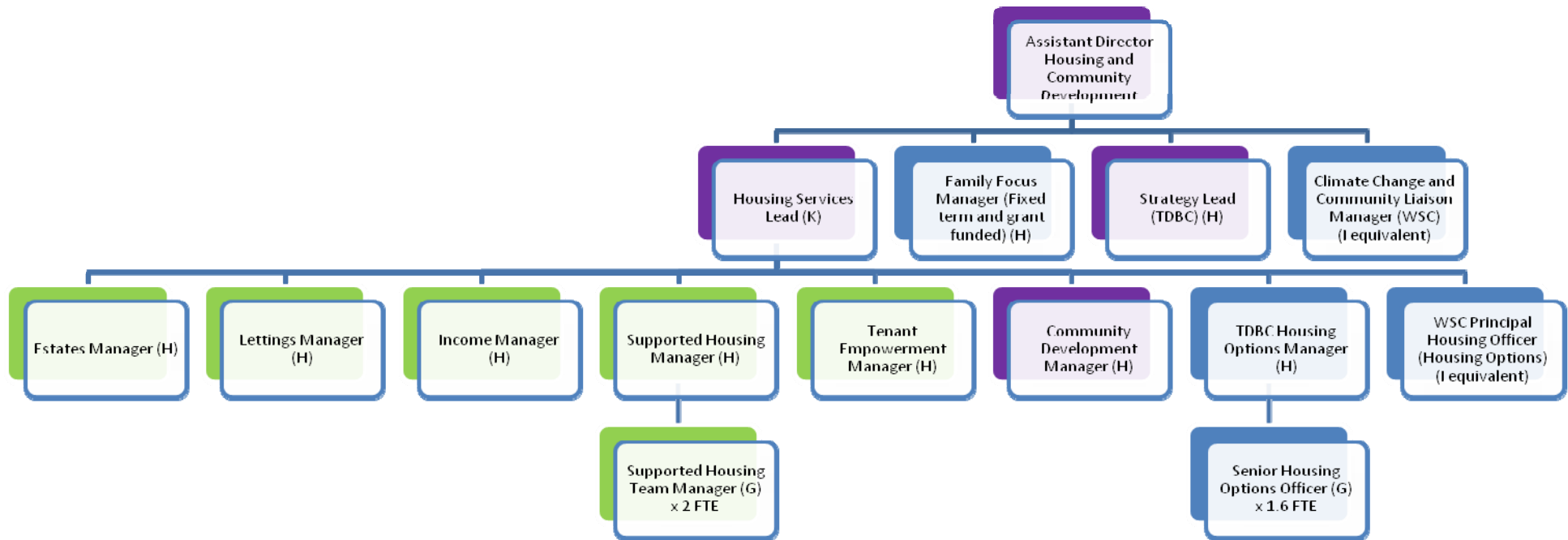
- 9.1 Council is requested to approve a Supplementary Estimate from HRA General Reserves to fund the estimated one-off costs to the HRA of the JMASS restructure to provide the necessary structure to deliver improved outcomes for tenants over the lifetime of the HRA Business Plan. Approval is sought as follows:
- 9.1.1 £199k toward the Tier 4 and 5 Housing and Community Development structure
- 9.1.2 £28k to allow the JMASS project to proceed in other parts of the Council for Tier 4 and 5, and
- 9.1.3 £120k as a supplementary estimate of potential future Tier 6 redundancy costs across Housing and Community Development and other Council areas, with any underspends being returned to reserves.

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**Appendix 1: Proposed New Structure** (Structure only shows management posts discussed in restructure paper)



**Appendix 2: Existing Structure** (Structure only shows management posts discussed in restructure paper)



**Appendix 3 – Equalities Impact Assessment: Shared Services Structure for Housing and Community Development**  
**(Reproduced from original JMASS proposal paper)**

<b>Responsible person</b>	<b>Simon Lewis</b>	<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Assistant Director – Housing &amp; Community Development</b>
<b>Why are you completing the Equality Impact Assessment? (Please mark as appropriate)</b>	Proposed new policy or service		
	Change to Policy or Service		✓
	Budget/Financial decision – MTFP		✓
	Part of timetable		
<b>What are you completing the Equality Impact Assessment on (which policy, service, MTFP proposal)</b>	Management and Shared Services Project – Housing and Community Development restructure		
<b>Section One – Scope of the assessment</b>			
What are the main purposes/aims of the proposal?	<p>The aim is to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a fit for purpose management structure for Housing and Community Development to service both councils, deliver on members' identified priorities and to be affordable within a reduced cost envelope</li> <li>2. To introduce collaborative front-line working where officers work with other agencies on the ground to address community issues within geographic areas.</li> <li>3. Other specific aims as outlined in paras 1.1.3 and 1.1.4 of the accompanying report</li> </ol>		
Which protected groups are targeted by the proposal?	None		

What evidence has been used in the assessment - data, engagement undertaken – please list each source that has been used The information can be found on....	<p>Data – what does this tell you</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Characteristics of the affected staff group – clear numbers involved for each category</li> <li>2. The HRA service collects equalities data on tenants</li> </ol> <p>Engagement undertaken that has been used to support data and identify impacts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consultation with UNISON on development of proposals and plans for implementation</li> <li>2. Consultation with affected staff group</li> <li>3. Consultation with Tier 6 staffing will be undertaken as part of the consultation for this</li> </ol>
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	<p>proposal</p> <p>4. Consultation with the Tenants Services Management Board will also be undertaken.</p> <p>Data available within HR systems and with Project Team</p>	
<p><b>Section two - Conclusion drawn</b> about the impact of proposal on different groups highlighting negative impact, unequal outcomes or missed opportunities for promoting equality</p>		
<p>The proposals may have the following impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Elderly and Disabled</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The proposed restructure affects the management structure of Supported Housing which has responsibility for around 1000 units of sheltered and extra care housing. Although the proposal does not affect the number of officers working with tenants on the ground, it does change the line management structure and moves away from specialist management roles. This is mitigated through Area Managers required to take an overview and responsibility within their areas for service delivery to all tenants and from the creation of the Senior Supported Housing Development Officer to ensure consistent service standards and a focus on this group of people</li> </ol> </li> <li>• <b>Women</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The proposed restructure affects 14 managers and leads within Housing and Community Development Based of which 6 are women and 8 are men. The proposals will lead to a reduction in managers however it is not possible to say at this stage whether those affected will be men or women.</li> </ol> </li> <li>• <b>All protected characteristics</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The proposals to deliver services through area teams working collaboratively with other agencies on the ground should lead to a more comprehensive, responsive and joined-up service to tenants and residents and should lead to a <b>positive</b> impact on all protected characteristic groups. Additionally the proposed restructure provides additional front line capacity to support tenants faced with debt and anti-social behaviour issues. Through being able to bring in local health support, social service support, police and other partners more easily, this should help improve the quality of life of tenants across the board.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>		
<p><b>I have concluded that there is/should be:</b></p>	<p>No major change - no adverse equality impact identified</p>	
	<p>Adjust the proposal</p>	
	<p>Continue with the proposal</p>	<p>But ensure that final outcomes are monitored and that if external adverts are required, they are placed in media which will ensure that female, ethnic minority and candidates with a disability are reached. Ensure HR policies and procedures are adhered to. Also need to ensure that monitoring of satisfaction and service standards takes place across supported housing to ensure that tenants receive a good</p>

		service.
	Stop and remove the proposal	
Reasons and documentation to support conclusions	The negative impacts will be mitigated by the actions set out above whilst ensuring HR policies are adhered to.	
<b>Section four – Implementation – timescale for implementation</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are no variations to the Tier 4/5 timetable proposed for the Housing and Community Development Service restructure and therefore, subject to the consultation outcomes, the new structure should be in place by 1 July 2014</li> </ul>		
<b>Section Five – Sign off</b>		
Responsible officer: Simon Lewis Date: 28/02/2014	Management Team Date	
<b>Section six – Publication and monitoring</b>		
Published on		
Next review date	Date logged on Covalent	



**Action Planning** - The table should be completed with all actions identified to mitigate the effects concluded.

<b>Actions table</b>						
<b>Service area</b>	<b>Shared Services Structure for Housing and Community Development</b>			<b>Date</b>	<b>28 February 2014</b>	
<b>Identified issue drawn from your conclusions</b>	<b>Actions needed</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>By when?</b>	<b>How will this be monitored?</b>	<b>Expected outcomes from carrying out actions</b>	
Impacts on sheltered and extra care housing tenants	Establishment of Service Standards and standardised processes for supported housing officers. Monitoring of satisfaction and delivery against standards across supported housing schemes	Senior Supported Housing Development Officer; Area Housing Mgrs	31/3/2015	Monitoring reports; satisfaction surveys; Sheltered Housing Forum	Consistent service standards and satisfaction	
Impacts on reduction on females within senior management	Ensure recruitment follows approved procedures and any external advertisements encourage applicants from under represented groups.	HR Manager	Before external recruitment and during all internal processes	Monitoring of final outcomes and ongoing consultation with UNISON	Unknown	
Need to ensure HR Policies are adhered to.	HR to implement against agreed policies.	HR Manager	During implementation phase (and beyond for external advertisements)	Monitoring by HR Manager and ongoing consultation with UNISON	Compliance with policy and free from challenge.	

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

**Council – 22 July 2014**

**West Somerset Council**

**Council – 23 July 2014**

## **Approval of Redundancies**

### **Report of the Retained HR Manager**

This matter is the responsibility of the Leader of the Council, Councillor John Williams and Cllr Vivienne Stock-Williams, Portfolio Holder for Resources for TDBC and the Leader of Council, Councillor Tim Taylor and the Cllr Kate Kravis, Lead Member for Resources for WSC.

#### **1 Executive Summary**

This report is requesting Council to approve the redundancies of the Revenues, Benefits and Debt Recovery Manager (WSC) with effect from 31 July 2014 and the Planning Policy Lead (TDBC) with effect from 28 February 2015. The necessary financial approvals are already in place via the Business Case for Joint Management and Shared Services. This request for Full Council approval is a separate requirement of the Councils HR policies.

#### **2 Background**

2.1 The purpose of this report is to request that Councils agree the redundancies of:

the Revenues, Benefits and Debt Recovery Manager (WSC) as at 31 July 2014; and

the Planning Policy Lead (TDBC) as at 28 February 2015.

2.2 There is a requirement for these redundancies to be approved by Full Council as the 2014/15 Pay Policy Statements contain the following:

‘That where severance payments for staff exceed £100,000 they will be reported to Full Council for approval and in presenting information to Full Council the components of the relevant severance package will be clearly set out. These components may include salary paid in lieu, redundancy compensation, pension entitlements, holiday pay and any bonuses, fees or allowances paid.’

- 2.3 Under the Joint Management and Share Services (JMASS) project the post holders were placed 'at risk' of redundancy and expressed the preference to leave the organisation. These requests allowed other staff to be slotted into posts within the new JMASS structures and were accepted by the Assistant Director (Resources) and Assistant Director (Planning and Environment) and the Senior Leadership Team after consideration of all the financial implications and HR implications.
- 2.4 The financial details are set out in Appendices A and B.

### **3 Resources**

- 3.1 The Resources restructure was part of Phase 2 of the Tier 4/5 review with the new structure becoming effective from 1 August 2014. The post holder expressed an interest in taking redundancy and this request allowed other staff to be slotted in and helped to reduce the risk of challenge in setting up the new structure.
- 3.2 The risks associated with this decision have been considered by the Assistant Director who has been working with affected staff on transition plans. As the new structures are effective from 1 August 2014 the post holder will be paid 11 weeks in lieu of notice.

### **4 Planning Policy**

- 4.1 Although Phase 1 of the Tier 4/5 restructure took effect from 1 July 2014 discussions have been held with the employee to secure their services until the 28 February 2015 to ensure sufficient capacity is available to manage the workload of the team which includes the preparation and examination of the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan
- 4.2 This additional period of service is being funded from the LDF reserve and does not impact on the savings required for the JMASS Project.

### **5 Finance Comments**

- 5.1 Both Full Council's approved funding for JMASS project termination costs in Nov 2013 of £1,191k (WSC £293k: TDBC £898k). The total costs for both posts are £260k which is affordable within the agreed budget. An update on the JMASS project will be provided in the autumn.
- 5.2 The payback period for both posts is under 3 years and therefore within normal acceptable boundaries. The finance details are set out in the confidential appendices A & B.
- 5.3 Should these posts remain part of the organisation then the ongoing savings proposed in the new structures could be reduced by £102k for Tier 4&5.

## **6 Legal Comments**

- 6.1 All relevant employment legislation and HR policy has been complied with.
- 6.2 The creation of the JMASS staffing structures has been delegated to the Chief Executive but, due to the requirement for all redundancies over £100,000 to be approved by Full Council, there is a need for these specific proposals to be considered by Members.
- 6.3 The requests for redundancy have been considered against and accord with Council policies. Individually and together they pay back within a three year period but it should be remembered that these are part of the wider JMASS review.
- 6.4 Should either Council determine that either or both of the redundancies should not be approved then there is a risk of challenge by the affected post holders as this decision may be deemed to be discriminatory.

## **7 Links to Corporate Aims**

- 7.1 This proposal is in response to the JMASS Project but also – in the case of the Planning Policy Lead post - ensures the continuation of ongoing current work on planning policies for adoption by Taunton Deane BC in 2015, which will support the growth agenda.

## **8 Environmental and Community Safety Implications**

- 8.1 None associated with this report.

## **9 Equalities Impact**

- 9.1 None associated with this report.

## **10 Risk Management**

- 10.1 The legal comments highlight potential risks of challenge from the affected employees if Council decide not to approve the redundancies. In addition to this risk such a decision would also reduce the financial savings made as part of the T4/5 Review for both Service areas and increase the impact on front line services in Tier 6 being affected.

## **11 Partnership Implications**

- 11.1 None for the purposes of this report.

## **12 Recommendations**

- 12.1 That Councils approve the redundancies of the Revenues, Benefits and Debt Recovery Manager (WSC) with effect from 31 July 2014 and the Planning Policy Lead (TDBC) with effect from 28 February 2015 in accordance with the financial details set out in Appendices A and B.

**Background Papers**  
2014/15 Pay Policy Statements

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# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Council Meeting – 22 July 2014

### Part I

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

### (a) Councillor Williams

#### Financial Outturn 2013/2014

The Executive has recently considered a report concerning the Council's financial performance for the 2013/2014 financial year.

Effective financial management forms an important part of the Council's overall performance management framework. It is also vital that the Council maintains strong financial management and control in the face of continuing and unprecedented financial pressures as funding for Council services continues to be squeezed.

During the last financial year, Members have been presented with regular financial monitoring information, with quarterly performance reports submitted to both the Corporate Scrutiny Committee and the Executive.

There has been a number of significant challenges faced by the Council this year, and these have had an impact on the overall financial position for the authority. These included:-

- The new Business Rates Retention scheme where prudent practices have been put into place including the creation of a Business Rates Smoothing account earmarked reserve to help protect the authority from future financial fluctuations; and
- Forecasting for demand-led services. It is planned to direct more focus on the higher risk / more volatile areas, with more detailed trend analysis to improve forecasting in the future.

A summary of the Council's Financial Performance for 2013/2014 is as follows:-

**General Fund (GF) Revenue** - The GF Revenue Outturn for 2013/2014 is a Net Expenditure position of £13,453,000, which is a £964,000 (6.7%) underspend against the Final Net Budget for the year. This has been driven largely by above forecast income levels in parking, planning, burials/cremations - as well as cost reductions in the final months of the year.

The following proposals are those the Executive wishes to recommend for approval which would allocate £418,000 of the underspend or additional budget approvals for 2014/2015:-

***Supplementary Requests of Underspend 2013/2014***

<b>Bid Description</b>	<b>Bid (£'000)</b>
Development of IT Strategy For TDBC	50
Cemetery Extension – Taunton	121
Grass Cutting	50
Weed Spraying	10
Street Cleansing	42
Car Park Improvements	125
Capital Grants for Parish Play Equipment/Sports Halls/Clubs	20
<b>TOTAL requested for approval</b>	<b>418</b>

The GF reserves balance as at 31 March 2014 stood at £2,480,000. This balance will reduce to £2,062,000 if the above allocations of £418,000 are approved. This balance remains above the minimum reserves expectation within the Council's Budget Strategy (£1,500,000).

The Earmarked Reserves balance as at 31 March 2014 was £13,009,000, representing funds that have been set aside for specific purposes to fund expenditure in 2014/2015 or later years. This has grown largely in respect of funds committed to support future capital programme spending, a new Business Rates Smoothing reserve and funding set aside to support service restructuring and transformation projects.

**General Fund (GF) Capital** - The GF approved Capital Programme at the end of 2014/2015 was £17,973,000. This relates to schemes which will be completed over the next five years. The profiled expenditure on Capital Programmes during 2014/2015 was £4,350,000, with £13,623,000 being carried forward.

**Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Revenue** - The HRA was a 'Self-Financing' account for the Council's Housing Landlord function, which is budgeted to 'break even'. The HRA Outturn for 2013/2014 is a net underspend of £861,000 (3.3% of gross income).

The Executive has recommended that funding should be allocated from the underspend for the following projects:-

- Community Development Reserve – to allow one-off investments in Community Development - £500,000; and
- 
- Administration Support for area based teams to March 2016 - £41,000.

The HRA Reserve balance as at 31 March 2014 stood at £3,059,000, which was above the minimum level (£1,800,000) set within the Council's Budget Strategy and HRA Business Plan.

The HRA Earmarked Reserves balance as at 31 March 2014 stood at £614,000. This includes £404,000 related to the Social Housing Development Fund, which is earmarked to fund investment in new social housing provision within the Council's own housing stock.

**Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital** - The HRA approved Capital Programme at the end of 2014/2015 was £20,363,000. This related to schemes which will be completed over the next five years. The profiled expenditure on Capital Programmes during 2014/2015 was £8,647,000, with £11,655,000 being carried forward and a net underspend of £61,000 being reported.

**Deane DLO Trading Account** - The year-end financial statements reported that the DLO had made an overall profit of £332,000 after contributing £101,000 to the General Fund.

Although this surplus has been transferred to the DLO Trading Account Reserves approval is now sought to transfer £25,000 of this underspend to the Capital Replacement Reserve Fund to enable fuel tanks to be replaced and £240,000 into the DLO Vehicle Replacement Earmarked Reserve. Approval is therefore required to use the latter amount to support a managed fleet programme.

**Deane Helpline Trading Account** - The Deane Helpline had made a net overspend of £47,000 against the final budget. However, once Technical Accounting adjustments of £51,000 had been reversed, this deficit reverted to a surplus against budget of £4,000.

**Taunton Unparished Area Fund (Special Expenses)** - Total expenditure from the fund during 2013/2014 amounted to £75,004. Currently, £40,867 remains unallocated.

The introduction of the Business Rates Retention system has introduced new financial risks for the Council. The Council's share of Business Rates funding is directly linked to the total amount of Business Rates due and collected in the area. A potentially significant risk exists in respect of the costs of refunds and appeals, particularly where this results in refunds that are back-dated to 2010.

Taking into account the inherent risks and uncertainties within the retention system, together with accounting timing differences, it is recommended to maintain a contingency balance in a Business Rates Smoothing Account Reserve. A sum of £1,265,000 has been set aside, providing some protection against differences which are larger than estimated. The requirement for this reserve will continue to be monitored as the retention system 'matures' and the Council's level of certainty improves.

It is **recommended** that:-

- (a) The Council's (revenue and capital) performance for the year 2013/2014, for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account, including the pre-approved carry-forwards and transfers to earmarked reserves, be noted;



- (b) The Carry Forward of General Fund Capital Programme Budget totalling £13,623,000 be approved;
- (c) The Carry Forward of Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme Budget totalling £11,655,000;
- (d) General Fund Supplementary Estimates in 2014/2015 in the following areas, utilising 2013/2014 underspends, be supported and that the following be approved:-
  - i. £50,000 to fund an IT Strategy for the Council in 2014/2015.
  - ii. £121,000 to be added to the General Fund Capital Programme for 2014/2015 to fund the Taunton Cemetery extension, funded by a Revenue Contribution to Capital outlay (RCCO).
  - iii. £50,000 to fund additional grass cuttings in 2014/2015.
  - iv. £10,000 to fund additional weed spraying in 2014/2015.
  - v. £42,100 to fund Street Cleansing works in 2014/2015.
  - vi. £125,000 be added to the General Fund Capital Programme for 2014/2015 to fund Car Park improvements, funded by a RCCO; and
  - vii. £20,000 be added to the General Fund Capital Programme for 2014/2015 to fund Play Equipment grants in 2014/2015, funded by a RCCO.
- (e) HRA Supplementary Estimates in 2014/2015 in the following areas, utilising 2013/14 underspends, be supported and that the following be approved:-
  - i. £500,000 to fund Community Development in 2014/2015, with delegated authority for initiatives to be approved by the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Chairman of the Tenant Services Management Board and one of the Council's Statutory Officers; and
  - ii. £41,000 to fund Administration Support in 2014/2015 and 2015/2016.
- (f) The transfers to the DLO Trading Account Earmarked Reserves to fund vehicle replacements and fuel tank purchases and for this to be added to the General Fund Capital Programme for 2014/2015 be also approved.

## **(b) Councillor Mrs Herbert**

### **COACH Project**

The Executive has recently given consideration to the proposed provision of a Centre for Outdoor Activity and Community Hub (COACH) on a site at French Weir,

Taunton. The facility will be both a building, including a floodable boat store, and a community facility.

The intention was to provide a sustainable and functional permanent home for a wide variety of clubs and Community Groups as detailed in the business plan and the replacement of the public toilets as the current ones were sited on land that was required for the COACH scheme.

The Council has been working on the project since 2011 and provisional approval to grant a lease of the land had previously been agreed subject to planning permission, funding and a business case. Planning permission had been granted in November 2013.

In addition, an application was submitted to Sport England for grant funding earlier in the year. Initial discussions with Sport England have shown a good level of support for the project due to its unique nature.

With regard to contributory funding from the Council, Executive Councillor Norman Cavill agreed last year to accept the Trustees' proceeds from the sale of land at Castle Street, Tangier (the site of the former Taunton Youth and Community Centre) on the understanding that the money would be ring fenced for capital funding of youth projects to be agreed at the appropriate time.

To support the COACH project in their application to Sport England, the Executive was of the view that a proportion of these funds - £200,000 - should be earmarked for the project as the required funding.

The proposed term of the lease is proposed to be 125 years from a date to be agreed at a peppercorn rent. The lease will provide that the land shall be developed and used in accordance with the planning permission granted and that there shall be no rights to assign or sublet (save for casual hiring).

All the other terms and conditions, including those relating to the provision of replacement public toilets, would be agreed by the Council's Property Estates Team in consultation with the Executive Councillors for Leisure and Property.

It is **recommended** that:-

- (a) The grant of a long lease to the COACH Trustees at a peppercorn rent on the terms and conditions set out in the report to the Executive be approved;
- (b) A proportion of the funds - £200,000 – from the sale of the former Taunton Youth and Community Centre be assigned as funding for the COACH project to support the application for funding made to Sport England; and
- (c) When the funds are forthcoming from the sale, they be added to the Council's Capital Programme.

## **(c) Councillor Cavill**

### **Council Accommodation**

Consideration has recently been given to a report concerning the future of Taunton Deane Borough Council's Office Accommodation following an options appraisal exercise in December 2013.

The two options which have been under consideration over the past six months are a new build at Firepool, Taunton and a move to County Hall.

The Deane House was built in 1987 and has seen little refurbishment since then. It performs at EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) Level E and some of its infrastructure is coming to the end of its natural life. The building now needs significant investment.

The Council also has the challenge of meeting an unprecedented budgetary challenge and is considering all ways of cutting overhead costs in order to safeguard investment in front line services.

The review undertaken has focused on the future of the Council's main office base and has looked at options for this. Whilst a detailed financial and qualitative evaluation of the two options has been undertaken, in making the key leadership decision on a preferred future solution, the Council has to be mindful of a number of key factors.

The Deane House currently offers 4,355 sqm NIA (Net Internal Area) and occupancy surveys have shown that desks are vacant for 40% of the time. The Deane House costs around £650,000 per annum to occupy. Staying at The Deane House would involve significant additional cost although, in any event, the building was too large for the Council's current requirements.

A full Condition Survey has been carried out on the building with recommendations of what work is needed to make it fit for purpose. The offices would require some £4,300,000 of expenditure on M&E and backlog, of which in the region of £3,000,000 would need to be spent during the course of the next 2-5 years.

Other organisations which had chosen to rationalise their office accommodation have at the same time incorporated new ways of working. The outcome of introducing these was to reduce the amount of office space provided utilising the fact that desk spaces were occupied on for example a 60% basis. The terminology that has been adopted for this is "Smart Office".

The evaluation of the Council's accommodation needs has included a range of qualitative criteria, including the importance of a flexible accommodation solution. In addition, the evaluation has focussed on a "best assessment" of the accommodation

needs for the Council as currently understood. However, it is important to note that this context continues to evolve and change with increasing pace, and as such, the accommodation requirement is likely to continue to alter.

A DTZ study from as far back as 2008 stated the following two key findings from its survey of local authorities' approach to accommodation:-

- Reductions in space per employee and improved sustainability credentials were cited as the main achievements; nearly half of the Councils believed that major change projects had significantly contributed to improvements in staff performance.
- Over 40% of respondents reported significant success in implementing new work space strategies including flexible working, improvements in space utilisation ratios and reductions in staff to desk ratios.

During the second half of 2013 an internal review and high level option appraisal had been undertaken culminating in the following resolution being made by the Executive:-

- (1) The Key Principles against which the Council's future accommodation needs would be made be accepted as the correct ones;
- (2) Option 3 – Move to County Hall and Option 4 – New build at Firepool be adopted as the preferred options for the provision of the main office base of Taunton Deane Borough Council as the options which best met the Key Principles; and
- (3) Officers be requested to carry out full feasibility reports on the preferred options.

Following this resolution, the property consultancy DTZ was appointed to undertake the detailed feasibility study of the two preferred options.

The review process has now included consideration of the potential increased usage of West Somerset House in Williton to accommodate the single staff structure supporting both Councils. There is the potential for additional workstations to be provided there on the basis of a more efficient desk layout and the introduction of Smart Office ways of working, thereby reducing the Taunton space requirement.

The appraisal process has brought together two areas of analysis - financial and non financial. Once both the financial and non-financial scores are finalised, the two scores are combined to derive an Overall Value for Money Outcome and the overall weighting is financial 60% and non-financial 40% as it has been agreed that the financial aspects carry more weighting.

The following is the outcome of the Overall Value for Money assessment:-

	60%	40%	100%	VFM Ranking
	Financial Scoring	Qualitative Scoring	Total Combined Scoring	
DH SQ+	48.67	95.15	67.26	4
SCC 25- Year Lease	97.68	100.00	98.61	1
Firepool LL	73.46	98.79	83.59	2
Firepool 25 Year Lease	76.09	68.48	73.05	3

The above exercise has concluded that, when combining the Financial and Non-Financial scores, an accommodation solution at County Hall is shown the best overall Value for Money Option. A Virtual Freehold at Firepool ranks in second place. Remaining in occupation of The Deane House and investing in the building fabric and services, ranks in last place.

Both the main options under consideration have assumed the subsequent disposal of The Deane House and the wider site. However, there was now a clear commitment to reinvest the amount of any receipt obtained for The Deane House and site in an income generating investment.

Any agreement to move Taunton Deane Borough Council's accommodation from The Deane House to either County Hall or Firepool will involve many substantial next steps and tasks to implement and require significant resource.

Some cost estimates have been acquired to support the project via external project management support and other professional services. These will be subject to further negotiation and suitable scrutiny via procurement. The anticipated third party costs to see the project through to completion in 2017 are in the region of £250,000. This figure included the costs associated with the disposal of The Deane House site.

It is **recommended** that:-

- (1) It be agreed that the Council's preferred option for its future main office accommodation, reception and Member debating space is at County Hall, Taunton subject to Somerset County Council confirming its intent to develop the site and the agreement of Heads of Terms, detailed commercial negotiations and design;
- (2) Delegated authority be granted to the Director of Housing and Communities to progress this project to completion, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Asset Management;
- (3) A Supplementary Estimate of £250,000 for project related costs, funded by £210,000 (84%) from General Fund (GF) Reserves and £40,000 (16%) from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Reserves based on the current level of usage of The Deane House by GF and HRA services;
- (4) Approval be granted to initiate steps to facilitate either the disposal of The

Deane House site on the most favourable terms or entering into a regeneration project which will enable retention of the site and derives benefit to the Council; and

- (5) Subject to (4) above, a suitable investment be made in an income deriving asset of equivalent value to the receipt derived from The Deane House site disposal.

# **Council Meeting – 22 July 2014**

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

### **1. Regional Growth Funding**

- 1.1 I truly welcome the news that the plans to enhance Taunton Station and surrounding area have received £4,600,000 of Government Funding from the Local Growth Fund as administered by our Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The importance of this cannot be underestimated as it kick starts a £22,000,000 station development and is estimated to increase investment by £74,000,000. All great news for Taunton.
- 1.2 I am sure that an opportunity I had to meet the Secretary of State for Transport, Patrick McLoughlin, and make a presentation alongside Network Rail was instrumental in securing our award. The Secretary of State when visiting the station grasped immediately the benefits of upgrading and increasing capacity as Network Rail predict a 40% increase in passenger traffic by 2020. It was great to be able to meet and discuss the potential development with the Secretary of State.
- 1.3 The station project has been worked upon over a number of years but has quickened in the last six months with the realisation by the LEP of the importance of this project as a catalyst to future economic benefit. Delivery plans which will see the south side of the station complex redeveloped can now be finalised and at last the subterranean entrance and exit on the north side of the station, as the main entrance, will be no more.
- 1.4 There is a commitment to consultation with local people and commuters to ensure that any disruption during construction is minimised. The plans will lead to a fantastic new gateway for Taunton, increased parking capacity and improved accessibility for pedestrians, cyclists and buses.
- 1.5 The enhancement and extension project will transform an ageing, tired and increasingly congested station into a proud, modern and welcoming environment for passengers, businesses and the wider public. It will also be a boost to the adjacent Firepool regeneration site where our plans are also coming together. It is very important that the boulevard link across Firepool is constructed as this connects with the riverside walks leading to the town centre.
- 1.6 We also must congratulate Somerset College on their successful bid for £1,000,000 to establish an Advanced Centre of Excellence for

Engineering to which they are adding £2,000,000 so creating a state of the art centre at their Wellington Road, Taunton site which is to be welcomed.

## **2. Local Government Association Annual Conference – 8 - 10 July 2014**

- 2.1 As always, the opportunity to meet colleagues from far and wide is very much an important part of this conference, to share experiences with others and know that we are all experiencing similar issues and then how there are a wide and diverse solutions applied is most helpful. One thing is certain the message from Ministers and representatives from all parties was that whoever won the next election the age of austerity and planning policy must continue! The headlines were:-
- 2.2 There would be no lifting of the capping on Council Tax;
- 2.3 The austerity measures applied over the last few years will continue until the Country's financial state has been repaired;
- 2.4 The stated aim was to increase the level of self sufficiency of finances for Councils by raising the National Non-Domestic Rate retention of the amount collected from the present 50% to in excess of 80% but then the sting in the small print was that other sources of grant funding would be reduced!
- 2.5 The LEP's will still figure highly as a means of disbursing funding to the regions in what is seen as the most cost effective way to meet locally established priorities;
- 2.6 We are still not building sufficient houses to meet the needs of our communities so no let up in pressure to improve and 200,000 or more houses per annum is the stated goal;
- 2.7 No significant change to the National Planning Policy Framework is envisaged and if anything the only changes will be ones to encourage release of more sites;
- 2.8 Simon Stevens, new Chief Executive of the NHS gave an excellent presentation on how the NHS and Local Government can best work together to ensure better health and better services that are sustainable into the future. He made specific reference to Councils' public health responsibility from October 2014 changing so that together the NHS and Councils can promote and aid the principle of self care for high needs individuals in their own homes. This is the "Better Care" system and the NHS are working with the LGA and community groups to produce a prospectus which should be available shortly as to the proposed way forward.



- 2.9 In a session about the 'High Street Dead', a very interesting fact from Simon Roberts, MD of Boots UK, was that "click and collect" was becoming an extremely important part of their business with at least 50% of orders being placed were then collected in store. He saw this as an excellent opportunity to promote and enhance footfall for all town centre businesses. Collecting from one shop will inevitably attract shoppers for other businesses so maintain the vitality of town centre retail.
- 2.10 On the final day some of the main plenary sessions did not go ahead or had alternative speakers because Government Ministers scheduled to speak had been summoned to an emergency Cabinet meeting in Whitehall. Unfortunate but unavoidable!

### **3. Somerset Community Foundation**

- 3.1 I have had the opportunity to meet with Justin Sargent, Chief Executive of the Somerset Community Foundation, recently and the message is clear, the Somerset Community Foundation is here to help fund the needy, the deserving and community groups that have projects to help their community.
- 3.2 Although they disburse charitable funds they are not fund raisers in the traditional sense but secure funds from benefactors, bequests and other charities who do not have the capacity to administer small grants. They welcome applications for funding from a wide range of people and groups and further details can be obtained from their web site <http://www.somersetcf.org.uk> on which will be seen a simple on line application procedure.
- 3.3 This can be a useful source of funding for all Councillors to promote to their community when a need is identified whether it is helping older people and carers, children and young people or supporting rural facilities and Parish initiatives. They also operate a "fast track" application system where there is urgent need and claims up to, I believe, £1,000. In this case they try and turn them around within 10 days. So as can be seen a potentially useful source of funding for your community.

### **4. Accommodation Project**

- 4.1 This was considered by the Executive at the last meeting and it has been recommended to Full Council for approval of the option to lease part of the Public Services Hub at County Hall. It has been considered by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee who agreed not to support the preferred option. Consultation has also been undertaken with the Tenant Services Management Board. I can fully understand the difficulties and the sensitivity of this proposal but in these difficult times we have to look at the most cost effective solution to deliver services

and I do hope that Members will have been persuaded to support it by the time we reach this report.

- 4.2 What has been included in the recommendation is now a clear commitment to reinvest the amount of receipt for The Deane House and site in an income generating investment. This hopefully addresses the genuine concern I heard from many that we were disposing of the 'family silver' by leasing our future accommodation, not owning it. So in this way we should get the best of both worlds, leasing as the most economical way forward and reinvesting the capital receipt to derive an income and what should be capital growth.
- 4.3 One other concern I have heard loud and clear is ease of accessibility of County Hall and parking for visitors. The agreement sought tonight is subject to detailed design and legal agreements before final sign off. I have requested that ease of parking and sufficient bays for the short term parking we presently offer be negotiated with the County Council and included in any agreement as a must. I hope this offers reassurance on this point.

## **5. 2013/2014 Underspends**

- 5.1 The variance from Quarter 3 is substantial at £964,000 surplus of which the majority, £706,000 is increased income or volatility in demand such as benefits. Parking income has held up much better than anticipated, the Crematorium has not experienced the drop in income anticipated because of other crematoriums coming into use locally and planning income surged as applicants tried to get ahead of the Community Infrastructure Levy requirements.
- 5.2 The result is that we can focus on improving the environment with more grass cutting and cleansing, invest substantial amounts in car parks and a cemetery extension and most important provide funds to develop a fit for purpose IT strategy.
- 5.3 I do hope that Members will have been able to support these proposals.

## **6. Flood Alleviation Scheme**

- 6.1 This is for the major scheme on the River Tone between Taunton and Wellington for which the broad location has now been agreed and the final scoping report will be available to present to Members in September or October. Following this, full design of the structure can then be carried out.

- 6.2 The estimated cost in the Somerset Flood Action plan is between £15,000,000 and £20,000,000 and the point is clearly made that substantial external funding will be essential to deliver the final scheme. I look forward to it coming before Members shortly.

## **7. Affordable Housing Open Day - 4 June 2014**

- 7.1 Taunton Deane is experiencing considerable growth both for housing and employment opportunities. It is a place people want to live and work. Through this growth a range of affordable housing is being developed with over 800 affordable homes in the planning pipeline. These range from the low cost housing options at Cheddon Road, Taunton to numerous shared ownership opportunities across the Borough.
- 7.2 The past year has seen many milestones achieved by the Council's Housing Development Department, and I was pleased to launch the new name – "Deane Housing Development" for future Council housing developments at the above open day. The largest site is in Creechbarrow Road in the Halcon Area. This saw the demolition of 42 flats, garages and incorporating a large area of communal gardens that were underutilised. In partnership with Knightstone Housing Association, work is continuing on the development of 92 new flats and houses. Deane Housing Development will have 60 properties and Knightstone 32.
- 7.3 The two smaller infill schemes in Taunton will result in a block of 8 x one bedroom flats, four of which will be suitable for wheelchair users, and a separate development of 4 x two bedroom houses. The third development is in West Bagborough, a rural village in an area of high property values, making it difficult for locals to find homes they can afford. This scheme will provide the village with seven new dwellings being 2 x two bedroom, 2 x three bedroom and 1 x four bedroom houses and 2 x one bedroom flats (one suitable for wheelchair). All of the schemes will be built to the Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4, meaning they are more economical to heat.
- 7.4 The total investment by Taunton Deane for these schemes is in the region of £10,000,000, which proves our deep commitment to providing much needed, quality, affordable homes for Taunton Deane.

Councillor John Williams

# **Council Meeting – 22 July 2014**

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

### **1. Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP)**

- 1.1 Following earlier rounds of consultation, officers are currently drafting the SADMP. The Council is waiting for transport modelling to be completed by Somerset County Council and the agents. This will in turn inform the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and viability assessments which form part of the Councils evidence base.
- 1.2 When all the relevant evidence base is complete, (including for example a final Sustainability Appraisal), the final version of the draft plan will be taken to Local Development Framework Steering Group, Scrutiny, Executive and Full Council for publication later in 2014. A six week period for formal representations will then be made prior to Examination of the Plan (by The Planning Inspectorate) in 2015.

### **2. Monitoring**

- 2.1 The annual Employment and Housing monitors for the period 2013/2014 have been completed and available. The annual retail and leisure monitor (which is published in the summer) is underway.

### **3. Mid Devon Local Plan**

- 3.1 As part of the required 'Duty to Cooperate', officers and Members have been involved in discussing proposals for a major retail, leisure and employment uses around Junction 27 (Tiverton) in Mid Devon District Council's Local Plan review (Issues and Options document).
- 3.2 Taunton Deane, Exeter City and other districts have expressed initial concerns at the impact of the proposals within the sub region and continuing discussions are taking place.
- 3.3 More evidence and studies are currently being presented and need detailed assessment so we will update Members when this work is finished.

### **4. Policy Team Staffing**

- 4.1 From 1 July 2014, the Council's Tier 4 and 5 structure will become operational. Nick Bryant (Taunton Deane) will be the Planning Policy Manager. Toby Clemson and Martin Wilshire (West Somerset Council)

will be the Principal Planners in the Policy Team.

## **5. Jurston Development Brief**

- 5.1 The Council is consulting on the Jurston Development Brief. Taunton Deane's Adopted Core Strategy allocated the Jurston site in Wellington as part of the mixed use urban extension Cades/Jurston. The Core Strategy stated that the development of this strategic site would be further guided by a masterplan and design code to ensure a coordinated approach to the delivery of the site.
- 5.2 The development brief sets out contextual information (location, history, planning policy, consultation), constraints and opportunities presented by a site and a set of the principles of the type, form, layout and look of development for it. Views are being sought to further shape the development before the Council progresses the Development Brief to adoption as Supplementary Planning Document.
- 5.3 Consultation closed on the 10 July 2014.

## **6. Neighbourhood Planning**

- 6.1 The Government has announced an extension to their financial support for Local Planning Authorities who are supporting Neighbourhood Planning in their area. This is an extension of their grants scheme to help meet some of the costs associated with designation, examination and referenda.
- 6.2 The Government are also to announce in the autumn greater support for Non-Parished areas undertaking Neighbourhood Plans.

## **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 fantastic to see that these plans have now gained funding from the Local Economic Partnership (LEP) following their inclusion in the Growth Prospectus for Taunton and the Taunton Rethink.
- 7.2 The station enhancement will create a fantastic new gateway to Taunton for the travelling public, businesses and new investors.
- 7.3 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 I wish to thank all the officers involved in the work they did in preparing the bid and following through to a successful conclusion.

## **8. Exeter to Devon Metro - Wellington Railway Station**

- 8.1 I have also been working with the LEP, Mid Devon Council, Exeter City Council, Devon County Council and Somerset County Council in conjunction with Network Rail to facilitate the introduction of an Exeter to Taunton Metro to include new stations at Cullompton and Wellington.
- 8.2 It is clear from the initial business cases that have been developed that there is potential and I am presently starting discussions within Taunton Deane on how we can best deliver this long term strategic aim.

## **9. Communications**

- 9.1 Twitter continues to be a valuable tool in communications, with the number of followers standing at 641 at the time of writing my report. Customer Contact and Word Processing are providing vital help in ensuring we can link quickly to news releases and answer queries.
- 9.2 We are in the process of drafting a social media policy which will come to Members in due course. I had hoped to have something to share with the Members by now but it is vital that we get this point right so we are taking advice from other bodies including the Local Government Association (LGA) to make sure it is appropriate and robust.
- 9.3 Recent activity has centred around events such as Somerfest, preparations for Taunton Flower Show and, of course, the very successful reopening of Taunton Pool by Mark Foster.
- 9.4 Partnership work continues to be key – with housing partners such as Knightstone, the Police, as well as Somerset County Council and colleagues in other districts.
- 9.5 While external communications has been busy, work continues on internal communications with the One Team newsletter, issued monthly to all elected Members and all staff. Help and guidance has been provided by the LGA's Communications Team which has been invaluable.
- 9.6 Deane Dispatch, compiled with the help of the Corporate Support Unit, continues to provide a monthly update on Council news and initiatives. This provides a good opportunity to focus in depth on important issues.

Councillor Mark Edwards



# Council Meeting – 22 July 2014

## Report of Councillor Jane Warmington - Community Leadership

### 1. Community Safety

1.1 Headline crime and satisfaction figures for the Taunton (Deane) Policing Area have recently been presented to the Community Scrutiny Committee and are reproduced here for information.

1.2 Total crime - reduction of 5.5% - 346 fewer victims of crime. Detection rate of 40.8% (upper quartile performance and amongst the best in the country).

1.3 Crime figures per main crime type:-

Dwelling burglaries	reduction of 9.2% (-20)
Non-dwelling burglaries	reduction of 3.4% (-13)
Theft of motor vehicle	increase of 25 % (+15)
Theft from motor vehicle	increase of 13.7% (+59)
Robbery	increase of 61.1% (+11) (very small numbers)
Criminal damage	reduction of 9.4% (-99)
Violence	reduction of 3.8% (-57) (all violent offences)
Theft of cycle	reduction of 3.1% (-7)
Shop theft	increase of 0.3% (+3)

1.4 Anti-social behaviour calls have reduced by 2.4% (-108). Reported crime has continued to decrease into the 2014/15 crime year by a further 3.4%. Reductions are currently being recorded in a number of categories such as burglary, violent crime, shop theft and criminal damage. The overall detection rate of 37.5% so far this year remains amongst the best in the force.

1.5 Satisfaction figures during 2013/14 - these are the sixth best in the country:-  
87.2% of victims were satisfied with the way the local Police dealt with their crime (a 1.3% increase on the previous year);  
84.25% of victims were satisfied with the way local Police dealt with their anti-social behaviour incidents (a 3.1% increase on the previous year).

1.6 In a similar manner the levels of customer satisfaction have continued to increase in the new crime year with the crime satisfaction index at 87.6% (+0.4%) and anti-social behaviour satisfaction index at 84.4% (+0.2%).

1.7 Changes in senior staff include:-

- Chief Superintendent Nikki Watson who is now Assistant Chief Constable of Operations based at headquarters in Portishead;



- Chief Superintendent Daimon Tilley has replaced Chief Superintendent Nikki Watson as the Somerset Area Commander working out of Taunton and we welcome him back;
- Chief Inspector Paul Mogg is the Somerset West District Commander based in Taunton;
- Temporary Inspector Bob Muckett is the local Sector Inspector for Taunton Deane covering for Inspector Stuart Bell who is still on attachment at headquarters.

1.8 These changes are to support the introduction of a new operating model, a 27% reduction in the force budget and a serious complaint against the Chief Constable Nick Gargan which has resulted in his being currently suspended from all duties until this has been thoroughly investigated.

## **2. 2014 Health Profiles for Wards across Somerset**

2.1 Public Health England has just published the 2014 Health Profiles for local authorities. These contain a summary of information on the health of the people in each local authority area and some factors that may influence their health. The profiles are available online at [www.healthprofiles.info](http://www.healthprofiles.info) and you can find the Health Profile for each area by clicking on the 'Find Profiles' button on the left of the home page. This year the Health Profiles are being displayed using new software, as part of a process of making Public Health England's information products more consistent.

2.2 As part of the suite of Health Profiles, they have updated the online tool "Local Health" which provides information down to ward level, and have updated and enabled data to be displayed for a wider geographical area. You can find Local Health via the Health Profiles website, or using the direct link: [www.localhealth.org.uk](http://www.localhealth.org.uk)

## **3. Changing the lives of troubled families (Family Focus)**

3.1 Families with complex problems and chaotic lives who place a huge demand on public services are being supported to change through the Troubled Families programme. They have an allocated Family Focus Worker (who might manage up to ten families) to work intensively with them for at least six months (some much longer). These families are beginning to show improvements measured against outcomes which have been set nationally. These include sustained reduced anti-social behaviour, children back regularly attending school and finding paid employment.

3.2 Somerset is the fifth best performing county in the country based on results so far. The model used in Taunton Deane and West Somerset where Family Focus Workers are based in Children's Centres is the most successful across the Districts. They are working alongside established Family Support Workers, based in the area where most of their families live (and not in District Council offices for example). The County Council (SCC) is looking to adopt this Somerset wide and are managing the programme centrally from next April.

- 3.3 The Government is intending to extend the programme for a further five years and is loosening the family attachment criteria to include any domestic abuse and if the family are at all involved in crime. This will significantly increase the number of families to be worked with (Government figures suggest over 3000 more families across Somerset). Funding to attach these families will continue although per family (attachment and subsequent successes) it will reduce by half. An announcement is expected in July/August with the revised programme starting in April 2015.

#### **4. Early help - getset services**

- 4.1 SCC has renamed their Children's Centres 'getset services' and are continuing but widening their support for families in localities by working more collaboratively. It is not just for very young children any more but from nought to nineteens, as problems may emerge at any point throughout childhood and adolescence.
- 4.2 They are working with more partners such as Health, Schools, District Councils, Housing Associations, the Voluntary and Community Sector and Private Providers to offer a range of extra support depending on what is wanted and needed in an area. Much of this help is already out there provided by different organisations and the aim is to bring it together to provide extra support so families know where to come to for services, help and advice ([www.getsetsomerset.org.uk](http://www.getsetsomerset.org.uk))
- 4.3 This Early Help Model has evolved through the Halcon One Team working together out of the Acorns Children's Centre and showed what could be achieved (which included soaring referrals of previously hard to reach families and a ready-made caseload for the Family Focus Workers which continues to grow).

#### **5. Voluntary Community Workforce - getting ready to work**

- 5.1 This Voluntary Community Workforce offers the opportunity for many of those who have never worked, to become work ready and offers the chance to leave the house and do something useful. Other issues can then be addressed alongside (for example means of identity, a work record, adult literacy and addiction support) when they feel more comfortable and settled. The number of repeat domestic violence incidents are also reducing and may well be linked to this work programme.
- 5.2 Link Power, Halcon's Voluntary Community Workforce, had dipped a bit and lost volunteers but under new direction (PCSO Ian Warren) they are firmly back on track with over twenty signed up working up to five mornings a week.
- 5.3 They provide support for Family Focus families and offer an initial thorough tidy of their gardens (part of the incentives to encourage a challenging family to participate in the programme). They are also able to offer this for mutual exchanges which are taken as found (an arrangement between tenants) so can be in a poor state.
- 5.4 Another volunteer driver is being sought for the donated Police van which has allowed green waste and rubbish to be collected and disposed of without waiting (and paying) to do this. The costs to the project are insurance, petrol and parts

(servicing has been secured free of charge from a local garage). The van also means they will be able to work across a wider area.

- 5.5 Jobs undertaken during the second week of July totalled 161 voluntary hours of work. This included twelve trolleys collected; five public areas of grass cut; six jobs completed for Family Focus and five for Halcon One Team referrals; ten other jobs completed, twenty six in all; one person now has a full time job with Taunton Skips; six more new volunteers have signed up.
- 5.6 The project has just been awarded a three year development grant of £17,000 from the Lloyds Foundation. This will enable it to move forwards. This includes looking into developing it into a social enterprise to become self - sufficient. The project has been supported so far in kind and is considered to be the best way of addressing unemployment in the locality alongside other issues.
- 5.7 The grant was applied for by myself and the then Community Development Officer Penny Comley-Ross on behalf of the Link Partnership (Taunton East Development Trust). We would like to thank the Lloyds Foundation very much indeed for this support.

## **6. North Taunton One Team**

- 6.1 North Taunton One Team has started informally to meet first thing on a Thursday at Hillside Children's Centre. The PCSOs have been on attachment to Halcon for one month each to understand how it works. We await news of a bid to the Home Office Police Innovation Fund to fully develop this different way of working both here and in Wellington where it is being looked into and to continue it in Halcon.

## **7. Voluntary and Community Sector Support**

- 7.1 The Taunton East Development Trust has received some additional help from us to support and develop both Trustees, Manager and the regular volunteers over the past twelve months. This has been delivered by the Community Council for Somerset who approach such things sensitively and is working very well. The Trust known locally as the Link Partnership are a more confident team, familiar with what is expected of them, proper processes in place, understanding why and as a result working more efficiently and effectively. From the start of the year they are entirely running their own Activity Days and Brunch Club across the school holidays and it is very good to see.
- 7.2 We recognise that similar support may benefit other local Charities or established Community Groups which may struggle with governance and good process. The Community Council for Somerset and West Somerset Engage (which stepped in to replace the loss of Taunton Voluntary Action) can help and Taunton Deane applied to for grant aid to pay for this. We are keen that established groups doing wonderful work get this help if they need it.

## **8. Taunton Deane Youth Network**

- 8.1 There is a lot going on across Taunton Deane spread across the towns and villages. Several groups of Youth Workers have set themselves up as businesses to offer support to local Clubs or set up new initiatives. What's going on can be found on the Somerset Youth website [www.somersetyouth.co.uk/](http://www.somersetyouth.co.uk/) which details services for young people in Somerset including clubs and projects, volunteering and funding.
- 8.2 Youth and Community Group Grants of up to £5,000 are available for Community Groups in Somerset who are starting or developing provision for young people aged eleven to nineteen (there is more information on the Youth Funding pages of the website). The contact for this and for volunteer training is Kirstie Brown (Youth and Community Officer based at the Holway Centre in Taunton) 01823 349853 or [youthservice@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:youthservice@somerset.gov.uk)

## **9. Education for life**

- 9.1 We need to help reduce the overall demand on expensive specialist public services such as Children's Social Care, Mental Health and Adult Social Care which is increasing, difficult to budget for and becoming unaffordable into the future.
- 9.2 Education is the most important route to breaking the cycle of deprivation, making sure those children are equipped to choose a different life from their parents and supporting parents alongside who want to change.
- 9.3 Early help and intervention through the children's centres has been shown to increase significantly through their working as part of a multi-agency team based in the area they work in. This has allowed important information to be shared easily and necessary actions taken quickly to support vulnerable/troubled families to change including improving school readiness in their children.
- 9.4 More family support workers will be needed at those children's centres in disadvantaged areas with the planned extended Family Focus programme and more one team working. Early intervention works and good nursery schools are the next step to improve school readiness in these areas.
- 9.5 Primary schools in deprived areas (some without adequate investment) struggle to balance daily safeguarding, lack of school readiness in each successive intake, with the education they are expected to deliver (and are judged on). However good you make a school in these areas, lack of school readiness will always disadvantage them.
- 9.6 Any investment in schools in these areas (particularly primary schools) should include a permanent provision for parenting classes and the opportunity for parents who want to improve their literacy and numeracy but have insufficient confidence to go to the local college which may also be some way away.
- 9.7 Broadening secondary education should prepare youngsters for life outside school, providing a more rounded education, and they should expect and be able to work.

Education has relied on home upbringing for too long to provide the necessary life skills to support a child leaving school. This is now insufficient and few if any schools (including the private sector) prepare their pupils with an adequate grasp of these. Education needs to be broader and time devoted to teaching both life skills and civics over a longer secondary school day (already being talked about) which would also benefit working parents.

- 9.8 Failure to broaden education in this way is a lost opportunity, risks even more children being taken into care or registered in need, stretching Children's Social Services. In Somerset these are currently in disarray, operating in self-imposed silos, resisting working with other agencies involved with these families (for example local schools, police, district councils and health increasingly working together as one team).
- 9.9 Working better together to tackle problem families, improve their lives and reduce the burden on society is a shared responsibility, which we all have to grasp now. We cannot afford to do this piecemeal as we have in the past. We cannot continue to reduce costs without reducing the problem otherwise we fail those we are trying to help. We are making a difference in Taunton Deane already but more can be achieved through adapting and improving education, social services and health (who hold the biggest budgets) and who really could make a difference.

Councillor Jane Warmington

# **Council Meeting – July 2014**

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

### **1. Staffing Issues**

- 1.1 Review of the Economic Development Team is continuing, aiming for completion in November 2014.
- 1.2 David Evans is re-prioritising as Anne-Marie Spalding left in April so the team has reduced in capacity, particularly in relation to supporting inward investment proposals.
- 1.3 The Tourist Information Centre (TIC) recently recruited an additional TIC Assistant, a work placement student from Bridgwater College and secondly a University Placement Student will be appointed to support the whole team. Both will be for 6 months.

### **2. Business Support**

#### **Business events**

- 2.1 Greening Urban Spaces – hosted by Somerset College, part sponsored by Taunton Deane and organised by the Friends of Longrun Meadows, the event brought national speakers together to discuss how to deliver good sustainable regeneration practice in urban and rural spaces.

#### **Recent larger business support**

- 2.2 Recent and continuing conversations with companies in respect of Inward Investment, funding application assistance, relocation and various other expansion and development opportunities.

#### **Growth Sector forums**

- 2.3 Taunton Deane Manufacturing Forum, which commenced operation in November 2013, now comprises 15 large manufacturers and is chaired by one of the member companies. The meeting in April considered innovation and how to support the businesses to innovate and collaborate over use of expertise and technology. The July meeting looked at support available to strengthen the group and formalise it as a forum.
- 2.4 Go Create, hosted by the Creative Innovation Centre in Taunton, is a

group which comprises 120 local individuals and businesses in the creative business sector. A series of six workshops was sponsored for the group to provide bespoke business advice and support to them.

### **3. Marketing and TIC**

- 3.1 Business has remained buoyant over the last quarter. The temporary closure of the Travel shop at Taunton Bus Station has boosted travel agency sales.
- 3.2 Event ticket sales have increased by a growing programme at The Brewhouse Theatre and a greater range of events taking place in the area.
- 3.3 Rotundas in Taunton Town Centre - Ownership of the rotundas formerly owned by the Taunton Town Centre Company passed to the Council at the end of May 2014 and these units will now be maintained and bookings taken by the TIC Team.
- 3.4 Visit Somerset website - A new visitor website for Taunton Deane is currently under construction which will be linked to the Somerset Tourism Association's main site. This will give the Council an excellent home page to attract and provide information to visitors. It is aimed to complete this by end of July. Carla Modley continues to support the main site with technical support and content.

### **4. Taunton Town Centre**

- 4.1 The £42,000 that was budgeted for the Town Centre Company is now to be allocated in the following manner:-
  - £6,800 to maintain footfall counters;
  - £25,000 to market the town centre to shoppers and visitors. This invitation to tender has been sent out to those marketing groups that have expressed an interest, inviting them to apply by the end of July 2014; and
  - £10,000 to support cultural events and the Deane Dragon Trail. It has been decided that the Council's Dragon will be situated adjacent to the Fountain in Vivary Park.
- 4.2 Taunton Chamber of Commerce is working with interested parties in the town centre considering the formation of a Town Centre Partnership.
- 4.3 Events in the town centre recently supported:-
  - **Family Fun Day:** This was a very successful day, delivered by TIME4 at the end of May.

- **Dragon Boat Festival:** This was a fund raiser for Headway Somerset, which was well attended by businesses and the public, including a market on St James Street Car Park.
- **Somerfest:** The Council led on this event because of the demise of the Town Centre Company. Building 2013, this year's event on 21 June 2014 attracted more visitors and was a day and evening of cultural festivities across the town centre.
- **Planned Events:-**

**Santander / ISIS fun day** on Castle Green at the end of July.

**Parrot Fest** – Support The Apple and Parrot and ISIS to put on a pop / rock music event on Castle Green in August.

**Festive Lights and Switch on** - Conversations are progressing between TIME4 and Make Taunton Sparkle to enable festive lighting and an event, on 23 November 2014.

- 4.4 Advertisements promoting the main events in Taunton Deane are now placed in the 'What's On Somerset' magazine, the 'Tone' publication being no longer available as it was produced by the Town Centre Company.

## 5. Job Clubs

- 5.1 The contract with Vista has been temporarily extended to the end of September to provide more time to agree a how the service should be delivered in the future.

## 6. Asset Management

- 6.1 **Market Car Park** - The temporary car park is nearing a point of Operation. There have been some changes from the originally proposed long stay Car Park to now include short stay. This of course has a potential impact on our Town Centre Car Parks. Our officers have spent a considerable amount of time on the negotiations and other considerations, to enable this parking area.
- 6.2 **Deane DLO** - The relocation plans for the DLO are now reaching the stage where the two interested companies will be asked to submit their final tenders for their respective sites.
- 6.3 **Canon Street Car Park** - The Chestnut Tree area has now been completely cleared and reinstated as part of the car park
- 6.4 **The Market House, Taunton** - Vacant possession has now been



obtained and a lease with the new occupier should be completed very shortly. The lower floor area on the Corporation Street side has for the time being been let on a tenancy at will to the Street Pastors. One of the rooms above that area has been let on similar terms to TIME 4.

- 6.5 **Coal Orchard, Taunton** - A retail led scheme is under consideration to develop part of Coal Orchard Car Park. A national restaurateur has expressed interest which would anchor the scheme.
- 6.6 **High Street, Taunton Works** - A scheme of seven benches was installed in the High Street in July, following close consultation with the public and local businesses and traders. Bollards will be installed later in the financial year.
- 6.7 **Long Run Meadow, Bishops Hull** - The work schedule is being planned for the access bridge to the park and ride car park, which will involve some river clearance and stabilising the bank, before the bridge can be installed.

Councillor Norman Cavill

# Council Meeting – 22 July 2014

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

### 1. Environmental Health / Licensing

- 1.1 There has been quite a bit of staff movement in Environmental Services recently. This month we have said goodbye to Hannah Butcher who is moving on to a new role with Public Health England, whilst Emily Vining has gone on maternity leave. Joanne Toogood delivered baby Benjamin and both are doing well. We welcome Norman Wint back to the Food Team as cover for maternity.
- 1.2 Food Safety: In June Environmental Services promoted the Food Standards Agency's 'Food Safety Week'. This particular campaign recommended that raw chicken should not be washed as splashing during the washing process increases the likelihood of spreading campylobacter, the most common cause of food poisoning in the United Kingdom.
- 1.3 Food Inspections: The Food Inspection Team continues with the task of inspecting food establishments. The table below shows inspections by category with 'A' being those with the most risk. UN is unrated premises that are either awaiting or have only recently had their first inspection.

#### Quarter 1 Progress Report - Food Inspection Programme 2014/2015

Inspections remaining up to 31 March 2014		Inspections remaining from 1 April 2014 – 30 June 2014		Total Outstanding Food Inspections	
A	0	A	0	A	0
B	0	B	2	B	2
C	1	C	11	C	12
D	56	D	7	D	63
E	97	E	13	E	110
UN	22	UN	23	UN	45
Total	176		56		232

## 2014 Quarter 1 Food Inspections Done

<b>Risk Rating</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>A</b>	1
<b>B</b>	6
<b>C</b>	12
<b>D</b>	10
<b>E</b>	21
<b>UN</b>	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>

- 1.4 Licensing Committee: I would like to congratulate Kelly Durdan on her appointment as Chairman of the Licensing Committee. Licensing is an interesting and ever changing area of responsibility for the Council and I would encourage all Councillors to attend the committee meetings when they get a chance.
- 1.5 Taxi Forum: The Taxi Forum met again after a bit of a hiatus on 3 July 2014 and was well attended with a variety of issues being raised by attending drivers and operators.
- 1.6 Rod Stewart: The Licensing Team have had the huge task of dealing with the Rod Stewart concert which saw the influx of 18,000 people into Taunton. The event went off without incident and I would like to congratulate the team for all their work over the eighteen months of planning and organising that went into enabling the event to take place.
- 1.7 Inspections: The team have also been inspecting pet shops, animal boarding, breeding and riding establishments. The programme of work is well underway and, so far, no licensing issues have been identified.
- 1.8 License Applications: Application levels continue to be high and the team are preparing for the effective delivery of the Licensing Service in West Somerset through the shared services project
- 1.9 M5 Inquest Coroner Findings: The Coroner has completed his meetings following the tragic deaths on the M5. This involved professionals from many different areas including Government Departments and industry experts. Full recommendations will follow in due course.

## **2. Deane DLO**

- 2.1 Spring Clean: Thanks should be given to Richard Hopkins's team who

worked hard to get the town centre looking neat and tidy in time for our high profile town events in June. As requested they put in extra effort with limited resources to keep the town swept and free of litter with a special effort ready for the very popular Rod Stewart Concert and Somerfest.

- 2.2 North Town Bridge: I would also like to congratulate Executive Councillors Catherine Herbert and Jane Warmington for their efforts in cleaning the North Town Bridge. While Somerset County Council initially frowned upon their early endeavours there followed a productive meeting with John Williams, the leader of Somerset County Council John Osman, Jane Catherine, myself and County officers. A safe and acceptable way has been agreed with the supervision of County Highways and the DLO that will allow Catherine, Jane and a team of volunteers to continue with the cleaning.

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

- 3.1 At the June SWP meeting I received the Annual Performance and Outturn Reports. Whilst there were no major issues reported it is clear more work needs to be done to encourage recycling, especially of food waste where as much as is recycled is still placed in regular waste bins. However this needs to be set against the prevailing economic conditions.
- 3.2 SWP will be carrying out some High Diversity Trials in some parts of our area during the summer as part of the drive to meet the 50% recycling rate target of household waste by 2020. This will involve changing the frequency and mix of collections and will provide information on potential longer term savings.
- 3.3 Trials are already underway in Wellington to try and increase the amount of food waste recycling.
- 3.4 There have been some issues with contract performance since KeirMG took over the collection contract, although these issues are in areas other than Taunton Deane. They seem to be caused by lack of staff and poor vehicle performance and are being addressed.
- 3.5 SWP is discussing with KeirMG the best method of financing the replacement of the entire collection fleet which is in line with normal operational requirements.
- 3.6 As part of its commitment to improve its service and be innovative SWP is working with Viridor on proposals to divert waste from landfill to reduce treatment and disposal costs beyond 2016/2017.

Councillor James Hunt

# **Council Meeting – 22 July 2014**

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

### **1. Parks**

- 1.1 Following lots of work by the Taunton in Bloom Committee the judging took place on Thursday, 10 July 2014. It was a beautiful day and the floral displays looked their best in the sunshine, the judge who had travelled from Cornwall was very impressed.
- 1.2 The bandstand concerts are again a great draw for Vivary Park. So far we have heard the Lazy River Band, Apple County Chorus, Chard Brass band, Wellington Silver Band, Taunton Concert Band and Wiveliscombe Town Band. See if you can catch Right Side of the Turf, Stoke Sub Hamdon Band or Kingsbury Episcopi Band before the end of the series. Or, of course, try Wellington Park for their bandstand concerts.
- 1.3 Our parks and open spaces are being used by an increasing variety of events. We have already seen Coach awareness day in Longrun Meadows, Actiontrack music in the town centre, Race for Life in Vivary Park and Hamilton Park Fete. Still to come are - NCS funding /awareness day – Samba Band Fundraising event based in town centre, Lyngford Park Summer Youth Activity Days, Stand Against Violence Charity Fun Day – Castle Green, Muddy Boots c/o Friends of French Weir /Longrun Meadow, Living Light Church Meeting – Vivary Park, Fun In the Park (Friends of French Weir), Extreme Stunt Show – Moorfields and Memory Walk (in aid of the Alzheimers Society ) – Vivary Park.
- 1.4 To support the Taunton Flower Show with publicising the new expanded show we had a press briefing to explain the changes and restrictions to Vivary Park that will be put in place this year. The show is so important to the town we hope the new set up will prove worthwhile and allow the show to evolve and thrive.

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

- 2.1 Station Road Pool Refurbishment – Our project managers continue to tie up the last pieces of the contractual issues and as previously discussed we will carry out a de-brief for Members once this is complete.
- 2.2 Blackbrook Pool Project – Awaiting planning decision.

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

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

#### **Active Lifestyles**

##### Community Flexercise at Lane Estate, Taunton

- 3.2 In partnership with Taunton Deane, Tone was able to offer an extended period to the Community Flexercise sessions at Newton Hall, Newton Road, Lane Estate, Taunton. A number of sheltered housing residents are accessing this service and benefitting from the increased physical activity levels of the sessions and the social interaction with tea and biscuits afterwards. Extension of the activity has been agreed until the end of July 2014 when it will be reviewed again.

##### Rockwell Green Community Event - Project Wellington

- 3.3 Tone, in partnership with Wellington Children's Centre, Knightstone Housing and Somerset Skills and Learning, held a community day on Wednesday, 16 April 2014 at Rockwell Green Primary School. The project was aimed at engaging with targeted families and offering a physical activity orientated, intergenerational inclusion day to encourage family health and wellbeing through interaction and activities. Approximately 130 people attended the day.

##### Active Somerset

- 3.4 Funding has been sourced from Somerset County Council to enable Tone to deliver a 'stand-alone' Active Somerset course. The courses are identified as being in demand/needed by the local community and funding is offered for 12 weeks for coaching fees and venue hire, to enable the course to get up and running and remain sustainable after the 12 week period has finished. A needs analysis has been completed with netball looking high up on the requests.

##### Tone Volunteers

- 3.5 Two of Tone's volunteers, Joy and David Boaden, were recognised at the Mayor's Citizenship Awards in April for outstanding service to their community. Joy has been volunteering as a Health Walk Leader in Taunton for about 10 years and David has been a Communications Volunteer for Tone's three Walking for Health schemes for the last three years. It is thought that they may have been nominated by people who have benefitted from the walks and by fellow volunteers.

##### Cancer Patient Wellbeing Clinics

- 3.6 Tone has begun supporting the Musgrove Beacon Centre's Wellbeing Clinics.

The clinics, which are being held in village halls around the district, are for patients that have received treatment for cancer. The Wellbeing Clinic provides them with information so that they can move on from the hospital and live their lives fully beyond cancer. Tone promotes Walking for Health (WfH) because the national WfH programme is funded by Macmillan Cancer Support.

### **Facility News**

- 3.7 Tone Leisure launched their new Values: 'Fun', 'Fresh' and 'Simple' on Friday, 9 May 2014, with an 'It's a Knockout' staff event at Blackbrook Pavilion, followed by an official launch event at Wellsprings Leisure Centre, Taunton attended by the new Mayor.

#### Wellsprings Leisure Centre

- 3.8 A new online box office has now gone live on Tone Leisure's website. Events available include: Sally Morgan, Roy Chubby Brown, Jimmy Car, Sleeping Beauty and Jethro.

#### Blackbrook Pavilion

- 3.9 Blackbrook Pavilion held a charity Insanity! Class (the new high impact fitness class sweeping the country) in the Sports Hall attended by 80 people. Due to the success of this session a weekly class has now been put on in the centre.

#### Wellington Sports Centre

### **Section 106 Refurbishments**

- 3.10 Wellington's new modern and customer friendly reception area is fully operational and Tone has received fantastic feedback from customers. Part of these works included the installation of Fast Track Kiosks allowing members speed of entry to the gym, swimming and classes. This has taken 72% of member traffic away from the front desk.
- 3.11 The final phase of works was due for completion on or around 1 July 2014, with the vending and customer viewing area being fully modernised.

#### Taunton Pool

- 3.12 Taunton Pool re-opened to the public on Friday, 23 May 2014. With the opening date not clear until a few days before, Tone had to rely heavily on social media and other digital marketing to spread the word. It worked and an amazing 4,031 people used the pool for casual swimming within the first week.

- 3.13 The official re-opening took place on Sunday, 1 June 2014 with Mark Foster cutting the ribbon. This event was organised by Taunton Deane Borough Council with the help of Tone staff. The site was closed for public swimming until Noon when customers had the chance to come in and meet Mark and have their photos taken with him.
- 3.14 Tone Leisure and Taunton Deane continue to press for the snagging works to be completed by the contractors.

Vivary Adventure Centre - Golf

- 3.15 Season ticket renewals have been strong year to date despite the damage to the course during the latter part of the winter. Taunton Deane has gratefully assisted Tone Leisure in removing the trees and the greens are now all fully recovered. Further works are planned by the Council to the badly damaged boundaries, while Tone are completing a full tree survey to determine which other trees need to come down before next winter.

Councillor Catherine Herbert



# **Council Meeting – 22 July 2014**

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

### **1. Changes to Enhanced Right to Buy**

- 1.1 The Housing Order 2014 states that the Right to Buy discount will increase the cash caps amounts annually by the Consumer Price Index. The Right to Buy maximum discount will therefore increase from £75,000 to £77,000. This will come into force from 21 July 2014.
- 1.2 The change will apply immediately to all live applications, regardless of where they are in the process.

### **2. Right to Buy Applications**

- 2.1 There are currently eight applications in the pipeline which will be affected by the changes with the discount on each being increased by £2,000.
- 2.2 Most applications do proceed to sale, the dropout rate being around 25%.
- 2.3 Last year, we sold 47 properties (of which 10 were flats and 37 houses). To date, we have received 19 applications since April 2014. We have completed on 11 properties so far this year, however, all of the 11 are from applications submitted in 2013.

### **3. Tenant Services Management Board (TSMB) Election**

- 3.1 The TSMB is coming to the end of its term of office, extended until September 2014, and elections will be held shortly. Most of the current members are offering themselves for re-election and nine applications have been received at the time of writing.
- 3.2 I would like to thank the current members for their efforts and look forward to working with the new Board.

### **4. Tenants' Forum**

- 4.1 The Forum's Annual General Meeting was held on 8 July 2014 and cheques were presented for the grants made by the Forum for Youth Initiatives.

- 4.2 My thanks go to the Forum members who are very active in carrying out void inspections, helping to select units and tiling choices for the new refurbishment programme etc.

## **5. Affordable Housing Open Day**

- 5.1 This has become a very successful annual event, becoming even more popular following its change of venue to the County Cricket Ground .
- 5.2 Not only do the public have the opportunity to seek advice on all aspects of Affordable Housing, including Low Cost Open Market, Shared Ownership etc but it is a very useful networking event for providers and other organisations.

## **6. Deane Housing Development**

- 6.1 This is the new name for the development arm of the Council's Housing department which will appear, with its logo, on the boards at our building sites.
- 6.2 Deane Housing Development has also joined the Affordable Housing Partnership as a full member, taking the place of Magna who have chosen to drop to 'tier 2' membership.

## **7. Housing Development and Enabling Manager**

- 7.1 I am pleased to report that Jo Humble has been appointed to this new post.

Councillor Jean Adkins

# **Council Meeting – 22 July 2014**

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

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

#### **Corporate Services**

- 1.1 The prime focus over the past couple of months for Corporate Services has been the recruitment to the tier 4/5 management structure. This process has gone well and the majority of the positions in the new structure have been filled. The key priorities for the next quarter are to implement the new tier 4/5 structure (which has already started), finalise the recruitment to the tier 4/5 structure and design a structure for the remainder of the staff in the services (tier 6).

#### **Corporate and Client Team**

- 1.2 The recruitment and implementation of the tier 4/5 structure has been achieved to date without a significant impact on day-to-day service delivery. The Corporate and Client Services Team continue to provide vital support services to both Councils in the areas of Corporate Performance, Strategy, Customer Services (West Somerset Council (WSC)), Facilities Management (including Corporate Administration and Word Processing), HR, ICT, Southwest One contract management, Complaints, Ombudsman, Freedom of Information and Data Protection.

#### **Shared Services**

- 1.3 Corporate Services continues to provide key support to the Shared Services project and specifically project management, HR and ICT expertise. Under the new tier 4/5 structure, Programme Management support will be provided to develop and implement the forthcoming transformation programme. The ICT link between The Deane House and West Somerset House is now live and working. This is essential to our ability to work in partnership, provides secure e-mail between the two sites and allows officers at both sites to view Outlook calendars.

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

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

- 2.1 Since 1 April 2014, the Health and Safety Strategy and key performance monitoring arrangements have been in place. This strategy document has now been formally approved and adopted by the Corporate Governance Committee. As a result, the programme of audits of workplaces by the Health and Safety Team is now underway and the accident reporting and investigation policy is in place.

### **Health and Safety Inductions**

- 2.2 The induction information for new employees had been reviewed and refreshed both to provide up-to-date Health and Safety information and ensure it reflects the Joint Management and Shared Services (JMASS) project. A corporate Health and Safety induction was delivered to new starters within the organisation on 11 June 2014. This included employees of WSC who are now working for the shared service organisation. An induction for new starters at Deane DLO was carried out on 19 May 2014.

### **Voids Audit**

- 2.3 An initial audit was carried out of the work of the Deane DLO Voids Team, including site visits to four properties undergoing refurbishment. A report has been provided to the Voids Manager.

### **Deane DLO Stores Audit**

- 2.4 An audit has also been carried out of the Deane DLO Stores and the audit findings reviewed with the Service Manager.

### **Health Surveillance Assessments**

- 2.5 Health surveillance for at risk Deane DLO employees has been progressed with HR and Devon County Council as a service provider. Catrin Brown and Kate Woollard undertook training to allow them to carry out basic initial health surveillance assessments for employees.

## **3. Customer Contact Centre**

### **Best Shared Services Initiative Award**

- 3.1 I was delighted to learn earlier this month that our Customer Contact Centre had won the Best Shared Services Initiative at this year's South West Contact Centre Forum annual awards.
- 3.2 I believe that this award reflects the success of the team's collaborative and joined up approach in the handling of customer contact during the severe weather situation in January to March 2014 across all partners.

- 3.3 It is also reflective of the hard work of everybody involved in the response across Taunton Deane, Somerset County Council and Southwest One (SW1) which minimised the impact to our customers during these challenging months.
- 3,4 I congratulate all members of staff in the Customer Contact Centre on their achievement and the well-earned recognition of their daily commitment in all circumstances.

### Service Highlights

- 3.5 The service continues to be high performing, with all performance indicators achieved or exceeded during the past quarter.
- 3.6 The new technology implemented in 2013 has directly reduced customer abandonment rates from an average of 4.5% to 1.5%. This is as a direct result of functionality now available to advise customers of their position in the queue.

### Overview of service performance

- 3.7 Client Customer Satisfaction results showed that between 78% and 87% of client responses rated our services as good or very good.
- 3.8 92% of external customers rated the service they received to be good or very good.
- 3.9 98% of contacts received were resolved at 1st Point Of Contact.
- 3.10 During the year 2013/2014, four complaints were received from a total of 394,798 transactions across all channels.

### Industry comparison

	<b>UK Public Sector Average</b>	<b>SWOne Average 2013/14</b>
<b>% of calls abandoned</b>	5.2%	3.8%
<b>Speed of answer (Secs)</b>	30 seconds	21 seconds
<b>Customer Satisfaction</b>	63% positive	92% positive
<b>Contacts resolved at 1<sup>st</sup> POC</b>	80%	98%

## **Service Development – Technology**

- 3.11 In the 2013 telephony refresh programme, the following new technology was implemented to enhance the overall customer experience:-
- 3.12 New ACD (Automated Call Distributer) - This is the core inbound contact management technology which allows telephone, email, SMS, social media and web chat contacts to be routed into the Contact Centre in a blended environment.
- 3.13 Automation systems - This technology allows for low complexity transactions to be moved into an automated environment if appropriate. For example, payment transactions with the direct benefit of increasing access hours and enhanced Payment Card Industry Standard compliance.
- 3.14 Quality Management system - This technology enhances the overall quality monitoring framework by allowing self-assessment and online collaboration between Team Leaders, Advisers and Quality Assurance Leads.
- 3.15 Workforce Management system - This technology provides intelligent workforce planning and supports overall resource planning strategies allowing the Contact Centre to flex up and down depending on predicted demand.

## **Successes**

- 3.16 There has been no downtime since implementation.
- 3.17 There has been around 50% take-up of automated payments, with no negative feedback.

## **4. Health and Wellbeing**

### **Health and Wellbeing Audit**

- 4.1 The Taunton Deane Health and Wellbeing Strategy and action plan were developed and taken through the Community Scrutiny Committee and approved by the Executive in April 2014. The documents have now been approved and commended by the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board. The action plan is due to be adopted by the Joint Management Team to ensure its delivery during 2014-2015.
- 4.2 Work towards delivering the Health and Wellbeing Strategy is already progressing.

- 4.3 Both Taunton Deane and WSC are well on the way to becoming Dementia Friendly organisations and 154 Dementia Friends have been created by training staff in Supported Housing, Allocations, Repairs, Wellington Community Office, as well individuals from a range of Taunton Deane and WSC departments and Council Members.
- 4.4 Customer Services, Deane DLO and Estate Officers need a focused approach supported by management to ensure staff are trained.
- 4.5 Discussions have begun in North Taunton and Wellington to support communities to become Dementia Friendly. Work is due to start in the autumn.
- 4.5 The Council also continues to support Reminiscence Learning's Archive Project to deliver training in schools in Wellington around dementia awareness and prevention and to work with Dementia sufferers.
- 4.6 Taunton Deane has now designated many of its children's play areas as No Smoking Zones. Signs are in place to discourage adults from smoking around young children while they play.
- 4.7 This year, between the Voluntary and Community Sector Grant Fund, the Tenants Forum, and the Taunton Unparished Fund, £87,000 has been awarded to 35 organisations to deliver a wide range of activities aimed at improving the Health and Wellbeing of individuals and communities in Taunton Deane. These included dance groups for older people to reduce isolation and improve mobility, sporting activity sessions to be held in local parks for young people, the provision of healthy food parcels for people in need, drug and alcohol awareness training in schools and many more.
- 4.8 Looking ahead, the Assistant Director for Housing and Community Development is due to co-ordinate and deliver a Housing workshop on 17 July 2014 to the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board to make the case for investment in Housing and the links to Health and Wellbeing.
- 4.9 He will also be attending the Somerset Mental Health Summit meeting to support a presentation on the benefits of the Halcon One Team model and to discuss how the Council can improve working arrangements with the Mental Health teams to ensure people in our most vulnerable communities are receiving the support they need.

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

### **Legal Shared Services**

- 5.1 Following the undertaking of an exploratory piece of work by the Somerset Monitoring Officers Group on behalf of the County Wide Task and Finish Group, a detailed business case is being prepared with a view to establishing an initial shared Legal Service between Taunton Deane, Mendip and West Somerset Councils.
- 5.2 The intention is for the three Councils to consider the business case in the autumn, so that the new arrangements could be implemented in late 2014 or early 2015. This initiative will not prevent the continued close collaboration in respect of Legal Services with the other three local authorities in Somerset and any/all of them joining the shared service at a later date should it suit all parties concerned.

### **In-House Legal Team**

- 5.3 The Legal Services Manager has designed and introduced a more formal allocation of casework process to enable work flow to be more accurately co-ordinated and monitored. The Manager will also be integral to developing an implementation plan in respect of the shared Legal Services project referred to above during the next few months, whilst continuing to manage the priorities/casework for the in-house Legal Team and undertake casework and attend meetings as Solicitor to the Council.

### **Joint Independent Remuneration Panel**

- 5.4 The possibility of Taunton Deane joining the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel which currently serves SCC and WSC was discussed at the meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee held on 29 May 2014, when it was agreed not to support this proposal due to uncertainties in respect of whether the change would deliver sufficient financial savings and concern at the composition of the Panel.
- 5.5 These issues have been reported back to the Joint Panel and no further action will be taken pending a response to these matters. In the meantime, Mendip District Council has agreed to join the Joint Panel.

### **Electoral Services**

- 5.6 The European Elections were held on 22 May 2014 with the count being undertaken on Sunday, 25 May 2014. I am pleased to say that everything went smoothly with the verification and count producing accurate results, which is a great credit to the new Elections Team. The Electoral Commission has subsequently confirmed that all required standards were met.
- 5.7 Individual Electoral Registration (IER) has now gone live. The Shared Electoral Services Team are accepting applications to register in paper format, over the telephone and on-line.



- 5.8 The Confirmation Live Run was on 26 June 2014, when all of the data from the Electoral Register for Taunton Deane was uploaded to the Department of Work and Pensions for matching. The upload went very smoothly and the records were ready to be downloaded by Tuesday, 1 July. The matching results were better than the results of the dry run that was undertaken in October last year (79.31% for Taunton Deane). A total of 81.90% for Taunton Deane were matched green, so these people will receive a letter to confirm they are on the Electoral Register without having to do anything.
- 5.9 Local data matching will be undertaken on the remaining records (those matched amber and red), which will hopefully result in more records being matched and confirmed. After local data matching, any electors with an amber or red match will automatically receive an Invitation to Register form, which will be followed up with two reminders and a personal visit to encourage registration.
- 5.10 It is worth pointing out that any electors who are not matched will not be deleted from the Electoral Register prior to next year's elections. Any electors with postal or proxy votes who do not match, however, will lose their postal or proxy vote unless they successfully register under IER using the new application process. If you have any detailed questions on this new process, please contact the Electoral Services Team.

## **Democratic Services**

- 5.11 A successful and well attended Annual Council meeting was held at Taunton Rugby Club, Bathpool, Taunton on 8 May 2014, with many tributes for the out-going Mayor, Councillor Libby Lisgo, and a warm welcome for the new Mayor, Councillor David Durdan. I thank the Democratic Services Team for their excellent behind-the-scenes support that was vital in ensuring this event ran smoothly.

## **6. Resources**

### **Procurement**

- 6.1 The Resources Team continues to monitor the delivery of the Procurement Transformation Project and day-to-day procurement service delivered by SW1. As reported in the Quarter 4 monitoring report to Executive and Scrutiny this month, £1,967,000 savings have been delivered to the Council through the signed-off procurement related initiatives.
- 6.2 A further £1,211,000 of savings are scheduled to be delivered from these signed-off initiatives during the remainder of the SW1 contract.

- 6.3 The Strategic Procurement Service is reviewing the 'pipeline' of further possible initiatives for Taunton Deane in order to provide a clearer forecast of likely savings at the end of the current SW1 contract in 2017. The current best estimate is that a total of £4,970,000 savings could be delivered.

## **Finance Services**

- 6.4 The Finance Service has been focusing on the financial year-end and has successfully produced the 2013/2014 Statement of Accounts, approved by the Director of Operations (Section 151 Officer) on 30 June 2014 in line with the statutory deadline.
- 6.5 The external auditor is currently scrutinising the accounts prior to formal approval by Corporate Governance Committee in September this year.
- 6.6 In addition to the year-end work, which is significant, the team continues to support the continuing work of the JMASS Project, ensuring financial information and costings for the management and shared services structures are robust.

## **7. Revenues and Benefits**

### **Local Council Tax Support Scheme Consultation**

- 7.1 The Authority's consultation on changes to the Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) scheme ended on 23 May 2014. A total of 475 responses to the consultation document were received. A report on suggested changes to the scheme is currently being prepared, together with an analysis both of the effect the current scheme has had on customers receiving LCTS and the impact the scheme has had on our service.

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

- 7.2 'In-year' collection of both Council Tax and Business Rates is above target at the end of Quarter 1 2014/2015.
- 7.3 Speed of processing new claims and changes of circumstances remains at 7 days. More customers are making use of our 'There and Then' service, which has resulted in a further reduction in avoidable contacts.
- 7.4 Demand for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) and Discretionary Council Tax Assistance (DCTA) to help with shortfalls between benefit has remained stable. For the period up to 30 June 2014, £20,000 of our £133,000 budget has been spent on DHPs and

£10,000 of DCTA has been paid out to 80 customers – which is comparable to last year's figures.

### **IRRV Annual Awards**

- 7.5 I am delighted to report that the service has been shortlisted in three categories of the Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation (IRRV) Annual Performance awards.
- 7.6 Both the Revenues and Benefits Teams have been shortlisted in 'Team of the Year' categories for Revenues and Benefits respectively. The service is also shortlisted in the 'Excellence in Innovation' category, where the team's work in reducing avoidable contacts was showcased.
- 7.7 Inspections of the service from leading professionals from the IRRV will take place in August and September. The winners will be announced at the annual IRRV Conference Performance Awards Gala on 8 October 2014. I congratulate all members of staff in the Revenues and Benefits Team on their achievement in reaching the national finals and the well-earned recognition of their daily commitment in all circumstances.

Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams

## **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 22 July 2014 at 6.30 p.m.

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

### **1. Minutes**

The minutes of the Annual Meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council held on 8 May 2014, copies having been sent to each Member, were signed by the Mayor.

### **2. Apologies**

Councillors Edwards, A Govier, Mrs Govier and Ms Palmer.

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

Councillors Mrs Baker, Coles, Prior-Sankey, A Wedderkopp and D Wedderkopp declared personal interests as Members of Somerset County Council. Councillor Henley declared personal interests 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 Mrs Hill declared a personal interest as an employee of Somerset County Council. Councillor Tooze declared a personal interest as an employee of the UK Hydrographic Office. Councillor Wren declared a personal interest 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, 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 Swaine declared a personal interest as a part-time swimming instructor. Councillor Farbahi declared a personal interest as a local owner of land in Taunton Deane. Councillor Mrs Herbert declared a personal interest as an employee of Job Centre Plus. Councillor Ms Lisgo declared a personal interest as a

Director of Tone FM. Councillor Bishop declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item No.7 but remained in the room whilst the matter was discussed at the invitation of the other Members of the Council.

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

The following questions were asked in connection with the proposed development of land at Jurston, Wellington:-

- (i) Ann Loarridge stated that local people were concerned at the pressure this development would place on Wellington's infrastructure, in particular the roads, parking, resilience to flooding, local amenities and emergency responders. She felt the Council had a legal obligation to ensure that Wellington was resilient to the risks that this development presented.

Ms Loarridge asked when the Council would present the authoritative and most recent evidence that the local infrastructure could sustain the physical changes of this development and the pressures that an almost 20% population increase and a huge traffic increase would bring?

- (ii) Ken Bird felt that there had been a lack of thought with regard to this development during the preparation of the Core Strategy, particularly with regard to the likely impact of traffic on the town. Wellington already had a 'road to nowhere' at Longforth Farm. He asked the Council to think again about its plans for Jurston – a view which had been supported by the Town Council.
- (iii) Sarah Almond reported that Beech Hill and Laburnum Road were narrow roads which would be opened up to partly serve the new development. How could this be justified?
- (iv) Claire Bailey felt that the Jurston site was a large development alongside several others which had been, or were in the process of being built. It gave the impression that Wellington was having to take much of the development in Taunton Deane. Was this the case?
- (v) Tom Fasham referred to the access to local schools some of which were not served by footways. The predicted increase in traffic from the Jurston development would increase the danger to children walking or cycling to school. Did the Council think this was acceptable? He added that the development would require places for over 100 new pupils to be created at Court Fields School and asked if this was possible?

In response, the Leader of the Council, Councillor John Williams, stated that the adopted Core Strategy defined the likely areas suitable for development in Taunton Deane. The Council could not revisit the principle of the Strategy but could ensure local people benefitted from such developments.

The provision of infrastructure was considered with each planning application.

He was sympathetic regarding the traffic issues highlighted and the Council would work with the County Highway Authority to deliver answers. The road through the Longforth Farm development needed to be fully completed as this would be the ideal solution for diverting through traffic along this route away from the town centre.

With regard to the distribution of houses, Taunton was taking 80% of new development with Wellington 20%. A lot of thought had gone into the preparation of the Core Strategy and Taunton Deane would work with the community to achieve maximum gain from each development.

With regard to the points concerning education, these would be passed over to Somerset County Council for consideration.

#### **5. Freedom of the Borough – Councillor Clifford William Bishop**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning a proposal to admit Councillor Clifford William Bishop, as an Honorary Freeman of the Borough.

The Local Government Act 1972 (amended by the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980) allowed a Borough or City Council to admit “persons of distinction and persons who had in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the City, Borough or Royal Borough” as Honorary Freemen.

Conferring the title of Honorary Freeman was the highest honour that a Council of a City or Borough could bestow. Taunton Deane Borough Council had granted this honour on only four previous occasions.

Councillor Bishop had been an elected Councillor for over 50 years both at both district and parish level. During that time he had made a significant contribution to the local community of Taunton Deane generally and of the Bradford on Tone, Langford Budville, Nynehead and Oake Parishes in particular.

Should Members agree to grant this honour to Councillor Bishop there was a procedure, laid down in statute, which had to be followed involving the holding of a special meeting of the Council when a formal presentation would be made and the Honorary Freedom granted.

**Resolved** that the proposal that Councillor Clifford William Bishop be made an Honorary Freeman of the Borough in recognition of the eminent service rendered by him to the Taunton Deane community, be supported.

#### **6. Appointment of a replacement Non-Voting Independent Co-optee to the Council’s Standards Committee**

The Council had previously agreed the composition of the Council's Standards Committee to include three non-voting independent co-optees.

Earlier in the year, Mr Adrian Cox notified the Council that he wished to resign his position on the Committee.

At its most recent meeting, the Standards Committee had considered the replacement of Mr Cox and decided to offer the vacant position to Mr Lynn Rogers who, under the former Standards Regime, had served the Standards Committee as one of its independent members.

**Resolved** that Mr Lynn Rogers be appointed to the Council's Standards Committee as a non-voting independent co-optee.

## 7. **Superfast Broadband Extension – Request for Match Funding**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the proposed extension of superfast broadband in Taunton Deane.

Widening the availability of superfast broadband had become vitally important for all elements of the community, particularly businesses in the Taunton Deane area.

The current challenges around road infrastructure combined with the perceived shortage of employment land presented a significant challenge to the growth agenda in Taunton and inward investment potential. Superfast broadband was therefore an essential utility for the majority of our businesses and increasing its availability would assist with growth.

The current Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) Programme was aimed to deliver 90% superfast broadband coverage to the area by the end of 2016. In Taunton this translated into a projected increase of coverage which was slightly higher than the target figure for premises. This would mean a significant projected increase in the businesses and homes in the area that would be able to access superfast broadband.

The provision of superfast broadband in the more rural areas of Taunton Deane was challenging due to a range of technical and practical factors that increased costs. Superfast broadband in the terms of this project was a speed of 24 Megabytes (MB) or more.

This would leave 10% of the CDS area without any improvement in broadband speeds, which equated to approximately 90,000 premises. This gap in broadband provision had been recognised by the Government, which under the Superfast Extension Programme (SEP) had made available an additional £250,000,000 with the objective of bringing the United Kingdom (UK) up to 95% superfast broadband coverage by the end of 2017.

The Government had recently announced how this funding would be allocated. CDS had been granted £22,750,000 - the largest single allocation made to a programme in England. To draw down this funding the Government had stipulated that Local Authorities should provide 50% match funding.

Reported that Somerset County Council (SCC) had already taken the decision to agree an in principle capital match contribution of up to £2,000,000.

Following this, the District Councils had been briefed on the SEP and asked to consider their own capital contributions to support a full application to BD:UK (Broadband Delivery UK) and collectively contribute an additional £2,000,000.

The Taunton Deane contribution was an element of the Somerset Districts/Borough contribution. The breakdown illustrated that the commitment in principle by Taunton Deane Borough Council of £380,000 would play a part in securing significant match funding.

The impact of this proposed extension, subject to the provision of appropriate funding, would increase premises coverage by an additional 3,634 premises. This would leave the remaining premises not reaching broadband speeds of 24mb per second, although broadband speeds were expected to increase to nearly all properties.

It was expected that a new procurement exercise would be required so that more appropriate technologies, such as wireless or 4G, could be deployed. Given the nature of the geography in question, CDS expected that these technologies would be required so as to ensure value for money and to deliver the additional superfast broadband coverage into the deeply rural areas.

A detailed partnering agreement and governance arrangements would be required at a later date following full consultation with all of the Councils in Somerset who were able to make available a capital contribution.

In order to secure this extension an agreement in principle is required to a total capital funding commitment of £380,000. This could be spread over three years (£130,000 in 2014/2015, £130,000 in 2015/2016, and £120,000 in 2016/2017), recognising this might have an impact on the delivery programme.

The proposal clearly met the Councils ambitions, but the challenge was around affordability. The financial challenges facing the Council were well understood and this project placed an additional "call" on the Councils already scarce financial resources. The decision was whether this was more important to the Council and the community it served than some of the other calls on resources.

If Broadband was the top priority, it was recommended this should be funded from the Growth and Transformation Reserve (which had the 2014/2015 New Homes Bonus funding). The Assistant Director – Business Development would then pursue any external funding opportunities with a view to this reserve being topped up with any successful bids.

**Resolved** that:-

- (a) The recommendation of the Executive to support the match funding request to progress the Superfast Broadband Extension as set out in this



report be approved;

- (b) The sum of £380,000 for the Superfast Broadband Extension Programme as a Supplementary Estimate in the Capital Programme be approved, underwritten by the Council from the Growth and Transformation Reserves (New Homes Bonus) pending the outcome of bids for external funding.
- (c) The Assistant Director (Business Development) be requested to urgently progress bids for external funding to cover the costs underwritten by Taunton Deane Borough Council on the Superfast Broadband Extension Programme. An update report on progress to be shared with the Community Scrutiny Committee in six months time.

## 8. Accelerating Growth Delivery

The Council had established growth as a top priority and had previously earmarked New Homes Bonus funding for delivering its ambitions.

There was currently an ambitious agenda for delivering major housing and employment, regeneration and physical infrastructure schemes to enable growth outlined in the Taunton Town Centre Rethink and Taunton Growth Prospectus documents.

In order to accelerate and secure delivery of such schemes, Members had been advised that it would be necessary to make appropriate use of available New Homes Bonus funding, to commission dedicated specialist and technical support.

Such funding was needed to bring schemes to a stage where they were 'shovel ready'. In this way, the Council would be better placed to take advantage of significant funding opportunities offered by the Local Enterprise Partnership, the Government and other agencies.

Experience had shown that many of these major funding opportunities arose with little time to prepare, but required a clear business case and ability to deliver within very tight timetables.

Reported that it was proposed that a contribution of £550,000 should be made from the 2014/2015 New Homes Bonus allocation, towards technical and specialist support for accelerating delivery of growth ambitions. The proposed profile of spend to accelerate growth was set out in the following table:-

Priority	Description	14/15 (£k)	15/16 (£k)	16/17 (£k)	17/18 (£k)	Total (£k)
Highways and Transport Capacity	This funding would provide additional transport and highways related support to accelerate the delivery of major schemes which are essential to realising economic growth potential and also to speed up essential highways input to the planning process.	50	50	50	50	200

<b>Legal Capacity</b>	This funding would provide additional capacity for legal input and expertise, dedicated to growth and regeneration schemes and projects.	30	30	0	0	<b>60</b>
<b>Property and Estates Capacity</b>	This funding would enable dedicated property and estates support to resolve issues and accelerate delivery of growth and regeneration projects.	145	145	0	0	<b>290</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>225</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>550</b>

In addition to the schemes listed above, reported that a bid had been submitted for Government funding under the Homes and Communities Agency's 'Large Scale Infrastructure Programme', towards a dedicated team to accelerate delivery of major housing growth in Taunton. Major urban extensions elsewhere had had such resources to accelerate delivery and overcome day-to-day and complex matters associated with such large scale development. The outcome of this bid was expected over the summer period.

**Resolved** that the transfer of the commitment of New Homes Bonus from 2014/2015 to a new Earmarked Reserves for the purposes identified in the above table be approved, and be allocated to the Revenue Budget in each of the relevant financial years as the funds were used.

**9. Shared Services Structure for Housing and Community Development – Request for approval for one-off Housing Revenue Account redundancy costs**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the proposed new structure for Housing and Community Development which had been developed to meet the requirements for the Joint Management and Shared Services (JMASS) project.

The JMASS project had focussed on identifying savings for the General Fund and had gained approval through Full Council for use of General Fund reserves to cover redundancy costs. Approval was now sought for use of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) reserves to cover one-off redundancy costs to put in place the HRA element of the new structures.

The biggest proportion of these costs related to the Housing and Community Development structure, however some costs also related to other redundancies across the Council where a proportion of an officer's time was attributed to HRA work.

Approval was also sought for an earmarked provision for further redundancy costs that might be required for Tier 6 redundancies across the Council once these proposals had been developed. This was an estimated figure provided by Finance based on modelling which had been applied in respect of earlier JMASS work.

The opportunity would be taken to review the HRA structure as part of the

JMASS project as it would be sensible to consider both General Fund (GF) and HRA at the same time to provide the optimum structure to best meet the needs of tenants. With regard to GF services, where a significant focus was on making financial savings, the approach taken for the HRA services was very different with emphasis placed on having the right structure to invest in better outcomes for tenants, rather than to make savings for the HRA.

Although the redundancy costs borne by the HRA were fairly significant, the structure would deliver significant benefits to tenants through providing joined-up partnership working on the ground that would deliver far more effectively than the current piecemeal public sector model currently in place. The Community Area Working model proposed in the new structure used the Halcon One Team model as an exemplar and the anticipated outcomes clearly justified this one-off cost over the HRA Business Plan lifetime.

**Resolved** that a Supplementary Estimate from the Housing Revenue Account General Reserves be approved to fund the estimated one-off costs to the Housing Revenue Account of the Joint Management and Shared Services restructure to provide the necessary structure to deliver improved outcomes for tenants over the lifetime of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan. Approval was sought as follows:-

- (i) £199,000 towards the Tier 4 and 5 Housing and Community Development structure;
- (ii) £28,000 to allow the Joint Management and Shared Services project to proceed in other parts of the Council for Tier 4 and 5; and
- (iii) £120,000 as a supplementary estimate of potential future Tier 6 redundancy costs across Housing and Community Development and other Council areas, with any underspends being returned to reserves.

## 10. **Approval of Redundancies**

Considered report previously circulated, requesting Member approval of the redundancies of the Revenues, Benefits and Debt Recovery Manager (West Somerset Council) with effect from 31 July 2014 and the Planning Policy Lead (Taunton Deane) with effect from 28 February 2015.

Under the Joint Management and Share Services (JMASS) project the post holders had been placed 'at risk' of redundancy and had expressed the preference to leave the organisation. These requests allowed other staff to be slotted into posts within the new JMASS structures and had been accepted by the Assistant Director (Resources) and Assistant Director (Planning and Environment) and the Senior Leadership Team after consideration of all the financial implications and HR implications.

Full Council approval was necessary as the 2014/2015 Pay Policy Statements required severance payments for staff exceeding £100,000 to be reported to Members.

**Resolved** that the redundancies of the Revenues, Benefits and Debt Recovery Manager with effect from 31 July 2014 and the Planning Policy Lead with effect from 28 February 2015 in accordance with the financial details set out in the report be approved.

## 11. Recommendations to Council from the Executive

### (a) Financial Outturn 2013/2014

The Executive had recently considered the Council's financial performance for the 2013/2014 financial year, a summary of which was as follows:-

**General Fund (GF) Revenue** - The GF Revenue Outturn for 2013/2014 was a Net Expenditure position of £13,453,000, which was a £964,000 (6.7%) underspend against the Final Net Budget for the year. This was largely due to above forecast income levels in parking, planning, burials/cremations - as well as cost reductions in the final months of the year.

The following proposals were those the Executive wished to recommend for approval which would allocate £418,000 of the underspend or additional budget approvals for 2014/2015:-

#### ***Supplementary Requests of Underspend 2013/2014***

<b>Bid Description</b>	<b>Bid (£'000)</b>
Development of IT Strategy For TDBC	50
Cemetery Extension – Taunton	121
Grass Cutting	50
Weed Spraying	10
Street Cleansing	42
Car Park Improvements	125
Capital Grants for Parish Play Equipment/Sports Halls/Clubs	20
<b>TOTAL requested for approval</b>	<b>418</b>

The GF reserves balance as at 31 March 2014 stood at £2,480,000. This balance would reduce to £2,062,000 if the above allocations of £418,000 were approved – well above the minimum reserves level.

The Earmarked Reserves balance as at 31 March 2014 was £13,009,000, representing funds that had been set aside for specific purposes to fund expenditure in 2014/2015 or later years including future capital programme spending, a new Business Rates Smoothing reserve and funding set aside to support service restructuring and transformation projects.

**General Fund (GF) Capital** - The GF approved Capital Programme at the end of 2014/2015 was £17,973,000. This related to schemes which would be completed over the next five years. The profiled expenditure on Capital Programmes during 2014/2015 was £4,350,000, with £13,623,000 being carried forward.

**Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Revenue** - The HRA was a 'Self-

Financing' account for the Council's Housing Landlord function, which was budgeted to 'break even'. The HRA Outturn for 2013/2014 was a net underspend of £861,000 (3.3% of gross income).

The Executive had recommended that funding should be allocated from the underspend for the following projects:-

- Community Development Reserve – to allow one-off investments in Community Development - £500,000; and
- Administration Support for area based teams to March 2016 - £41,000.

The HRA Reserve balance as at 31 March 2014 stood at £3,059,000, which was above the minimum level (£1,800,000) set within the Council's Budget Strategy and HRA Business Plan.

The HRA Earmarked Reserves balance as at 31 March 2014 stood at £614,000. This included £404,000 related to the Social Housing Development Fund, which was earmarked to fund investment in new social housing provision within the Council's own housing stock.

**Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital** - The HRA approved Capital Programme at the end of 2014/2015 was £20,363,000. This related to schemes which would be completed over the next five years. The profiled expenditure on Capital Programmes during 2014/2015 was £8,647,000, with £11,655,000 being carried forward and a net underspend of £61,000 being reported.

**Deane DLO Trading Account** - The year-end financial statements reported that the DLO had made an overall profit of £332,000 after contributing £101,000 to the General Fund.

Although this surplus had been transferred to the DLO Trading Account Reserves approval was sought to transfer £25,000 of this underspend to the Capital Replacement Reserve Fund to enable fuel tanks to be replaced and £240,000 into the DLO Vehicle Replacement Earmarked Reserve.

**Deane Helpline Trading Account** - The Deane Helpline had made a net overspend of £47,000 against the final budget. However, once Technical Accounting adjustments of £51,000 had been reversed, this deficit reverted to a surplus against budget of £4,000.

**Taunton Unparished Area Fund (Special Expenses)** - Total expenditure from the fund during 2013/2014 amounted to £75,004. Currently, £40,867 remained unallocated.

The introduction of the Business Rates Retention system had introduced new financial risks for the Council. The Council's share of Business Rates funding was directly linked to the total amount of Business Rates due and collected in the area.

Taking into account the inherent risks and uncertainties within the retention system, together with accounting timing differences, it was recommended that

a contingency balance of £1,265,000 in a Business Rates Smoothing Account Reserve should be maintained. This would be monitored over future years to gauge the affects on the Council as the retention system 'matured'.

Moved by Councillor Mrs Smith, seconded by Councillor T Slattery, that part (e) of the recommendation be amended to read as follows:-

“£500,000 to fund Community Development in 2014/2015 with delegated authority for initiatives to be approved by the Portfolio Holder for Housing, as recommended by a politically balanced Members' Panel, from the Wards containing our Council House Stock along with the Chairman of the Tenant Services Management Board and the Shadow Portfolio Holder for Housing. This Panel to be set up immediately to meet and to recommend specific proposals to the Portfolio Holder who would make the decision subject to the normal governance procedures of the Council.”

The amendment was put and was carried.

On the motion of Councillor Williams, it was:-

**Resolved** that:-

- (a) The Council's (revenue and capital) performance for the year 2013/2014, for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account, including the pre-approved carry-forwards and transfers to earmarked reserves, be noted;
- (b) The Carry Forward of General Fund Capital Programme Budget totalling £13,623,000 be approved;
- (c) The Carry Forward of Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme Budget totalling £11,655,000 be approved;
- (d) HRA Supplementary Estimates in 2014/2015 in the following areas, utilising 2013/2014 underspends, be supported and that the following be approved:-
  - i. £500,000 to fund Community Development in 2014/2015 with delegated authority for initiatives to be approved by the Portfolio Holder for Housing, as recommended by a politically balanced Members' Panel, from the Wards containing our Council House Stock along with the Chairman of the Tenant Services Management Board and the Shadow Portfolio Holder for Housing. This Panel to be set up immediately to meet and to recommend specific proposals to the Portfolio Holder who would make the decision subject to the normal governance procedures of the Council; and
  - ii. £41,000 to fund Administration Support in 2014/2015 and 2015/2016.
- (e) The transfers to the DLO Trading Account Earmarked Reserves to fund

vehicle replacements and fuel tank purchases and for this to be added to the General Fund Capital Programme for 2014/2015 be also approved.

Also **resolved** that General Fund Supplementary Estimates in 2014/2015 in the areas relating to an IT Strategy for the Council, the Taunton Cemetery extension, additional grass cutting and weed spraying, street cleansing works, car park improvements and play equipment grants, utilising 2013/2014 underspends, be not supported;

**(b) Centre for Outdoor Activity and Community Hub (COACH) Project**

Consideration had recently been given to the proposed provision of a Centre for Outdoor Activity and Community Hub (COACH) on a site at French Weir, Taunton. The facility would be both a building, including a floodable boat store, and a community facility.

The intention was to provide a sustainable and functional permanent home for a wide variety of clubs and Community Groups and the replacement of the public toilets as the current ones were sited on land that was required for the COACH scheme.

An application had been submitted to Sport England for grant funding earlier in the year. Initial discussions with Sport England had shown a good level of support for the project due to its unique nature.

With regard to contributory funding from the Council, Executive Councillor Norman Cavill had agreed last year to accept the Trustees' proceeds from the sale of land at Castle Street, Tangier (the former Taunton Youth and Community Centre) on the understanding that the money would be ring fenced for capital funding of youth projects to be agreed at the appropriate time.

To support the COACH project in their application to Sport England, the Executive had been of the view that a proportion of these funds - £200,000 - should be earmarked for the project as the required funding.

The proposed term of the lease of the land at French Weir was proposed to be 125 years from a date to be agreed at a peppercorn rent. All the other terms and conditions, including those relating to the provision of replacement public toilets, would be agreed by the Council's Property Estates Team in consultation with the Executive Councillors for Leisure and Property.

On the motion of Councillor Mrs Herbert, it was

**Resolved** that:-

- (a) The grant of a long lease to the COACH Trustees at a peppercorn rent on the terms and conditions set out in the report to the Executive be approved;

- (b) A proportion of the funds - £200,000 – from the sale of the former Taunton Youth and Community Centre be assigned as funding for the COACH project to support the application for funding made to Sport England; and
- (c) When the funds were forthcoming from the sale, they be added to the Council's Capital Programme.

**(c) Council Accommodation**

Consideration had recently been given to a report concerning the future of Taunton Deane Borough Council's Office Accommodation following an options appraisal exercise in December 2013.

The two options which had been under consideration over the past six months were a new build at Firepool, Taunton and a move to County Hall.

The Deane House had been built in 1987 and had seen little refurbishment since then. The building now needed significant investment.

The Council also had the challenge of meeting an unprecedented budgetary challenge and was considering all ways of cutting overhead costs in order to safeguard investment in front line services.

The review that had been undertaken had focused on the future of the Council's main office base and had looked at options for this. Whilst a detailed financial and qualitative evaluation of the two options had been undertaken, the Council had to be mindful of a number of key factors.

The Deane House cost around £650,000 per annum to occupy and staying at this location would involve significant additional costs although, in any event, the building was too large for the Council's current requirements.

A full Condition Survey had been carried out on the building and it was likely that in the region of £3,000,000 would need to be spent during the course of the next 2-5 years to make it fit for purpose.

Other organisations which had chosen to rationalise their office accommodation had at the same time incorporated new ways of working such as "Smart Office".

The evaluation of the Council's accommodation needs had included a range of qualitative criteria, including the importance of a flexible accommodation solution. In addition, the evaluation had focussed on a "best assessment" of the accommodation needs for the Council as currently understood.

During the second half of 2013 an internal review and high level option appraisal had been undertaken culminating in the property consultancy DTZ



being appointed to undertake the detailed feasibility study of the two preferred options of either moving to County Hall or a new build at Firepool.

The review process had now included consideration of the potential increased usage of West Somerset House in Williton to accommodate the single staff structure supporting both Councils. There was the potential for additional workstations to be provided there on the basis of a more efficient desk layout and the introduction of Smart Office ways of working, thereby reducing the Taunton space requirement.

The appraisal process had brought together two areas of analysis - financial and non-financial. The following was the outcome of the Overall Value for Money assessment:-

	60%	40%	100%	
	Financial Scoring	Qualitative Scoring	Total Combined Scoring	VFM Ranking
DH SQ+	48.67	95.15	67.26	4
SCC 25- Year Lease	97.68	100.00	98.61	1
Firepool LL	73.46	98.79	83.59	2
Firepool 25 Year Lease	76.09	68.48	73.05	3

The above exercise had concluded that an accommodation solution at County Hall was the best overall Value for Money Option.

Both the main options under consideration had assumed the subsequent disposal of The Deane House and the wider site. However, there was now a clear commitment to reinvest the amount of any receipt obtained for The Deane House and site in an income generating investment.

Any agreement to move to either County Hall or Firepool would involve many substantial next steps and tasks to implement and require significant resource.

Some cost estimates had been acquired to support the project via external project management support and other professional services. These would be subject to further negotiation and suitable scrutiny via procurement. The anticipated third party costs to see the project through to completion in 2017 were in the region of £250,000. This figure included the costs associated with the disposal of The Deane House site too.

**Resolved** that the recommendations concerning the Council's future main office accommodation being located at County Hall, Taunton, the disposal or retention as a regeneration project of The Deane House site and all other matters detailed, be not supported.

## 12. 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:-

- Regional Growth Funding;
- Local Government Association Annual Conference – 8 – 10 July 2014;
- Somerset Community Foundation;
- Accommodation Project;
- 2013/2014 Underspends;
- Flood Alleviation Scheme; and
- Affordable Housing Open Day – 4 June 2014.

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

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

- Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP);
- Monitoring;
- Mid Devon Local Plan;
- Policy Team Staffing;
- Jurston Development Brief;
- Neighbourhood Planning,
- Taunton Railway Station Enhancement;
- Exeter to Taunton Metro – Wellington Railway Station; and
- Communications.

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

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

- Community Safety;
- 2014 Health Profiles for Wards across Somerset;
- Changing the lives of troubled families (Family Focus);
- Early help – getset services;
- Voluntary Community Workforce – getting ready to work;
- North Taunton One Team;
- Voluntary and Community Sector Support;
- Taunton Deane Youth Network; and
- Education for Life.

13. **Suspension of Standing Order**

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

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

The report from Councillor Cavill covered:-

- Staffing Issues;
- Business Support;
- Marketing and Tourist Information Centre;
- Taunton Town Centre;
- Jobs Club; and
- Asset Management.-+

(v) **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
- Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP).

(vi) **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.

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

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

- Changes to Enhanced Right to Buy;
- Right to Buy Applications;
- Tenant Services Management Board (TSMB) Election;
- Tenants' Forum;
- Affordable Housing Open Day;
- Deane Housing Development; and
- Housing Development and Enabling Manager.

(viii) **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, Democratic and Electoral Services;
- Resources; and
- Revenues and Benefits.

(Councillors Mrs Messenger left the meeting at 8.29 pm. Councillors Mrs Baker, Beaven, Bishop, Miss Durdan, Mrs Gaden, Hall, Henley, D Reed, P Smith, Stone, Swaine and Wren all left the meeting at 9.20 pm. Councillors T Slattery, Farbahi and Mrs Floyd left the meeting respectively at 9.29 pm, 9.51 pm and 9.54 pm.)

(The meeting ended at 9.56 pm.)