

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 30 September 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 meetings of the Council held on 22 July 2014 and 19 August 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 Proposed Loan to Somerset Waste Partnership for Waste Vehicles. Report of the Director of Operations (attached).
- 8 Review of Petition Scheme. Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (attached).
- 9 Review of the Standards Regime. Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (attached).
- 10 Proposed Membership of Joint Independent Remuneration Panel. Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (attached).
- 11 Democratic Deficit in Taunton - To consider the attached Motion proposed by Councillor Libby Lisgo and seconded by Councillor Simon Coles.

12 Part I - To deal with written questions to, and receive the following recommendation from, the Executive:-

Councillor Mark Edwards - Jurston (Wellington) Development Brief.

13 Part II - To receive reports from the following Members of the Executive:-

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

Bruce Lang  
Assistant Chief Executive

28 July 2016

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Lift access to the John Meikle Room and the other Committee Rooms on the first floor of The Deane House, is available from the main ground floor entrance. Toilet facilities, with wheelchair access, are also available off the landing directly outside the Committee Rooms.



An induction loop operates to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter.

**For further information about the meeting, please contact the Corporate Support Unit on 01823 356414 or email [r.bryant@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:r.bryant@tauntondeane.gov.uk)**

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## **Council Members:-**

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

Councillor J Warmington  
Councillor P Watson  
Councillor (Historic)Mrs E Waymouth  
Councillor D Webber  
Councillor A Wedderkopp  
Councillor D Wedderkopp  
Councillor J Williams - Leader of the Council  
Councillor G Wren

## **Taunton Deane Borough Council**

At a meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council held in the John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton on 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.)

## **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 19 August 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. Apologies**

Councillors Mrs Adkins, Farbahi and Ross.

### **2. 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.

### **3. Communications**

Councillor Williams reported that he had recently received an email with a link to an article in a national newspaper regarding 'Britain's 20 friendliest places

to live'. According to a survey conducted by a comparison website in relation to the British property market, Taunton was number three on the list.

Councillor Williams read from the article which stated:- *“You don’t have to be tanked up with the local cider to appreciate the friendliness of Taunton and the people who live there. The County Cricket Ground, beloved of West Country sports fans, is legendary for its relaxed good humour. An abundance of independent shops and businesses in the town centre reveals an idiosyncratic community brimming with optimism. There are plenty of charming Victorian terraces in town and picturesque country cottages nearby.”*

#### 4. **Financial Outturn 2013/2014 - Recommendation to Council from the Executive**

Following the decision made by Full Council on 22 July 2014 to which the ‘six month’ rule applied, a motion in accordance with Standing Order 23 (1) (b) had been received seeking rescindment of the part of the decision as to the proposed use of the General Fund (GF) Revenue 2013/2014 underspend.

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>

Moved by Councillor Coles, seconded by Councillor Prior-Sankey, that an additional £20,000 be allocated to enable Capital Grants to be provided for Play Equipment, Sports Halls and Clubs in the Taunton Unparished Area.

The amendment was put and was carried.

Moved by Councillor Coles, seconded by Councillor Prior-Sankey, that a sum of £300,000 be set aside from the Reserves towards meeting any essential



payments towards the maintenance of The Deane House whilst the outcome of the Local Government Elections in May 2015 was awaited.

The amendment was put and was lost.

On the motion of Councillor Williams, it was:-

**Resolved** that:-

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;
- 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; and
- viii. £20,000 be allocated to enable Capital Grants to be provided for Play Equipment, Sports Halls and Clubs in the Taunton Unparished Area.

## **5. Council Accommodation - Recommendation to Council from the Executive**

Following the decision made by Full Council on 22 July 2014 to which the 'six month' rule applied, a motion in accordance with Standing Order 23 (1) (b) had been received seeking rescindment of the decision concerning the future of the 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 Councils 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 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. A Virtual Freehold at Firepool ranked in second place and remaining in occupation at The Deane House and investing in the building fabric and services, ranked in last place.

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 would 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.

On the motion of Councillor Cavill, it was

**Resolved that:-**

- (1) It be agreed that the Council's preferred option for its future main office accommodation, reception and Member debating space was 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 provided to the Director of Housing and Communities to progress this project in consultation with a cross party working group including the Portfolio Holder for Asset Management and Shadow Portfolio Holder. At all stages, key decisions would be brought back to Full Council for determination;
- (3) A Supplementary Estimate of £250,000 for project related costs be approved, 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 would enable retention of the site and derived 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.

(The meeting ended at 7.45 pm.)

## **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 Job Centre Plus – Councillor Henley and Councillor Mrs Herbert**
- **Employee of UK Hydrographic Office – Councillor Tooze**
- **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**
- **Representative on the Parrett Internal Drainage Board – Councillor Gill Slattery**
- **Director of Tone FM – Councillor Ms Lisgo**
- **Owner of land in Taunton Deane – Councillor Farbahi**

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Full Council – 30 September 2014

### Loan to Somerset Waste Partnership for Waste Vehicles

#### Report of the Director of Operations

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

#### 1. Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for Taunton Deane Borough Council to loan Somerset Waste Partnership £3.5 million. South Somerset District Council (SSDC) will be considering a similar recommendation at their Full Council Meeting in October 2014.

As with any investment this is not risk free, however risks are considered to be minimal and managed through the cost sharing agreement of the Waste Partnership. There are financial benefits for the Council, particularly through increased investment income.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1 Most of the Somerset Waste Partnership's (SWP's) Refuse Collection Vehicles are approaching the end of their economic working life and need to be replaced to avoid escalating maintenance costs and the impact of increasing breakdowns on customer service. There is a contractual requirement that vehicles provided should be no more than 7 years old.
- 2.2 Somerset Waste Board (SWB) is a joint committee and not a legal entity in its own right and therefore cannot own vehicles. Currently, on behalf of the partners, Somerset County Council owns the vehicles.
- 2.3 Kier (the collection contractor) will undertake the procurement process, with Somerset County Council placing the orders for the vehicles on SWP's behalf. This will take advantage of Kier's purchasing power. It is anticipated that orders would be placed in October, with delivery being completed by the end of the financial year.

#### 3. Loan Requirement

- 3.1 Somerset Waste Partnership seeks to borrow £7million over a 7 year period, paying back both principal and interest on an annual basis.

Taunton Deane Borough Council is able to offer the partnership a fixed rate of 3.50% for £3.5 million and South Somerset are recommending the same rate for the residual £3.5 million to their Full Council meeting in October 2014. This compares with interest rates that Somerset County Council and Kier can offer (4.64% and 4.5% respectively) and therefore is considered competitive.

- 3.2 The start date of the loan would be 1st April 2015. In the event that monies are required sooner, SCC would be willing to order the vehicles and pay ahead of completion if required.

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

- 4.1 Providing a loan of £3.5 million to Somerset Waste Partnership alongside other capital commitments within the capital programme is affordable and an annual cashflow of repayments will serve to replenish cash balances.

- 4.3 Repayment of the principal amount of c£0.5 million each year will form a capital receipt which will replenish the unallocated capital, and it is proposed to 'set aside' this capital receipt to offset the capital financing of the loan. This means there is no revenue impact for the loan principal amount.

- 4.4 Providing such a loan would generate interest receipts in the region of £506,840 over the 7 year period which would support revenue budgets and equate to additional average income of £72,405 for the each of the next 7 years.

- 4.5 Our average investment return is in the region of 0.6% currently which equates to £147,000 in total on £3.5m over 7 years. The return on this loan would therefore provide additional income in the region of £51,405 per annum over the term of the loan.

- 4.6 We have consulted our Treasury Advisors, Arlingclose, and they are satisfied with the interest rate we are proposing; our ability to lend this level of funds for seven years; and the limited risk that this would attract. They also confirmed that this arrangement would fall outside of our Treasury Management Strategy as it is not an investment and therefore we do not have the restriction of counter-party limits.

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

- 5.1 The legal implications have been considered and there will be a need to draft a formal loan agreement. This will be dealt with "in-house" and costs should be minimal when compared to the size and term of the transaction.

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

6.1 None specific for this report.

## **7. Environmental and Community Safety Implications**

7.1 The environmental and community safety implications have been considered and there are not expected to be any specific implications relating to this report.

## **8. Equalities Impact**

8.1 Equalities impact has been considered in respect of this report and no specific impacts have been identified.

## **9. Risk Management**

9.1 There are credit and interest rate risks associated with this proposal. Credit risk is considered to be low as we are lending to another local authority. Interest rate risk will be mitigated through our normal treasury management arrangements.

9.2 We are confident that any risk associated with this loan is negated through the cost sharing agreement, central to the Waste Partnership and as such it is not necessary to take a charge over the assets.

## **10. Partnership Implications**

10.1 We have a vested interest in that the ability of the Waste Partnership to borrow at the best available rate will in turn be reflected in the net costs of the partnership, of which we take a share.

## **11. Recommendations**

11.1 This proposal was considered by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 18 September 2014. The minutes, which include comments from the Committee, are included in Appendix A.

11.2 Full Council is requested to:-

- (a) Agree the principle of a 7-year fixed rate loan at 3.5% to Somerset Waste Partnership of £3.5 million (detailed terms within this framework to be agreed, through delegated authority, by the S151 Officer).

(b) Agree to add this capital expenditure to the Capital Programme with the understanding that the principal payments will be treated as capital receipts offsetting the Capital Financing Requirement.

**Contact:** Shirlene Adam  
Director - Operations  
(01823) 356310  
[s.adam@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:s.adam@tauntondeane.gov.uk)



## Appendix A

### DRAFT MINUTE – CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 18 SEPTEMBER 2014

The Director – Operations attended the meeting and briefed the Committee on the opportunity that had arisen for Taunton Deane to become involved in the funding of the replacement vehicle fleet for Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP).

She explained that currently Somerset County Council (SCC) owned and funded the vehicles on behalf of all partners in SWP and the costs were shared to partners through the agreed cost sharing agreement. The fleet was approaching the end of its working life, and plans were in hand to procure replacements (the funding needed to support this was £7,000,000 for a 7 year period). Should SCC fund the replacement vehicles – the rate charged to the SWP would be 4.64%.

Having discussed various alternatives, the Director–Operations would be recommending to Full Council on 30 September 2014 that Taunton Deane and South Somerset District Council (SSDC) jointly fund the replacement fleet by offering a loan to SWP (SSDC will be taking the proposal through their Council for approval in October). The funding requirement of £7,000,000 will be offered equally by both Districts (£3,500,000 by SSDC and £3,500,000 by Taunton Deane) at a rate of 3.5%. This will benefit all partners in SWP and also provide additional interest income to SSDC and Taunton Deane.

The Council would fund the loan from internal cash management and therefore maximise the interest benefit to the Council. The details still have to be finalised but the Director–Operations envisaged a net benefit to Taunton Deane of around £40,000 - £50,000 per annum over the 7 year period.

The Committee asked for assurances on procurement which the Director confirmed was being handled by Keir on behalf of SWP (taking advantage of their purchasing power).

The Committee discussed risk – the key issue being interest rate risk and default. The Director reported that she was comfortable the Council could manage the loan within cash-flow thus avoiding the need to externalise the debt. Should interest rates move significantly this would be reviewed alongside all other treasury decisions of the Council. The Council would gain protection through the Cost Sharing Agreement for any changes to the service of the partnership.

The Director confirmed that the Council's Treasury Advisors, Arlingclose had reviewed the proposal and were supportive. Some points and questions were raised by Members that the Director – Operations said she would look at as follows:-

- Could the rate be variable to safeguard against the expected rise in interest rates anticipated in late 2015 by the Bank of England? (This was answered at the Scrutiny meeting – the loan would be fixed rate.)

- What was the timing of the replacement fleet in terms of the necessity for Money Management purposes?
- Was there any danger of competition from other Local Authorities? (This was answered at the Scrutiny meeting – the potential was open for all Districts but to date only SSDC and Taunton Deane had expressed an interest. This was due to each authority being in different positions with regard to cashflow etc).
- How was the loan to be secured and how sure was the Council that SWP was going to exist for the next 7 years? (This was answered at the Scrutiny meeting – the “assurance” would come to SSDC and the Council via the Cost Sharing Agreement).

The Committee after hearing the Director’s responses to the above questions and the promise that the points raised in the discussion would be mentioned in the paper going to Full Council, voted unanimously to support the principles of the proposal and to progress a report for Full Council consideration on 30 September 2014.

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Full Council – 30 September 2014

### Review of Petition Scheme

#### Report of the Assistant Chief Executive

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

#### 1. Executive Summary

This report sets out proposals from the Constitutional Sub-Committee which have been endorsed by the Corporate Governance Committee to review the Council's position on dealing with petitions in light of changes as a consequence of the repeal of legislation relating to this issue.

#### 2. Background

The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 made it a statutory duty for all councils to adopt a formal petition scheme. The Council duly adopted such a scheme at its meeting held on 13 July 2010.

The scheme adopted by the Council obliged the Council to respond appropriately to compliant petitions and inform people what action would be taken to address their concerns.

The scheme had to be published on the Council's website and by any other method appropriate for bringing it to the attention of those who live, work, study and do business in the Borough.

The Council was also required to respond to petitions which relate to the functions of its partner authorities and which seek an improvement in the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of the Borough.

The Council is currently required to respond to all compliant petitions and set thresholds for taking certain steps in response to a petition where practicable. There are currently three types of petitions relevant to the scheme:

- Ordinary petitions – which must contain at least 25 signatures. The petition organiser can present their petition to a meeting of the Council who will, without discussion, refer the petition to the relevant decision maker (this could be an officer of the Council or one of the Council's committees), or the petition organiser can meet with the relevant decision maker direct to present their petition.
- Petitions for Council debate – which must contain at least 1500 signatures which if validated will be debated or discussed at a meeting of the Full Council.
- Petitions calling for the Council employees to give evidence at a Scrutiny Committee meeting – which must contain at least 750 signatures which

can call for a senior Council employee to give evidence at a public meeting of a Scrutiny Committee.

To my knowledge, to date, very few petitions have been received that have required a council debate or a referral to a Scrutiny Committee.

Chapter 10 of the Localism Act 2011 has repealed the requirement for such a statutory petition scheme and mandatory new petitions facility with specified trigger points for the number of signatures required.

There is therefore now the opportunity for the Council to review its position and provide greater clarity and flexibility if it so wishes.

The Constitutional Sub-Committee gave consideration to this matter at its meetings held on 13 May and 7 August 2014.

As part of its review the Committee undertook some research to the trigger points for petition schemes that were currently operated by nearby and neighbouring local authorities – as set out in Appendix A of this report. The Sub-Committee considered various options and in particular the following three approaches:-

- 1) To retain the current scheme and perhaps consider giving this facility a higher profile to encourage the public to avail themselves of it.
- 2) To withdraw the current scheme and make the receipt and consideration of petitions as flexible as possible so that they could be dealt with in line with any correspondence received by the Council.
- 3) To continue with a more formal scheme but to vary the trigger points in terms of amounts of signatures required to encourage greater participation.

The Sub-Committee concluded that whilst there was now no duty on the Council to maintain a petition scheme, the authority had an overriding responsibility to promote democracy and it would therefore be advisable for the Council to retain a scheme of some form but to ensure that any such scheme should be flexible and user-friendly to encourage more petitions to be submitted in the future.

The Sub-Committee therefore recommended that consideration be given to instituting a simplified scheme whereby there is only one definition of a petition which must contain at least 200 signatures which, if validated, will be debated or discussed at a meeting of the Full Council. To assist users a sample petition sheet would be provided – see attached a draft of the new simplified scheme together with a possible sample petition sheet at Appendix B to this report.

The Sub-Committee submitted its proposals to the meeting of the Corporate Governance Committee on the 22 September 2014 where the proposals were endorsed and it was agreed to seek Full Council approval for the changes.

### **3. Finance Comments**

There are no significant financial implications arising from the recommended way forward. Any additional duties/workload arising from an increased use of a petition scheme would need to be met from within existing resources.

#### **4. Legal Comments**

Chapter 10 of the Localism Act 2011 has repealed Chapter 2 of Part 1 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and removed the duty on the Council to maintain a petition scheme. Nevertheless, in keeping with its general duty to promote democracy it would be advisable for the Council to retain a petition scheme of some form.

#### **5. Links to Corporate Aims**

There are no direct links to Corporate aims.

#### **6. Environmental and Community Safety Implications**

There are no direct Environmental and Community Safety Implications.

#### **7. Equalities Impact**

An Equalities Impact Assessment must be carried out if the report is in respect of:

- New initiatives/projects with an impact on staff, service or non-service users;
- New services/changes to the way services are delivered;
- New or refreshed Strategies;
- Events – Consultation/Training; and
- Financial/budget decisions.

#### **Recommended way forward**

The proposed changes to the petition scheme should not disadvantage any sections/vulnerable groups in the community.

#### **8. Risk Management**

There are no significant risk management issues arising from the report.

#### **9. Partnership Implications**

There are no significant partnership implications arising from the report.

#### **10. Recommendations**

That the proposals made by the Constitutional Sub-Committee and endorsed by the Corporate Governance Committee (set out in paragraph 2 above) be approved.

**Contact:** Bruce Lang, Assistant Chief Executive  
01984 635200  
Email: [bdlang@westsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:bdlang@westsomerset.gov.uk)

## Appendix A

### Comparison of Current Petition Schemes

<b>Council</b>	<b>Ordinary Petition Definition</b>	<b>Trigger Level for Council Debate</b>	<b>Trigger Level for Evidence Giving</b>
Taunton Deane Borough Council	Yes 25 signatures	1,500 signatures	750 signatures
West Somerset Council	No	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Sedgemoor District Council	No	1,100 signatures	550 signatures
South Somerset District Council	Yes 25 signatures	8,000 signatures	4,000 signatures
Mendip District Council	Yes 50 signatures	1,500 signatures	750 signatures
Somerset County Council	No	5,000 signatures	2,500 signatures
Cornwall Council	Yes 25 signatures	5,000 signatures	1,000 signatures
North Somerset Council	No	10,000 signatures	6,000 signatures

## Appendix B

### Presentation of Petitions

- (1)
  - (a) A petition is a written request signed by the requisite number of people appealing to an authority about a particular cause or issue.
  - (b) A petition requiring debate by full Council is a petition that contains more than 200 signatures and will be debated by full Council.
- (2) Excluded Matters are matters that are excluded from the scope of the petitions duty and these are:-
  - (a) Any matter relating to a planning decision, including about a development plan document or the community infrastructure levy;
  - (b) Any matter relating to an alcohol, gambling or sex establishment licensing decision;
  - (c) Any matter relating to an individual or entity in respect of which that individual or entity has a right of recourse to a review or right of appeal conferred by or under any enactment.
  - (d) Any matter which the Mayor believes to be scurrilous, offensive, improper, repetitious, capricious, irrelevant or otherwise objectionable.
- (3) Petitions submitted to the Council must include:-
  - (a) A clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition. It should state what action the petitioners wish the Council to take;
  - (b) The name and address and signature of any person supporting the petition;
  - (c) The name and address of the petition organiser.
- (4) All petitions will be acknowledged within 10 working days.
- (5) If a petition contains more than 200 signatures the petition will be debated at the next scheduled meeting of Ordinary council; the normal convention will be to debate no more than one petition at any one council meeting on a first come basis, subject to the discretion of the Mayor.
  - 5.1 The petition organiser will be given 5 minutes to present the petition to the meeting
  - 5.2 Councillors will discuss the petition up to a maximum of 15 minutes
  - 5.3 The council will decide how to respond to the petition which may include to take the action requested, not to take the action requested for the

reasons given in the debate, refer the matter for further investigation, or refer the matter to the Council Executive for final decision.

- (5) A petitioner has the right to request a review of the steps taken in response to the petition if they are unhappy and that request shall be made to one of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees.



# Appendix C

## Petition to Taunton Deane Borough Council

### Petition Scheme check list:

- 1. Any petition must meet the Council’s Petition Scheme requirements and be signed by at least 200 people.
- 2. Petitions with at least 200 signatures will be debated at Council.
- 3. Please send your petition to the Democratic Services Manager, Taunton Deane Borough Council, Belvedere Road, Taunton TA1 1HE. Email: [csu@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:csu@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

Alternatively you can present your petition to your local Councillor.

### Contact details of the lead petitioner:

(the person the Council will contact with responses to the petition)

<b>Name</b> (please print)	<b>Address</b> (please print)	<b>Signature</b>
	Address:  Telephone No: (Home/Work) (Mobile)  (Email)	

### We the undersigned petition the Council to:

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# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Full Council – 30 September 2014

### Review of the Standards Regime

#### Report of the Assistant Chief Executive

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

#### 1. Executive Summary

The report set out proposals put forward by the Constitutional Sub-Committee and approved by the Corporate Governance Committee with regard to the future composition and operation of the Standards Regime at the Council. This follows a request from the existing Standards Committee for arrangements to be reviewed with a view to operating in a way that would enable the Parish and independent Members to more fully participate in the process than they are able to do at present.

#### 2. Background

The Council agreed to retain a Standards Committee to oversee the Standards Regime following the Localism Act 2011 and Appendix A to this report sets out the relevant extract of the Council's Constitution in this respect.

At its meeting held on 8 July 2014, the Standards Committee reviewed the processes by which it currently operated. During the debate there was much discussion and concern shared by all Members of the Committee that since the introduction of the Localism Act 2011, the Parish Councillors and Independent Members, who were now co-opted and had no right to vote, and therefore felt increasingly disenfranchised from the process.

In addition, reference was made to the fact that now that only Taunton Deane Borough Councillors had the right to vote there was a risk that the Committee could be perceived as operating in a "political" way when any Standards Regime needed to be perceived as being objective and be able to operate in an independent manner.

The Standards Committee therefore duly agreed to request that the Constitutional Sub-Committee review the current arrangements with a view to making recommendations that would enable the Parish and Independent Members to more fully participate in the process than they were able to do at present. The Committee considered that by enabling them to act on an equal basis would encourage greater engagement, demonstrate enhanced objectivity and dispel any perception of undue political influence on standards issues.

The Constitutional Sub-Committee duly considered this matter at its meeting held on 7 August 2014 and agreed to recommend that consideration be given to amending the Constitution in respect of the Standards Committee as follows:-

- (i) to increase the Parish Council representatives from two to three;
- (ii) the selection process for such membership to be determined and implemented by the Monitoring Officer;
- (iii) Independent and Parish Members of the Committee be granted full voting rights alongside the five elected Members appointed by the Borough Council to serve on the Committee;
- (iv) the current requirement for the committee and all sub-committees to be Chaired by an elected Member be amended so that the the committee and any such sub-committees can be chaired by any Committee Member.

It was acknowledged that in the event of these recommendations being adopted, the Standards Committee would need to become an Advisory Committee in order to comply with the requirements of local government legislation and thereby need to make recommendations to Full Council.

The Sub-Committee was also cognisant of the financial pressures currently being experienced by the Council and therefore proposed that the reimbursement arrangements for members of the proposed Advisory Committee should remain as they were now to ensure that the proposal was cost neutral.

If the recommendations are adopted Appendix B sets out the amended Article 8 in regards to the Standards Advisory Committee, including track changes to set out the changes clearly.

The Sub-Committee submitted its proposals to the meeting of the Corporate Governance Committee on the 22 September 2014 where the proposals were endorsed and it was agreed to seek Full Council approval for the changes.

### **3. Finance Comments**

As referred to above, the intention is for the proposal set out in the report to be cost neutral.

### **4. Legal Comments**

If the recommendations are followed and the Committee becomes advisory then the Council would still comply with obligations placed on local authorities under the relevant legislation.

### **5. Links to Corporate Aims**

There are no direct links to Corporate aims.

### **6. Environmental and Community Safety Implications**

There are no direct Environmental and Community Safety Implications.

### **7. Equalities Impact**

An Equalities Impact Assessment must be carried out if the report is in respect of:

- New initiatives/projects with an impact on staff, service or non-service users;
- New services/changes to the way services are delivered;
- New or refreshed Strategies;
- Events – Consultation/Training; and
- Financial/budget decisions.

There are no significant equalities impacts from this report. The recommendations, if adopted, should enhance the perception of objectivity of how the Standards Regime is operated at the Council.

## **8. Risk Management**

There are no significant risk management issues arising from this report.

## **9. Partnership Implications**

The recommendations, if implemented would not prejudice partnership working, particularly in regard to the Joint Management and Shared Services Project as West Somerset Council does already operate a Standards Advisory Committee.

## **10. Recommendation**

That the proposals made by the Constitutional Sub-Committee and endorsed by the Corporate Governance Committee (set out in paragraph 2 above) be approved, to come into effect after the May 2015 local elections.

**Contact:** Bruce Lang, Assistant Chief Executive  
01984 635200  
Email: [bdlang@westsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:bdlang@westsomerset.gov.uk)

### Article 8 The Standards Committee

#### 8.1 Standards Committee

The Council will establish a Standards Committee.

#### 8.2 Constitution

##### (a) Membership

The Standards Committee will be comprised of:

- (i) Five (5) elected members from each of the political groups who are represented on the Council;
- (ii) Three (3) independent co-opted members who are not Councillors or officers of the Council or of any County, District or Unitary Council or of any Parish Council within Taunton Deane.  
(These are referred to as "Independent co-opted members");
- (iii) (Subject to the same exceptions as (ii) above) two (2) members of a parish council from within the Borough of Taunton Deane who shall represent the interests of all such Parish Councils (the Parish Members);
- (iv) Members of the Standards Committee will hold office from one Annual Meeting until the next - at which point their appointments shall be either renewed or terminated at Annual Council.

##### (b) Independent co-opted members

Independent co-opted members (see 8.2(a) (ii) above):-

- (i) Shall be selected in accordance following a recruitment and selection process;
- (ii) Will not be entitled to vote at meetings of the Committee or on any sub-committees to which they have been appointed. Their role is an advisory one.

##### (c) Parish Members

A Parish Member must be present at any meeting of the Standards Committee when matters relating to Parish Councils or their members are being considered. Parish members will not be voting members of the Committee and their role is an advisory.

#### **(d) Independent Person**

The Independent Person is a person who is appointed following a recruitment and selection process and carries out the following functions:-

- (i) They must be consulted by the authority before it makes a finding as to whether a member has failed to comply with the code of conduct or decides on action to be taken in respect of that members (this means on a decision to take no actions where the investigation finds no evidence of breach or, where the investigation finds evidence that there has been a breach, on any local resolution of the complaint, or on any finding of breach and on any decision on action as a result of that finding);
- (ii) They may be consulted by the authority in respect of a standards complaint at any other stage; any
- (iii) They **MAY** be consulted by a member or co-opted member of the Borough Council or a Parish Council against whom a complaint has been made.

#### **(e) Chairing the Committee**

The Committee shall be chaired by an elected member.

#### **(f) Sub-Committees**

The Standards Committee shall be entitled to appoint sub-committees or hearing panels to assess complaints received against members where allegations are made that a member has failed to comply with the code of conduct; where this happens the following limits will apply:-

- (i) The quorum (that is, minimum size at which business may be transacted) shall be three;
- (ii) All sub-committees shall be chaired by an elected member.
- (iii) All sub-committees must include at least three voting members.
- (iv) Sub-committees may include at least one co-opted independent member;
- (v) Where a Parish Councillor is the subject of a complaint then a Parish Member (unless s/he is the subject of that investigation) shall be appointed to that sub-committee.

The Standards Committee may appoint a sub-committee to determine any application for a dispensation should time be of the essence in the application (however there must be compliance with the statutory time limits on notification of meetings).

Any sub-committee set up to determine dispensations shall adhere to the limits as set out in (f) above.



### 8.3 Role and Function

The Standards Committee will have the following roles and functions in relation to the Borough Council and Parish Councils within Taunton Deane.

- (a) Promoting and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors and Co-opted members;
- (b) Assisting Councillors and Co-opted members to observe the Members' Code of Conduct;
- (c) Advising the Council on the adoption or revision of the Members' Code of Conduct;
- (d) Monitoring the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct;
- (e) Advising, training or arranging to train Councillors and any co-opted members on matters relating to interests set out in the Members' Code of Conduct and wider propriety issues including issuing guidance where appropriate.
- (f) Granting dispensations to Councillors and any co-opted members from requirements relating to interests set out in the Members' Code of Conduct or delegating such power to a sub-committee. Who will be authorised to determine such dispensations based on principles agreed by the Committee.
- (g) Deal with the assessment and determination of complaints under the Members' Code of Conduct relating to Members, Co-opted and Parish Members (other than the power to deal with such matters has been delegated to and exercised by the Monitoring Officer). Where the investigation finds evidence of a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct and a local resolution is not appropriate or not possible, then a Hearing Panel of the Committee (comprising three voting members of the Standards Committee agreed by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Committee Chairman) will consider and decide the complaint.
- (h) Take decisions in respect of a Member and Co-opted Members who is found on hearing to have failed to comply with the Code of Conduct, including:-
  - Reporting its findings to Council [or to the Parish Council] for information;
  - Recommending to the member's Group Leader that he/she be removed from any or all Committees or Sub-Committees of the Council;
  - Recommending to the Leader of the Council that the member be removed from the Executive Committee or removed from particular Portfolio responsibilities should the complaint refer to a Portfolio holder;
  - Instructing the Monitoring Officer to [or recommend to the Parish Council] arrange training for the member.

- Removing [or recommend to the Parish Council that the member be removed] from all outside appointed or nominated by the authority [or by the Parish Council];
  - Withdrawing [or recommend to the Parish Council that it withdraws] facilities provided to the member by the Council, such as a computer, website and/or email and Internet access;
  - Restricting contact to named officers or requiring contact through named officers; or
  - Excluding [or recommend that the Parish Council exclude] the member from the Council's offices or other premises, with the exception of meeting rooms for necessary for attending Council, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings.
- (i) Advise on the management of statutory and other registers of Interest and gifts/hospitality received;
- (j) Advise the Council on possible changes to the Constitution (except the Council and Executive Schemes of Delegation) in relation the key documents and protocols dealing with members conduct and ethical stanadrds;

## Appendix B

### Article 8 The Standards Advisory Committee

#### 8.1 Standards Advisory Committee

The Council will establish a Standards Advisory Committee.

#### 8.2 Constitution

##### (a) Membership

The Standards Advisory Committee will be comprised of:

- (i) Five (5) elected members from each of the political groups who are represented on the Council;
- (ii) Three (3) independent co-opted members who are not Councillors or officers of the Council or of any County, District or Unitary Council or of any Parish Council within Taunton Deane. (These are referred to as "Independent co-opted members");
- (iii) (Subject to the same exceptions as (ii) above) ~~threetwo~~ (23) members of ~~a~~ parish councils from within the Borough of Taunton Deane who shall represent the interests of all such Parish Councils (the Parish Members);
- (iv) Members of the Standards Committee will hold office from one Annual Meeting until the next - at which point their appointments shall be either renewed or terminated at Annual Council.

##### (b) Independent co-opted members

Independent co-opted members (see 8.2(a) (ii) above):-

- (i) ~~Ss~~ shall be selected in accordance following a recruitment and selection process ~~and will be entitled to vote.;~~ and will be entitled to vote.;
- (ii) ~~Will not be entitled to vote at meetings of the Committee or on any sub-committees to which they have been appointed. Their role is an advisory one.~~

##### (c) Parish Members

A Parish Member must be present at any meeting of the Standards Committee when matters relating to Parish Councils or their members are being considered ~~and will be entitled to vote. Parish members will not be voting members of the Committee and their role is an advisory.~~ and will be entitled to vote.

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#### **(d) Independent Person**

The Independent Person is a person who is appointed following a recruitment and selection process and carries out the following functions:-

- (i) They must be consulted by the authority before it makes a finding as to whether a member has failed to comply with the code of conduct or decides on action to be taken in respect of that members (this means on a decision to take no actions where the investigation finds no evidence of breach or, where the investigation finds evidence that there has been a breach, on any local resolution of the complaint, or on any finding of breach and on any decision on action as a result of that finding);
- (ii) They may be consulted by the authority in respect of a standards complaint at any other stage; any
- (iii) They **MAY** be consulted by a member or co-opted member of the Borough Council or a Parish Council against whom a complaint has been made.

#### **(e) Chairing the Committee**

The Committee shall be chaired by an ~~committee-elected~~ member.

#### **(f) Sub-Committees**

The Standards Advisory Committee shall be entitled to appoint sub-committees or hearing panels to assess complaints received against members where allegations are made that a member has failed to comply with the code of conduct; where this happens the following limits will apply:-

- (i) The quorum (that is, minimum size at which business may be transacted) shall be three;
- (ii) All sub-committees shall be chaired by an ~~committee elected~~ member.
- (iii) All sub-committees must include at least three voting members.
- (iv) Sub-committees may include at least one ~~co-opted~~ independent member;
- (v) Where a Parish Councillor is the subject of a complaint then a Parish Member (unless s/he is the subject of that investigation) shall be appointed to that sub-committee.

The Standards Advisory Committee may appoint a sub-committee to make recommendations on ~~determine~~ any application for a dispensation should time be of the essence in the application (however there must be compliance with the statutory time limits on notification of meetings).

Any sub-committee set up to make recommendations on ~~determine~~ dispensations shall adhere to the limits as set out in (f) above.

### 8.3 Role and Function

The Standards Advisory Committee will have the following roles and functions in relation to the Borough Council and Parish Councils within Taunton Deane and will make recommendations on :-

- (a) Promoting and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors and Co-opted members;
- (b) Assisting Councillors and Co-opted members to observe the Members' Code of Conduct;
- (c) Advising the Council on the adoption or revision of the Members' Code of Conduct;
- (d) Monitoring the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct;
- (e) Advising, training or arranging to train Councillors and any co-opted members on matters relating to interests set out in the Members' Code of Conduct and wider propriety issues including issuing guidance where appropriate.
- (f) Granting dispensations to Councillors and any co-opted members from requirements relating to interests set out in the Members' Code of Conduct or delegating such power to a sub-committee. Who will be authorised to determine such dispensations based on principles agreed by the Committee.
- (g) Deal with the assessment and determination of complaints under the Members' Code of Conduct relating to Members, Co-opted and Parish Members (other than the power to deal with such matters has been delegated to and exercised by the Monitoring Officer). Where the investigation finds evidence of a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct and a local resolution is not appropriate or not possible, then a Hearing Panel of the Committee (comprising three voting members of the Standards Committee agreed by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Committee Chairman) will consider and decide the complaint.
- (h) Take decisions in respect of a Member and Co-opted Members who is found on hearing to have failed to comply with the Code of Conduct, including:-
  - Reporting its findings to Council [or to the Parish Council] for information;
  - Recommending to the member's Group Leader that he/she be removed from any or all Committees or Sub-Committees of the Council;
  - Recommending to the Leader of the Council that the member be removed from the Executive Committee or removed from particular Portfolio responsibilities should the complaint refer to a Portfolio holder;
  - Instructing the Monitoring Officer to [or recommend to the Parish Council] arrange training for the member.

- Removing [or recommend to the Parish Council that the member be removed] from all outside appointed or nominated by the authority [or by the Parish Council];
  - Withdrawing [or recommend to the Parish Council that it withdraws] facilities provided to the member by the Council, such as a computer, website and/or email and Internet access;
  - Restricting contact to named officers or requiring contact through named officers; or
  - Excluding [or recommend that the Parish Council exclude] the member from the Council's offices or other premises, with the exception of meeting rooms for necessary for attending Council, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings.
- (i) Advise on the management of statutory and other registers of Interest and gifts/hospitality received;
- (j) Advise the Council on possible changes to the Constitution (except the Council and Executive Schemes of Delegation) in relation the key documents and protocols dealing with members conduct and ethical stanadrds;

# **Taunton Deane Borough Council**

## **Council Meeting – 30 September 2014**

### **Proposed Membership of Joint Independent Remuneration Panel**

#### **Report of the Assistant Chief Executive**

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

An opportunity has arisen for Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) to join a Joint Independent Remuneration Panel.

Each Council has to establish an Independent Remuneration Panel to advise on the scheme of Members Allowances. In this respect TDBC has an Independent Panel consisting of three Members. The legislation nevertheless allows the creation of a Joint Panel supporting more than one Council and puts no limit on the number of Councils that can be supported by an individual Panel.

The legislation recognises that a Joint Panel arrangement can be an appropriate and cost effective local arrangement. In this regard, following discussions across the County, the County Council, West Somerset Council and Mendip District Council have already agreed to have a Joint Panel and this paper recommends that TDBC should also join.

The Panel will consist of three Independent Persons appointed by the County Council and three Independent Persons appointed by the three District/Borough Councils.

The Panel would report separately to each of the four Councils to ensure continued sovereignty in terms of decision making. Each Council can therefore continue to make its own decision on Remuneration Rates as it sees fit in the light of the particular circumstances that pertain to that Authority.

Given that each Council is responsible for costs in relation to its appointees, whilst financial costs are modest, the Council should realise savings from this proposal given that currently it is necessary to budget for expenses of three appointees whereas in the new arrangement it will be only be necessary to budget for the expenses of one appointee.

The most significant benefits from the proposal will be accrued via access to County-wide officer expertise and the provision of greater resilience and increased efficiencies in terms of the use of TDBC officer time.

This proposal was considered at the meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee held on 14 August 2014 when it was recommended that the Council should agree to join the Panel.

It is therefore **recommended** that Taunton Deane Borough Council becomes a Member of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel alongside with Somerset County Council, Mendip District Council and West Somerset Council and that arrangements be made to appoint an Independent person to represent Taunton Deane Borough Council on the Joint Panel.

Contact: Bruce Lang, Assistant Chief Executive  
01984 635200  
Email: [bdlang@westsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:bdlang@westsomerset.gov.uk)



# **Council Meeting – 30 September 2014**

## **Democratic Deficit in Taunton**

**Motion proposed by Councillor Libby Lisgo and seconded by Councillor Simon Coles**

This Council recognises that there is an ongoing and increasing concern being expressed within our community about the democratic deficit at the heart of our County Town due to its unparished status.

This Council therefore resolves to ensure that services provided within the Unparished Area are not reduced and furthermore, services previously deleted such as public conveniences, are reinstated until an appropriate body or bodies, with precepting powers, is in place to properly undertake such responsibilities.

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Council Meeting – 30 September 2014

### Part I

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

### Councillor Edwards

#### Jurston (Wellington) Development Brief

The Taunton Deane Core Strategy 2011-2028 Development Plan Document adopted in September 2012 set the strategic framework for development across the district for the period to 2028. It includes a number of strategic sites including Cades/Jurston in Wellington.

In the Core Strategy Jurston is identified in Policy SS4 as a new compact urban extension east of Wellington which will include around 900 new homes at an overall average of 35-40 dwellings per hectare; 25% of new homes to be affordable homes in line with Policy CP4: Housing; A new local centre with associated community infrastructure; A new north-south link road between Taunton Road and the A38; A local bus loop to provide public transport access to and from the new residential areas; and a green wedge of approximately 30 hectares.

The Core Strategy also provides that development of strategic sites in Wellington should be further guided by a Masterplan and design code to ensure a coordinated approach to the delivery of these sites.

At a recent meeting of the Executive it was reported that a draft Development Brief had been prepared which addresses the requirements of the allocation for a Masterplan. This set out contextual information (location, history, planning policy, consultation), constraints and opportunities presented by a site and a set of principles to guide the type, form, layout and look of development for it.

The document titled "A076969 Jurston Development Brief 31.04.2014" is listed under Supporting Documents tab on the following link:

[http://consultldf.tauntondeane.gov.uk/portal/spatialplanning/jurston\\_db/jurston\\_devbrief?tab=files](http://consultldf.tauntondeane.gov.uk/portal/spatialplanning/jurston_db/jurston_devbrief?tab=files). A hard copy of the Development Brief can also be viewed by Councillors in the Members Room.

The Brief which relates solely to the Jurston parcel of the allocation, as planning consent has already been granted on the Cades Farm part of the allocation, had been published for public consultation earlier in the year and a full summary of representations received together with the Council's responses thereto were detailed in the report to the Executive.

Under the National Planning Policy Framework and Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations, the Council could adopt documents such as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) where they add value, detail and guidance to the existing policies in the Core Strategy Development Plan Document. A SPD would be an important material consideration in the determination of a future planning application for Jurston.

It is **recommended** that the Jurston Development Brief be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document to be used in the Development Management Process for assessing future applications of the Jurston site.

# **Full Council Meeting – 30 September 2014**

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

### **1. Scottish Referendum Vote**

- 1.1 I applaud the result of the Scottish Referendum deciding by a clear majority that our successful and long established historical union of Countries should continue. Had the decision been the other way I would have grave concern for the economies of both Countries as it would be nothing short of a seismic shock which would certainly have been destabilising at this stage of the Country's recovery from the recession.
- 1.2 It seems we have interesting times ahead with the Prime Minister's promise of devolution to not only Scotland but all other countries in the Union including England. We will need to watch this closely as proposals are made.

### **2. Halcon One Team**

- 2.1 I would particularly like to congratulate Councillor Jane Warmington, Portfolio Holder for Community Leadership, who was invited to speak at the Police Superintendent's Association Annual Conference earlier this month with Inspector Stuart Bell of the Avon and Somerset Police.
- 2.2 This was on the work of the Halcon One Team - reducing demand through multi-agency service transformation and it has been so successful that an award of £751,000 was received to fund rollout of this method of working across Taunton Deane. I reiterate my congratulations to Councillor Warmington and all the team for this enormous success.
- 2.3 There has been interest both County-wide and beyond, in this problem solving approach which co-ordinates existing multi-agency frontline staff into one area-based team working together. A joint initiative between the Police and the Council which has underpinned its success but driven forward by the commitment and dedication of those involved.

### **3. Firepool, Taunton**

- 3.1 I am pleased to report construction of the new junction accessing

the Firepool site from the Northern Inner Distributor Road (NIDR) is now in progress. In addition our development partner St Modwen is having positive discussions with a range of potential occupiers, consistent with the 'Taunton Rethink' use mix as approved by the Council in January 2014. A temporary parking arrangement has been agreed with PPS (private provider).

- 3.2 It was heartening to receive formal confirmation that Somerset County Council have been awarded £150,000 'Hinkley Deal' funding for construction of a new road access for buses leaving Taunton Station onto the NIDR. This will start in the near future, in time for construction to be carried out with the NIDR.
- 3.3 The 49 dwellings on the Priory Bridge Road Car Park recently granted planning consent should be commencing on site shortly and there is an application in for a further 92 dwellings as an extension to the Crest Nicholson site which is under consideration at present.
- 3.4 With the development now progressing and access assured there is interest again in the old water tower, which is a listed structure, for conversion to a restaurant. This will be a great use for a building that forms such a part of Taunton's heritage and in a wonderful location.

#### **4. Monkton Heathfield**

- 4.1 Redrow Homes have been shortlisted to receive £28,000,000 Government funding to accelerate delivery of the urban extension. We also await news from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) on an application for funding for a dedicated delivery team for Monkton Heathfield to ensure this all important development site can proceed smoothly with the necessary delivery of vital infrastructure.
- 4.2 Already in place with funding awarded by the HCA is the Monkton Heathfield Delivery Board which focuses on the present development and delivery of the Western Relief Road (WRR). The WRR is vital to the whole development as it provides an alternative route into Taunton from the A38 so helping to ease the already congested junction at Creech Castle.

#### **5. Infrastructure Funding**

- 5.1 Transport issues continue to be a major priority on the back of our successful partnership bid for £4,600,000 for Taunton Railway Station. Taunton Deane is supporting Somerset County Council

(SCC) in submitting multi-million pound bids for other major road infrastructure improvements as follows.

- 5.2 The Toneway Corridor, (the junctions at Creech Castle, Obridge and Heron Gate) provides the key connection between the A38, the M5 (Junction 25) and Taunton Town Centre. These junctions currently serve existing employment sites and suffer from high levels of congestion at peak times (both morning and afternoon). Over the next 15 years, significant levels of employment, retail and residential development are proposed - as well as urban extensions at Monkton Heathfield. This corridor is currently congested and without improvement it will act as a constraint on future growth. The projected capital cost of the scheme is £12,700,000 with funding being sought from the Growth Deal of £8,890,000.
- 5.3 Junction 25 of the M5 is not only a key access point to Taunton, but also provides a link to the second strategic route of the A303 via the A358, making it a key access point within South-West England. The junction experiences excessive congestion but particularly in both peak hours, with queues frequently extending along the A358 and occasionally backed up onto the mainline M5. Improvements are proposed which involves full signalisation and widening of the circulatory carriageway, improvement to signage on approach to the junction, widening of the eastern exit from the junction, improved pedestrian and cycling facilities. The scheme will also support the delivery of the planned growth in Taunton, including Monkton Heathfield and a potential further strategic employment site as set out in the Core Strategy. The capital cost of the scheme is £15,400,000 with the funding proposal requiring £13,860,000 from the growth deal.
- 5.4 The A358 Henlade bypass, the problems with this stretch of road are well recognised. The A358 forms part of the A303 / A30 / A358 route which provides a strategic link between the South-East and South-West regions. The A358 in this locality suffers from congestion which is constraining growth and causing air quality issues in the settlement of Henlade, a declared Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The proposal is to provide a bypass route as an alternative aligned to the south of the existing A358. The capital cost of the scheme is £31,000,000 (excludes cost of J25 as it is a separate scheme). Funding is being sought from the Growth Deal Funding of £21,700,000.
- 5.5 In addition to the present application for the Henlade bypass SCC, with support from us, have been successful in gaining Government agreement to review an upgrade of the A358 from Southfield Roundabout to J25. It is included in the Highways Agency Phase 2 study of road improvements to the A303/ A358/ A30. The hope is to secure agreement to this within the Autumn Statement by the Treasury to allow early investment in a much needed road upgrade and safety improvements to this wholly inadequate route.

- 5.6 All of applications and awards already made are essential to unlocking Taunton's full growth potential and feature in our joint Growth Prospectus with Somerset County Council, approved earlier this year.

## **6. West Park 26 Development**

- 6.1 A surge in demand for employment space at Wellington, has seen occupancy levels reach 100% in Block 1 at Westpark 26, triggering a new phase of expansion at what is the area's most exciting mixed-use business park.
- 6.2 All 40 units have been let or sold within six months of practical completion of the block. This has led to a decision to apply for planning permission for a fourth building of terrace units on the site.
- 6.3 Planning consent has now been granted for these further 18 terrace units, called Block Z, but such is the success that 7 units have already been pre-let or sold.

## **7. Broadband Availability**

- 7.1 Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) have added a new interactive map to their web site which by entering your postcode it provides a status report on present progress. This has invigorated debate particularly in the remote rural areas that are shown excluded from the improved coverage. However, it has to be recognised, the advice is only against the 90% coverage that CDS are committed to provide at present.
- 7.2 It is worth noting CDS have now secured extra funds to raise the bar to a 95% coverage and they continue to explore further techniques as to how to provide coverage for the final 5%. Concerns are raised that some may not benefit from any improvement but all is not lost yet and as a Council we will be continually pressing the case for improvement.
- 7.3 In addition, reassurance given to date that the improvements to infrastructure being made by the CDS programme are such that all properties within the area will receive a service of at least 2 mb/s by 2016. It is appreciated that 2 mb/s is not "superfast" but it is a useful speed to work with while, hopefully, further work is carried out on improving the technology to deliver a better service yet again.
- 7.4 As regards the extra funding for coverage to 95% it is confirmed that a resolution by this Council has approved an allocation of £380,000 for this initiative being the Taunton Deane contribution towards the funding.

## **8. Garden Cities to Meet Housing Demand**

- 8.1 It was interesting to be interviewed by BBC Somerset Sound about the possibility of an enormous Garden City for Taunton. A designer called David Rivulin had been awarded funding by the Government for his proposal to address the national housing shortage by constructing 40 Garden Cities across the land and Taunton was deemed a suitable location!
- 8.2 David was honest enough in his interview to acknowledge that he had no real first hand knowledge of Taunton so did not know where it could be sensibly sited but had identified Taunton on the basis of its great location and a lovely place to live. I pointed out that we already have one of the highest growth rates in the South West and the difficulties of finding sufficient land for development that would be necessary for a Garden City. With flood plain prevalent in the vale and ranges of hills either side of Taunton listed as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, I did not see how this could be sensibly taken forward!

## **9. Joint Management and Shared Service (JMASS)**

- 9.1 I am pleased to report that the Business Case we all agreed last November for JMASS is on track to deliver the savings we expected. A great achievement and I look forward to embracing the challenge of transformation for our Council.
- 9.2 The next Member Briefing on this is on 2 October 2014 at 6.15 p.m. in the John Meikle Room when we will hear more from Councillor David Tutt (Leader of Eastbourne) on the changes he drove through his Council to achieve not only savings, but better customer service too. I encourage you all to come along and find out more.

## **10. Accommodation Update**

- 10.1 The Tender Specification for external professional services is near to completion and officers are working with Southwest One Procurement to get this out. This will be a four week tender from a Government Framework.
- 10.2 Sue Tomlinson has been appointed to be the internal Project Manager for this work and the details of her terms of employment are being finalised. Sue is currently working with Chris Hall on the Open contractor install.
- 10.3 The project workstream leads are due to be confirmed this week, for example IT, Finance etc. A Member Group needs to be assembled in order to get Members involved in design issues.



10.4 The broad timetable is set out below. This is suitable in terms of SCC requirements and means no decisions here at Full Council until post-election:-

Activity	Start	End
Detailed Design	Nov 2014	Aug 2015
Heads of Terms and Agreement to Lease	Dec 2014	July 2015
On site construction	Sept 2015	Nov 2016
Fit out	Nov 2016	Dec 2016
Occupy	Dec 2016	Feb 2017

Councillor John Williams

# **Council Meeting - 30 September 2014**

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

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

#### **Corporate Services**

- 1.1 The key priorities for Corporate Services over the summer have been the implementation and embedding of the new Tier 4/5 management structure, the maintenance of service delivery and the development of a proposed Tier 6 structure. Good progress has been made in delivering these objectives.
- 1.2 A number of the services and staff within Corporate Services have been heavily involved in the development and delivery of the staff familiarisation sessions, which have been held during August for the new Tier 4/5 managers and staff transferring under TUPE from West Somerset Council.
- 1.3 Consulting on, finalising and implementing the Tier 6 structure will be a key priority for the next six months along with the identification and delivery of savings from non-staff budgets.
- 1.4 Detailed below are specific updates in respect of each of the service areas within Corporate Services.

#### **Corporate Strategy and Performance (Lead Officer: Paul Harding)**

- 1.5 This area incorporates the management of the strategy and performance functions for both Councils and includes functions in relation to the management of audit actions, complaints, local Government Ombudsman, Freedom of Information (FOI) and Data Protection.
- 1.6 Monthly meetings continue to be held with officers from the South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) in order to track progress against the delivery of the Audit Plan and an update report will be made to the September Corporate Governance meeting. A key priority that we will be progressing over the remainder of the financial year is to ensure we have identified and have robust procedures for monitoring all outstanding audit actions.
- 1.7 We have recently received statistics for the previous financial year from the Ombudsman. These indicate that five complaints were upheld by the Ombudsman in respect of Taunton Deane. We have reviewed these complaints and are satisfied that there are no identifiable

underlying trends that need to be resolved. We continue to deal with a small number of complaints from both the Ombudsman and the Information Commissioner.

- 1.8 The Quarter 1 performance report is in the process of going through the Corporate Scrutiny and Executive cycle. We are intending later in the year to look at implementing improvements to the reporting process. The Corporate Risk Register is scheduled for review by Corporate Governance in September.

### **Facilities Management and Customer Services (Lead Officer: Angela Hill)**

- 1.9 There have been no significant service delivery issues. The Facilities and Customer Services Manager has been heavily involved in getting to grips with her new role over the summer months, which incorporate facilities management for The Deane House and West Somerset House as well as management of the West Somerset Customer Services Team.
- 1.10 The service is currently assisting the Joint Management and Shared Services (JMASS) project in the delivery of new, single identity cards to enable staff access to both the Taunton and Williton Offices.

### **Human Resources (HR) and Organisation Development (OD) (Lead Officer: Fiona Wills)**

- 1.11 The HR and OD service are heavily involved in supporting managers in the delivery of the staff restructure elements of the JMASS project. In addition, a draft OD plan has been developed by the team to support staff in the new structure, which is currently with service managers for comment.
- 1.12 Corporate absence continues to be closely monitored by the team. Based on trends to date, this year we are predicting an outturn absence figure of 7.23 days per employee, which is below the national average of 8.7 days.
- 1.13 The HR Team is also working with the Revenues and Benefits Service to understand the impact of the Government's move to a Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS), which will be run by the Department of Work and Pensions. This may necessitate the transfer under TUPE of affected staff.
- 1.14 In December, new legislation comes into effect which will allow parents to share parental leave entitlement. The HR Service is currently working on a new policy to reflect the legislation and will be consulting on the policy in October 2014.

- 1.15 The team are liaising with the Pensions Service following its merging with the Devon Pension Team to form Peninsula Pensions. We are experiencing some problems with service delivery which are being raised with Peninsula Pensions.

### **ICT and Information Management (Lead Officer: Fiona Kirkham)**

- 1.16 This area incorporates the retained ICT functions for Taunton Deane, the management of the West Somerset Council (WSC) ICT service, information management for both Councils, Design and Print for Taunton Deane and website content development.
- 1.17 The team are heavily involved in managing the delivery of the ICT changes required to support the implementation of the JMASS restructure. Calendar and contact list sharing in Outlook has been implemented to enable officers working on either the Taunton Deane or WSC network to view each other's calendars and easily use e-mail.
- 1.18 We are currently in the process of implementing WIFI for The Deane House and Priory Depot. This will enable staff who use the WSC network to work from The Deane House or Priory Depot and will provide greater flexibility for staff working on the Taunton Deane network.
- 1.19 In the autumn we are aiming to implement changes to provide all staff, whether they currently use the Taunton Deane or WSC networks, with the access to the systems they need to use on both networks.
- 1.20 In August there was a power outage in the Taunton Deane Computer Room, which left us without power to the ICT servers or telephone system for a period of time. Whilst this was quickly fixed we are undertaking a lessons learned exercise to identify any technical and procedural changes we need to make.

### **Transformation and JMASS Project (Lead Officer: Kim Batchelor)**

- 1.21 A JMASS project progress update report will be going to Corporate Scrutiny in November 2014. In summary, this will report that the project is progressing well.
- 1.22 The implementation of the Tier 4/5 structure is now largely complete and familiarisation sessions have been held for the new managers over the summer. The Tier 6 structure is progressing to timetable and staff consultation will commence in October. Work has also commenced to identify the non-staff budget savings.
- 1.23 Site visits are continuing to enable us to learn from the experiences of other Councils. These will help to inform the development of the transformation programme.

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

### **Activities of the Health and Safety (H & S) Advisor**

- 2.1 A request for H & S assistance has been received from Supported Housing. An inspection of all meeting halls has been carried out. Advice relating to lone working arrangements, fire risk assessment and an audit of the Extra Care schemes are due to take place imminently.
- 2.2 An audit of the Arboriculture Team and observations of work on site have been carried out.
- 2.3 An inspection of housekeeping arrangements in The Deane House was also completed with the Unison Safety Officer.
- 2.4 Following on from asbestos management concerns raised at the last Priory Depot H & S Committee, a follow up asbestos survey has been carried out with TDBC's Asbestos Surveyor. Remedial actions have been carried out and are subject to regular monitoring. Advice has also been given on reactive asbestos arrangements in Environmental Health.
- 2.5 Regular Corporate H & S inductions are now being carried out for all new starters and employees who have transferred to Taunton Deane from WSC. All managers received training on the key priorities for H & S, dynamic risk assessment and accident and incident reporting.
- 2.6 A "Health and Safety Guide for Managers" has been produced and has been made available to all employees via the H & S intranet site at Taunton Deane and via a shared drive at WSC.
- 2.7 A package of tool box talks for managers with specific information on hazards ranging from asbestos to electrics is almost complete. The information is provided in a format that can be used by Deane DLO Managers as a brief update during a team briefing.

## **3. Customer Contact Centre**

### **Performance indicators**

- 3.1 The service has continued to perform exceptionally well in line with its contractual performance indicators, with no failures since the last update and consistently exceeding targets.
- 3.2 There has been a significant decrease in average abandonment, which is due to the implementation of enhanced queuing functionality. Specifically, the new contact centre technology now allows for certain information to be presented to customers dynamically, based on

business rules, which informs them of likely wait times and queue position.

### **New Telephony Technology**

- 3.3 The implementation of the new Siemens OpenScape Contact Centre remains extremely positive news with no interruptions to service experienced. This is specifically important because one of the primary drivers for implementing a new contact centre system was to reduce the amount of operational downtime which was a regular problem with the old MacFarlane system.
- 3.4 Whilst we have still not implemented the new automated attendant, automated payments are still proving a popular channel for our customers. Over 50% of callers wanting to make a payment to Taunton Deane now choose to use the automated system.

### **Our World at Work**

- 3.5 The Our World at Work Team, Customer Contacts' internal staff forum, continues to successfully manage staff satisfaction surveys and provides a valuable staff engagement forum for concerns and opportunities to be discussed.

### **Customer Contact Accreditation (CCA) 2014**

- 3.6 The Service has once again been successful in its application to the CCA for accreditation to the Global Standard Version 5. Following a two day re-assessment in July 2014, the Service has now received confirmation of accreditation. The Global Standard is the benchmark for outstanding contact centres which focus on the constant pursuit of perfection and quality for their customers. 2014 sees the last re-assessment of version 5 of the standard and the Service will now focus on working towards version 6 for 2015.

### **Service Delivery Plan (SDP) 2014/2015**

- 3.7 Whilst Taunton Deane has not formally agreed this year's SDP, Customer Contact has provided information on its current programme of work with SCC regarding the Operating Level Agreement (OLA) refresh. OLA's are the non-contractual agreements in place with service lines in both authorities which provide the forum for discussion and development. We hope to initiate a refresh for the Council in the coming months.

### **2014 Service Restructure**

- 3.8 The Customer Contact Service's internal restructure is progressing in line with the original time-scale set out in the proposals. Consultation took place during July 2014. In August, feedback was consolidated

and published and Phase One commenced with selection processes for Management posts. Management posts were confirmed and in position in September.

- 3.9 Phases 2-4 are expected to commence in November 2014, once the Workforce Management System is implemented. 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.

## **4. Health and Wellbeing**

### **Housing**

- 4.1 The Assistant Director for Housing and Community Development led a Housing Workshop in July 2014 with the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board. He showed the strong links between investment in housing and improved health (and resultant reduced cost to Adult Social Care and the NHS. Examples given were through tackling poor housing standards (particularly damp and mould) and addressing fuel poverty by improving thermally inefficient properties.
- 4.2 Additional improvements could be obtained through investment in the Home Improvement Agency, Disabled Facilities Grants, Handyperson Service and Lifeline Services – all of which prevent downstream costs to the National Health Service.
- 4.3 Great emphasis was given on the need to work more closely with partners such as the Mental Health Services and Adult Social Care, particularly in addressing the needs of vulnerable households at risk of homelessness.
- 4.4 The presentation was well received by the Health and Wellbeing Board, who committed to agreeing an improvement plan to address some of these areas.

### **Mental Health**

- 4.5 The Assistant Director for Housing and Community Development represented the Council at the Somerset Mental Health Summit in July 2014, where he gave a joint presentation with Sergeant James Turner from the Police on the positive impact that the Halcon One Team is having and the need for greater support and engagement from Mental Health Services to ensure people in our most vulnerable communities are receiving the support they need.

### **Temporary Emergency Lifeline**

- 4.6 Deane Helpline are in talks with Musgrove Park Hospital about trialling the installation of a temporary emergency Lifeline to help reduce bed blocking. The Telecare Services Team Manager has managed to secure 20 free Bosch Lifelines to help roll this trial out.

### **Community Activities in Meeting Halls**

- 4.7 Across the whole of Taunton Deane there is a wide range of activities taking place in Sheltered Housing and Extra Care meeting halls. The activity in these halls has increased in the last 12 months. All the activities encourage local residents to be socially active, thus avoiding isolation and loneliness which can lead to depression and other diseases.
- 4.8 Gary Kingman is currently working on a project using volunteers to make available a range of activities which can be hosted in halls and have a benefit to the wider community.
- 4.9 Other activities include eye and hearing tests, carers drop in sessions, ex-service personnel groups and memory cafes – all of which are relatively new activities.

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

### **Legal Shared Services**

- 5.1 Work on a Business Case with a view to establishing an initial shared legal service between Taunton Deane, Mendip and West Somerset Councils has continued. The intention is for a proposal to be developed which Members can consider before the end of the calendar year and, if approved, can be implemented in early 2015.
- 5.2 As has been mentioned before, this initiative will not prevent the continued close collaboration in respect of legal services with the other three local authorities in Somerset and any/or all of them joining the shared service at a later date should it suit all parties concerned.

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

- 5.2 The in-house Legal Team continues to be extremely busy. The Legal Services Manager is currently working with Human Resources to engage additional capacity for the team to ensure that the appropriate legal support can be provided for key corporate projects.

### **Joint Independent Remuneration Panel**

- 5.3 Following further discussions with SCC and an agreement in principle for changes in the composition of the proposed Joint Independent Remuneration Panel which will provide a greater balance between



SCC and District/Borough appointed representatives, this matter was given further consideration at the meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee held on 14 August 2014.

- 5.4 The Committee duly agreed to recommend to Full Council that Taunton Deane should join the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel which currently serves SCC, WSC and Mendip District Council, and this matter will be considered elsewhere on this Full Council agenda.

### **Electoral Services**

- 5.5 As part of the transformation to the new Individual Electoral Registration (IER) process, a letter was sent out to all persons on the Electoral Register. The letters, which were worded by the Electoral Commission, did cause some confusion for many members of the public in respect of references to an "open register". This resulted in a significant number of telephone and email enquiries, which put pressure on the service for a two week period at the end of July/early August 2014. This was a phenomenon shared with the rest of the country.
- 5.6 There was some inconvenience caused to members of the public who were all trying to make contact at the same time, but the majority of enquiries have now been dealt with. Hopefully, this should not occur again as it was a one-off process forming part of the transformation to the new IER process.
- 5.7 Once again, it is worth repeating that any electors who do not match following the local data matching process will not be deleted from the Electoral Register prior to next year's elections. Nevertheless, any electors with postal or proxy votes who do not match, will lose their postal or proxy votes unless they successfully register under IER using the new application process. If you have any detailed questions on this process please contact the Electoral Services Team.

### **Democratic Services**

- 5.8 The Democratic Services Team have been adapting to cover Member meetings at both The Deane House and WSC as part of the shared services project. To date, the transition has been smoothly managed and my thanks go to all the members of the team for their flexible and positive approach.

## **6. Resources**

### **Procurement**

- 6.1 We continue to monitor the delivery of the Procurement Transformation

Project and day-to-day procurement service by Southwest One. Latest information, as at 31 July 2014, reports that £2,241,000 savings have been delivered to the Council through the signed-off procurement related initiatives. A further £1,175,000 of savings are scheduled to be delivered from these signed-off initiatives during the remainder of the Southwest One contract.

- 6.2 The Strategic Procurement Service continues to review the 'pipeline' of further possible initiatives for Taunton Deane to provide a clearer forecast of likely savings at the end of the current Southwest One contract in 2017. The current best estimate is that a total of £4,990,000 savings could be delivered.

### **Financial Services**

- 6.3 As part of the Joint Management and Shared Services (JMASS) Project, the 'Tier 4 & 5' element of the management restructuring has been implemented with effect from 1 August 2014, and we welcome colleagues into the new structure for the two councils. Steve Plenty has commenced in his role as Finance Manager. Reporting to Steve are Kerry Prisco and Emily Collacott, who have been appointed as Principal Accountants. Recruitment of the vacant third Principal Accountant is underway.
- 6.4 The Financial Services Team has been supporting the annual audit of the Statement of Accounts over the summer months, undertaken by our external auditor Grant Thornton. This has progressed as planned, and the team – with help from other service areas as necessary – have been working through a number of queries, as is always the case to help the auditor complete his/her work. At the time of writing, the indications are that the auditor will endorse the Council's accounts and our arrangements to secure value for money, which is excellent news – well done to all involved. This should enable the Corporate Governance Committee to approve the Statement of Accounts at its meeting on 22 September 2014.
- 6.5 The team has also been focussing on the financial year end and has successfully produced the 2013/2014 Statement of Accounts, which was approved by the Director of Operations (S151 Officer) on 30 June 2014 in line with the statutory deadline. The external auditor is currently scrutinising the accounts prior to formal approval by the Corporate Governance Committee in September.
- 6.6 The team continues to support the service managers with their monitoring of budgets. The Q1 report to Corporate Scrutiny and the Executive provides an early estimate of the potential financial year end position if trends continue. In view of the outturn position last year, the team has worked with managers to focus on the high risk / demand-led budgets, to help improve accuracy of forecasts.

- 6.7 We are now moving into the time of year where budget setting work gathers pace. An important update on our financial position and budget approach was reported to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 18 September 2014. The service will complete the detailed budget estimates in the coming weeks, as well as support managers and portfolio holders in making important budgetary decisions.
- 6.8 In addition, 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 and are on track to deliver Business Case targets.

## **7. Revenues and Benefits**

### **Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation (IRRV) Annual Awards**

- 7.1 August was a busy month for the Revenues and Benefits Service, who hosted three separate inspections from the IRRV following their success in reaching the finals of the IRRV Annual Performance Awards. The winners will be announced on 8 October 2014 at an awards ceremony in Telford.

### **Customer Service Excellence**

- 7.2 The service will also host an annual inspection to consider re-certification for the Customer Service Excellence standard in early October.

### **Council Tax Support Scheme**

- 7.3 On 23 October 2014, the Corporate Scrutiny Committee will consider a report that provides information on the outcome of our Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme for last year, as well as setting out our options for the scheme in 2015/2016. This report follows extensive consultation undertaken in response to significant cuts in the funding provided by Government to support local CTS.

### **Council Tax and Business Rate Collection**

- 7.4 Council Tax collection at the end of August 2014 was ahead of target at 53.6% - this is an improvement on the amount collected at the same point last year. Business Rate Collection was also ahead of target at 51.82%. So far this year, we have helped 105 households in awards of Discretionary Council Tax Assistance totalling £13,500.

### **Fraud**

- 7.5 We have submitted a bid to the Department of Communities and Local Government to assist us in tackling non-benefit fraud. The Assistant

Director – Resources will present a report to the next Corporate Governance Committee on progress to date.

### **Joint Working**

- 7.6 Finally, good progress has been made by managers in the Revenues and Benefits Service in establishing joint working with West Somerset. Officers are now working across both authorities to maximise efficiencies, with an aim to provide excellent services to residents in both areas.

Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams

# **Council Meeting – 30 September 2014**

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

### **1. Site Allocations and Development Management Plan**

- 1.1 The Taunton Deane Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP) is now likely to be formally published in the New Year. The Plan which will set out more detailed development management policies as well as a number of site allocations which will be presented to members in November / December.
- 1.2 The delay to the plan is primarily as a result of a technical drag in transport modeling being signed off by Somerset County Council (SCC) and subsequent work including the Infrastructure Delivery Plan review and Viability Appraisal which is dependent on the findings of this modeling.
- 1.3 Following publication the Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State and Planning Inspectorate for examination in the Spring.

### **2. Mid Devon Junction 27**

- 2.1 At the current time, we understand that Mid Devon District Council are unlikely to contain a specific Policy for J27 in their Local Plan.
- 2.2 There are problems with retail evidence being in place in time for Plan publication (their October Committee cycle is proposed). Currently, much of the retail submission is considered poor and I understand would not constitute sound evidence to any degree. Delay for publication is unlikely due to other pressing issues which we well understand such as a five year land supply.
- 3.3 There are other leisure matters such as concert hall and cinema and the need for sequentially as well as capacity to address.
- 3.4 In addition, there are many other factors of concern surrounding their traffic figures indicating 2.3 million passengers at Tiverton Parkway (only 400,000 currently) and an increase of 1.17 million bus passengers per annum therefore Devon Highways and the Highways Agency have major concerns.

### **3. Neighbourhood Planning**

- 3.1 Bishops Lydeard along with Trull and Staplehay are currently our most active groups; both progressing towards a draft plan. They are now at the stage of balancing the communities' wishes with what can be achieved and the objective evidence to support this
- 3.2 The Council has had a number of meetings with both groups to advise on technical elements, viability and qualitative evidence requirements for their plans. Because Neighbourhood Plans, when adopted, are local planning policy it is important that issues around viability – how their proposals will be paid for and thereby affect developments – and the factual evidence – studies, reports and data – to back up their proposals, will stand up to the rigors of examination.
- 3.3 Nationally the Government is continuing their financial support for Local Planning Authorities who are supporting Neighbourhood Planning in their area. This grants scheme is essential in helping the Council with the costs associated with designation, examination and referenda. Across the country there are now 13 adopted plans, around 80 draft plans produced for consultation and over 1,000 communities working on Neighbourhood Plans.

#### **4. Monkton Heathfield Governance Board**

- 4.1 The Monkton Heathfield Governance Board which was set up as a sub-group of the Taunton Economic Advisory Board continues to meet regularly. The Board is Chaired by myself and has representation on it from Taunton Deane, SCC, the Local Economic Partnership, Environment Agency and the Homes and Community Agency as well as the developers.
- 4.2 A key focus remains the resolution of issues around delivery of the Western Relief Road and following receipt of Counsel's advice all parties feel that the Board is facilitating substantive progress on this matter. This should prevent the development from stalling when the trigger for delivery of the road is met (651 dwellings).
- 4.2 This progress is really important for securing £25,000,000 of Large Sites Infrastructure Programme funding from the Government. The site has been shortlisted and is currently going through 'due diligence'. A mechanism for assessing viability has been agreed in principle and work has also commenced on providing valuation advice.
- 4.3 A memorandum of agreement is being drafted with a timetable for all of this work to be completed as well as for the submission and determination of planning applications for the road.
- 4.4 As I write this report Taunton Deane is still awaiting a decision on the Large Sites Capacity Bid for Monkton Heathfield. A successful

outcome would fund a dedicated resource within the Council to take forward not only delivery of the consented sites, but also master planning and strategy for the delivery of infrastructure that will unlock the wider urban extension, which is absolutely critical in terms of delivery of both housing and employment in the longer term.

## **4. Car Parking**

- 4.1 Car Park usage over the first five months of the year is broadly comparable with last year across the tariff bands with income matching the expected levels.
- 4.2 The proposed housing development on Priory Bridge Road Car Park, Taunton will mean that car park closing during October 2014. This will coincide with PPS operating on a daily basis the area on the Market site currently used for overflow cricket parking.
- 4.3 The current Taunton Car Parking Strategy was produced against the backdrop of the then known Project Taunton proposals. The 'Rethink exercise' and other potential decisions regarding town centre developments require the initiation of a complete review of this Strategy over the coming months.
- 4.4 This is aimed, as always, at ensuring we have the right amount of parking in the best available places to meet the needs of the public, both for long term and shorter stays. As a Car Parking Strategy is only one aspect of the wider transport and congestion agenda, we will need to work closely with SCC.

## **5. Taunton Railway Station Enhancement**

- 5.1 Members will be aware of the Council's and Network Rail's ambitions to enhance Taunton Railway Station. The station enhancement will create a fantastic new gateway to Taunton for the traveling public, businesses and new investors.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 Joint working by officers on behalf of Taunton Deane and West Somerset Councils, alongside colleagues from SCC, has now seen the announcement of further significant local investment in Taunton Deane.
- 5.4 £150,000 for a scheme linking Taunton's new Department for Transport funded Inner Distributor Road to the rail station. This would improve connections between the railway and the new Hinkley Power Station, helping the workforce that is expected to travel by rail.

- 5.5 The Taunton Northern Inner Distributor Road is due to be completed in 2015.
- 5.6 The investment in Taunton follows the award of £4,600,000 which funds the early phases of a multi-million pound redevelopment scheme at the station being developed by Taunton Deane, SCC, Network Rail and First Great Western. This vital funding will kick start a £22,000,000 development programme of the station and surrounds which in turn is estimated to attract investment of up to £74,000,000 on the sites around.

## **6. Communications**

- 6.1 The social media and filming policy has been drafted and will be submitted to Corporate Scrutiny in the late autumn with the aim of having the policy adopted by Full Council by the end of the year.
- 6.2 Taunton Deane is focusing on Twitter as this is believed to be the most appropriate social media for the Council to use. It is proving effective as we are able to issue information very quickly and respond to issues.
- 6.3 The support of the Customer Contact Centre is extremely valuable as they can respond to tweets as they would to a telephone call or email. The swift response is certainly appreciated by the majority of those who use this channel to contact the Council.
- 6.4 The @TDBC account is attracting about 100 new followers a month with numbers standing at 816 at my time of writing – the figure changes daily – sometimes hourly – so it is not possible to give the definitive number but we are looking forward to reaching the 1000 followers – a target in our sight.
- 6.5 Twitter has enabled us to put out useful reminders and alert people to events as well as promoting what the Council is doing.
- 6.6 Communications continues to be busy, both proactively and reactively. We continue to work closely with partners including other district authorities, SCC and Somerset Waste Partnership.
- 6.7 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 - 30 September 2014

## Report of Councillor Jane Warmington - Community Leadership

### 1. Deane Dragon Trail

- 1.1 This inspirational community art project celebrating the rich history and heritage of Taunton Deane has been a huge success throughout this summer. Thirty one dragons (at the last count) sponsored by various businesses and painted by local artists have appeared across the Borough. "Mapped, Apped and Snapped", thousands of people have joined the trail, visited the dragons, which have been featured weekly in the Somerset County Gazette.
- 1.2 This terrific trail of fiery fellows was the original idea of the Mayor of Taunton Deane, Councillor Dave Durdan, to have lots of fun over the summer and raise money for local community causes. For more information about the artists, dragons and sponsors, visit [www.deanedragons.co.uk](http://www.deanedragons.co.uk).
- 1.3 Money is being raised for community projects through the sale of trail maps; the mobile phone app(lication); a large dragon money box accompanying our Mayor on his official visits is to be raffled off; wonderful dragon cards available from our Tourist Information Centre; dragon beanies on sale from Watkin Toys and the Dragon Auction at Queens College on 12 October 2014. Funds are being administered by the Somerset Community Foundation ([www.somersetcf.org.uk](http://www.somersetcf.org.uk)).
- 1.4 If you have only seen a few of the dragons, they are all being gathered together now the trail has finished, as part of the Annual Quartz Arts Festival and exhibited at Queens College from 29 September until 11 October 2014 a delegation of dragons destined to delight.
- 1.5 Many congratulations to our Mayor for this inspirational idea which has given so much pleasure to so many and made everyone smile. Hoards of children and grown-ups have followed the trail and visited different parts of Taunton Deane over the summer. The Deane Dragons will live long in the memories of many. Thank you!

### 2. Self Service Kiosks

- 2.1 The first five touch-screens have been installed in kiosks, two at The Deane House in the banking hall, one at Priorswood Community Centre, Wellington Council Offices and Milverton Community Hall. These are to enable easy access to on line services such as housing, CAB, shopping, internet and social media. They are simple and straightforward to use with trained helpers on hand to assist. There are more touch-screens to go into some of our meeting halls.
- 2.2 This is part of digital inclusion, to encourage tenants and residents to become familiar with and comfortable using information technology and making it easily

accessible in their local area. Enabling most people to contact us on line will allow us to continue to provide a face to face service for those who are not able to. The officer leading on this work is Steven Clarke, part of our Tenant Empowerment Team.

### **3. Police Superintendents Association Annual Conference**

- 3.1 The Portfolio Holder was invited to speak at the recent Police Superintendents Association Annual Conference with Inspector Stuart Bell of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary (ASC). This was about the work of the Halcon One Team – reducing demand through multi-agency service transformation. Their joint presentation was at one of the Conference Electives.
- 3.2 There has been interest both County wide and beyond, in this problem solving approach which co-ordinates existing multi-agency frontline staff into one area-based team working together, a joint initiative between the Police and the Borough Council. The Portfolio Holder is Chairman of the Silver Governance Group for the One Team.
- 3.3 Good inter-agency communication (three briefings a week in Halcon) and early intervention means issues can be dealt with promptly before reaching crisis point, a much more effective way of working and improving people's lives.

### **4. Police Innovation Fund Bid - wider One Team working**

- 4.1 A recent successful bid was submitted to the Home Office Police Innovation Fund to enable the Halcon One Team Model to be rolled across Taunton Deane focused on two other demand areas, North Taunton and Wellington, and allow Halcon to innovate further. The award was for £751,000.
- 4.2 The two lead agencies were Taunton Deane and ASC supported by Somerset County Council (SCC) (Early Help and Complex Families), Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and Somerset Partnership National Health Service Foundation Trust.
- 4.3 The bid was for the additional investment for three teams over two years and was expertly pulled together in a matter of days by John Hart, one of our Anti-Social Behaviour Officers and submitted through the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner in April 2014.
- 4.4 Evidence to support the bid was based on impressive reductions in crime, anti-social behaviour, evictions, rent arrears and domestic violence in the area over the last eighteen months and significant improvements in support for victims and families who live there.
- 4.5 These include a structured committed approach to victim care, sustained partnership approach to reducing domestic abuse, improved examples of tenants being managed more effectively, increased referrals to specialist support such as Children's Centres, the Troubled Families Programme, drugs and alcohol support, education, employment and a quarterly local newsletter delivered to every address.

- 4.6 Evidence of early intervention reducing the demand on expensive acute services, will be gathered to challenge the already stretched big budgets which pay for these and to encourage education, health and social services to invest in this preventative approach to sustain improvements and dramatically reduce demand in the future.

## **5. Taunton and District Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)**

- 5.1 Taunton CAB has just published their Annual Report and are celebrating seventy-five years of advising people from across Taunton Deane. They have recently moved to St Mary's House, Magdalene Street in Taunton. They are providing money management surgeries in North Taunton, Wellington and Halcon as part of 'Target Taunton' with support from our Housing Services.

- 5.2 The impact of the targeted service delivered in Halcon under the One Team model is dramatic. Money Matters Partnership Adviser Chris Mitchell has seen 517 residents (nearly 8%) from the Halcon Ward in twelve months (July 2013 to July 2014) and secured £141,000 in unclaimed benefits for eighty-six of them and £14,000 in lump sums. This and basic budgeting advice he provided locally from the Acorns through drop-ins, appointments and some home visits.

## **6. Troubled Families - Family Focus Integration with Getset Services**

- 6.1 Somerset County Council launched their new Getset Services during June 2014. Getset Services are the amalgamation of the following services: traditional Children's Centres; Early Intervention; Family Focus; Targeted Youth Support and Parent and Family Support Advisers (PFSA) and support families with children from nought to nineteen.
- 6.2 Getset Services are to be delivered across the community from hubs where outreach work is coordinated at former Children's Centres in Halcon (Acorns), Priorswood (Hillside), Holway (Hollies), Wellington, Williton and Minehead (Alcombe).
- 6.3 Family Focus is currently delivered by the District Councils and each District Council is delivering a slightly different model. There is a combined model of service delivery across Taunton Deane and West Somerset (WSC). The districts are commissioned until March 2015 and SCC has recently announced that it wishes to bring the management of Family Focus back in-house over a phased timetable. The project management currently involves the secondment of two Taunton Deane/WSC employees who will then revert back.
- 6.4 Taunton Deane/WSC Family Focus will be handed back to the SCC on 1 October, 2014 six months earlier than previously envisaged and there are three reasons for this:-
- (1) The service is already based within Children's Centres (now Getset Services) and the Family Focus Workers working directly with families are employed by SCC and line-managed by Getset managers. This makes for an easy transition back to full project management by SCC;

- (2) The relative success of the project locally means that the transition should be smooth with no major outstanding risks or issues; and
- (3) Recruitment to Getset Services is largely complete across Taunton Deane/WSC.

6.5 Taunton Deane/WSC has an excellent relationship with Getset Services which has been forged through the close participatory work on Family Focus during the past eighteen months. Taunton Deane/WSC will continue to be a strategic partner in the delivery of Getset and remain on the Advisory Boards for both Taunton and West Somerset. Wider One Team working will provide an enhanced Troubled Families Model across Taunton Deane.

## 7. Volunteering Event

- 7.1 There are hundreds of different opportunities to help and support the work of charities and not for profit organisations in the area ranging from helping with administration, through working with animals and the environment, to youth work. Charity Trustees are also volunteers and joining a Board of Trustees can be an exciting and challenging way to use existing skills and build new ones, while supporting a good cause.
- 7.2 Engage West Somerset, in partnership with Taunton Deane, will have held their volunteering event, hosted by Somerset County Cricket Ground in the early evening on Tuesday, 23 September 2014 with representatives from a wide range of charities available to talk about volunteering.
- 7.3 Engage's Volunteer Centre was there to give information about other opportunities for volunteering in Taunton Deane and further afield. For anyone interested in finding out more about becoming a trustee, members of Engage's Board of Trustees were on hand to answer any questions about involvement in managing a charity.
- 7.4 Independent advice for trustees and managers for those who are already trustees or involved in managing a charity or voluntary group, and would like advice, visited the Trustee and Management Surgery running throughout the evening.
- 7.5 There were three workshops - on funding sources from Lloyds Foundation; demonstrating the impact of your project from Somerset Community Foundation; and finding and keeping volunteers from Somerset Sight ([information@engagews.org.uk](mailto:information@engagews.org.uk)).
- 7.6 The following organisations booked stands to promote their volunteering opportunities:-

Girl Guides  
 Headway Somerset  
 Wiveliscombe Area Partnership  
 Compass Disability  
 Samaritans  
 Blackdown District Scouts

Conquest Centre for Disabled Riders  
 Taunton CAB  
 Healthwatch Somerset  
 Workers Educational Council  
 MPH League of Friends  
 4 – 40 volunteers (leaflets only)

In the Mix Youth Project  
Age UK  
RSPCA South West  
Somerset Community Council  
Advocacy in Somerset  
TDBC Grants

Somerset You can Do  
Bridgwater and Taunton Canal Association  
Sue Ryder  
SEAP (advocacy support for health)  
Somerset Sight (provisional)

## **8. Creechbarrow Road Hoardings Art Project**

The following panels are completed and due to go up in late October 2014:-

St James Primary School  
Six Acres Resource Centre  
Heathfield Community School  
Lavender Court Nursing Home  
Halcon Primary School  
Chill and Chat  
Streetlinkz  
Link Power and Halcon Litter Pickers

Groups with a session booked to paint their boards are:-

Monday Night Youth Group  
Link Centre Volunteers  
Family Focus  
Lane Estate Art Group  
Young Adults Project  
'Theme Board' to be painted by a small team from various groups.

PCSO Ian Warren from the Halcon One Team and the Link Power volunteers have been very helpful with moving the plywood boards from group to group.

## **9. Community Awards**

- 9.1 Congratulations to Lucy Hawkins, Housing Estate Officer, one of three Halcon One Team members to receive a Police and Crime Commissioner's Pride Award last month for her outstanding contribution to the community. Sharon Collard and Tracy Harper from SCC's Getset Services (Acorns) also received this award from the Police and Crime Commissioner at Police Headquarters at Portishead.
- 9.2 Congratulations to Avon and Somerset Police Community Support Officer Linda Ebdon (Halcon One Team) and Lesley Thomas, Manager of Priorswood Community Centre, who have been invited to lunch with the High Sheriff to receive his award for exceptional service in their communities.

Councillor Jane Warmington

# **Council Meeting – 30 September 2014**

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

### **1. Staffing issues**

- 1.1 The Joint Service Review of the staffing structure has now been completed in relation to the Economic Development Team. The proposals will be shared on 1 October 2014 along with remaining reports on reorganisation.

### **2. Business Support**

#### **New Business Grants**

- 2.1 Grants were awarded at end of August to 6 new enterprises:-

- £500 to Michael Lewis, Upper Wood Street, Taunton for his business 'Buff Box Limited@. The funding will be put towards some new refrigeration units for his food business.
- £500 to the Wiveliscombe and 10 Parishes Business group to employ a part-time person to undertake a study on the light industrial sector of the local area;
- £500 to Abi Treanor of Manning Road, Cotford St Luke towards the cost of a Licensing course and some promotional literature for her business specialising in unique alcoholic products;
- £500 to Marc Eggleton of Laurel Close, Taunton. The funds will go towards a personalised programme of Leadership and Management Development for 'Dexterous Designs', a business consultancy;
- £500 to Sally Lai of Silver Street, Wiveliscombe to fund developing her company's identity (Sally Lai Art Consultancy) and towards the cost of printing stationery; and
- £425 to Patricia Caller of Jubilee Street, Taunton towards her business, Genius PR and Events Limited, which delivers amongst other activities, The Taunton Comedy Festival. The funding will go towards a marketing campaign including banners, stationery and a new logo and branding.

- 2.2 A grant of £2,000 has also been awarded to the Blackdown Hills Business Association (BHBA), who will shortly be introducing a new weekly local craft and producer market to Castle Green, Taunton. The grant will enable BHBA to advertise and promote the new market and to support a greater number of local businesses.

#### **Investment Grant**

- 2.3 Christopher Ward of Advocate Consultancy Services Limited, has created 32 new jobs. He has been granted £32,000 to assist in setup and training costs. The business will begin trading from a town centre site during September 2014.

### **Business events**

- 2.4 A Superfast Broadband (SFBB) Roadshow is planned for the 8 October 2014. Its purpose is to raise awareness of SFBB and the opportunities it will bring to businesses and residents across Taunton Deane. All Councillors will have received an email with more detail on this and are encouraged to get people to sign up and come along.
- 2.5 Councillors will no doubt be aware that whilst there is now significant coverage across the area residents and businesses need to sign up to the service. Additional users could create more coverage in the follow up phase as higher percentages of sign up can lead to additional investment by the network providers.
- 2.6 The commissioning of the extension phase will shortly start with Ian Timms acting as Lead Officer for Taunton Deane and West Somerset Council (WSC). Members should feed any information on coverage holes to myself and Ian to enable us to secure the most effective coverage for Taunton Deane.
- 2.7 There is work continuing on the existing rollout programme to deal with shortfalls in the town centre coverage. Any business that has a poor connection can provide its address and postcode to enable us to take it up with BT.
- 2.8 Traders Boards have been installed in Wellington and Wiveliscombe Town Centres. They have been placed in the towns' car parks and will encourage local trading and marketing of businesses within the towns.

### **Support for larger businesses**

- 2.9 Current conversations are continuing with the owners of 20 larger businesses throughout Taunton Deane, most of whom are looking for land and property to enable their growth and investment. This is a very positive indicator of the recovery of Taunton Deane's economy and will directly lead to job creation. The Economic Development Team is able to offer expert advice and support to businesses including; land and property, funding, business advice and business networking.

### **Support for inward investors**

- 2.10 Extensive support is being given to prospective inward investors. These relate notably to the continuing regeneration schemes in Taunton and the upturn of the town centre in recent months. For example, discussions are currently ongoing with three national restaurant chains, each of which is

bringing a currently redundant or under-utilised property back into positive use. Those restaurants will boost the town's evening economy and will attract additional visitors to the town centre.

- 2.11 Officers are also discussing with neighbouring Councils and the Heart of the South West Local Economic Partnership a marketing programme aimed at attracting Hinkley related businesses to Somerset. This would complement our own 'Taunton: Growing for the Future' support as well as Into Somerset.

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

- 3.1 Discussions on the 10 year lease of The Brewhouse Theatre, and the Annual Funding Agreement for 2014/2-15 have been concluded. Taunton Theatre Association (TTA) has had a summer of successful performances and events managed by volunteers and delivered on a shoestring budget.
- 3.2 The TTA is now putting in place the human resources to enable it to ramp up its operation of the theatre. It has appointed a number of its Trustees and has advertised for a Chief Executive Officer.

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

- 4.1 From the Town Centre Management budget the Council has progressed the following:-
- **Town Centre Marketing**  
The Council awarded this month a contract to *Destination CMS* to deliver a year-long marketing programme for Taunton Town Centre. They will use traditional as well as digital media channels, to promote businesses in the town, as well as a continual stream of stories to raise the profile of the town centre as a destination to visit. It will aim to attract visitors locally as well as from a wider catchment area. The provider plans to establish good links with businesses and cultural providers in order to generate stories and features. This will add local value to national campaigns and holiday promotions.
  - **Footfall Counters**  
A new license to draw upon the data from the four counters in the town centre has been negotiated. They provide effective monitoring of footfall trends in the town centre, particularly during special events. This data will be linked up with the Orchard Centre counters.
  - **Cultural Events**  
The residual of the budget has been allocated to supporting cultural events. To date financial support as well as professional advice has been provided to:-



- Family Fun Day in May;
- Somerset Remembers Project in November (Museum of Somerset and Castle Green);
- Castle Green Fun Day in August;
- Party on the Park on Castle Green in August;
- Taunton Shakespeare Festival in August;
- Deane Dragon Trail, including DLO support to install the sculptures, in July, August and September. The Council sponsored its own Dragon 'Daisy Making in Vivary Park';
- Hammet Street Arts Festival in September; and
- Taunton Literary Festival in November.

### **Festive Lights and Switch on**

- 4.2 Discussions are progressing between TIME4 and Make Taunton Sparkle to provide festive lighting and an event similar to last year on 23 November, 2014 including a main stage for local artists complemented by a large street market and craft fair throughout the day. A separate producer fair is being organised by the BHBA and will be held on Castle Green on the same day.

### **Street Markets**

- 4.3 A grant of £12,000 has been given to TIME4, enabling the Community Interest Company to buy canopies for its street markets on a Friday and Saturday. This will enable TIME4 to improve the attractiveness of the markets, and are branded with the Taunton T Logo. The 20 September witnessed the first anniversary of these markets.
- 4.4 Officers are working closely with TIME4 and the licensed traders in the High Street to reorganise their current positions. This with the aim of creating greater use of the whole of the High Street and encouraging visitors and shoppers into that part of the town centre.

## **5. Job Clubs**

- 5.1 The contract with Vista to deliver Job Clubs in Halcon, Priorswood and Wellington has been temporarily extended to the end of September to provide more time to agree a future for the service.
- 5.2 An indicative amount of funding has been available through Job Centre Plus (JCP) to upskill local residents which will need to be spent by March 2015. Officers are discussing with JCP the forms of support required and the most effective mechanisms to reach those individuals.

## **6. Castle Green**

- 6.1 A coordinated action plan has been put together, led by Ian Timms, and

drawing upon all relevant services within the Council. The Plan aims to enhance the appearance and amenity of Castle Green and encourage greater use of the space by the public.

Continuing communication with the surrounding businesses is an important element of the plan, particularly to stimulate events and activities. For example, in August the Apple and Parrot Public House arranged a Party in the Park pop concert with all profits generated being donated to the local charity, Stand Against Violence. The Council assisted this first event financially, but it is hoped that in future years the event will be self financing.

## **7. Tourist Information Centre (TIC) and Marketing**

- 7.1 The Deane Dragon Trail has led to a very busy summer for the TIC team as the office has acted as the outlet for Trail maps, souvenirs and is still selling the raffle tickets to win 'Roary' at the Auction event at Queens College on the 12 October 2014. The Dragon Trail was a great success with visitor throughput in the TIC up in July and August by 35% year on year and it has been great to see so many families enjoying the trail.
- 7.2 Ticket and Travel ticket sales continue to remain positive helped by the good weather, a wider variety of events using the TIC as a box office and the on-going closure of the Travel Shop at Taunton Bus Station.
- 7.3 The Cards for Good Causes Charity Christmas Card shop reopens in the TIC on 1 October 2014 and will be open until the 23 December.
- 7.4 The new Visitor website for Taunton -[www.visitsomerset.co.uk/taunton](http://www.visitsomerset.co.uk/taunton) went live in August 2014 and remains work in progress with this site replacing the current content (including the popular events diary) in October. The Tourist Information Lead would welcome feedback and will be working with Destination CMS to add enhanced content to promote Taunton as a visitor and shopping destination over forthcoming months.

Councillor Norman Cavill

# **Council Meeting – 30 September 2014**

## **Report of Councillor James Hunt – Environmental Services**

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

- 1.1 There have been a few changes in staff in the Environmental Services Team. I would like to thank leaver Martin Stoyles for his nineteen years of service with Taunton Deane and welcome Erica Lake who takes up the post of Environmental Health Manager.
- 1.2 I would also like to thank John Lewis who also leaves this month for his service to Taunton Deane and for his advice and guidance as support officer for Somerset Waste Partnership Board Members.
- 1.3 Safe use of food on the barbeque was an area highlighted in a 'Barbecue Safety' message issued by the Environmental Team in August 2014. Again taking a proactive approach to food safety the team and the Food Standards Agency issued advice on how to avoid the increased instances of food poisoning that occur each year during the summer season when barbeque use increases.
- 1.4 Licensing are making progress towards achieving a shared Licensing service for Taunton Deane and West Somerset. Officers are now in residence at both Council offices and are taking the best practice from both authorities to move forward with a robust and resilient Licensing service.
- 1.5 Licensing are also again working closely with Economic Development, Time 4 Taunton and Make Taunton Sparkle on this year's Christmas festivities.

### **2. Deane DLO**

- 2.1 In August 2014, Taunton Deane and Somerset Waste Partnership jointly took steps to counter a growing problem with trade waste causing problems in Taunton Town Centre. A statement was issued and a letter delivered to all businesses within the town centre area instructing them on their responsibilities regarding trade waste. An improvement has been noticed.
- 2.2 Following Full Council's approval of the allocation of additional funding in August, the additional street cleansing operative is now in place in Taunton Town. This has resulted in a cleaner and a faster response to incidents. The additional weed spaying should have been completed by the time Full Council meets. The replacement bins are being sourced with consideration to the type and placement to try and mitigate some of the issues of cigarette disposal.

### **3. Somerset Waste Partnership**

- 3.1 For the next three months a total of about 5,000 households in Taunton Deane will be involved in one of three different “Recycle More” trials organised by Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP). These are to explore more ways in which we can improve the recycle rates in Somerset and so send less to landfill.
- 3.2 Each household involved is being sent full information, and anyone with concerns or questions about the Recycle More trials will be offered advice and support.
- 3.3 As well as testing new items in kerbside recycling, such as the often requested plastic containers, these small-scale, short-term trials will review recycling and refuse collection frequency.
- 3.4 In addition to the existing dozen recycled materials, including food waste, these new items will be collected in only the Recycle More trial areas:-
- Plastic pots, tubs and trays, such as yoghurt pots, margarine tubs and fruit trays.
  - Beverage cartons, such as Tetra Pak containers used for milk, juices and soups.
  - Household batteries and small electrical items, from toasters to mobile telephones.

### **4. Community Scrap Store**

- 4.1 Last year Councillor Ken Hayward brought to the attention of the Council a local Community Scrap Store which has been providing a service to schools and community groups helping to recycle scrap donated by local businesses.
- 4.2 I am pleased to report that since the store opening in May 2013 it has recycled almost 3.5 tonnes of waste that may otherwise have gone to landfill.
- 4.3 The store has now changed locations and can be found on the Somerset College campus where it is open Monday-Friday 10am-4pm and Wednesday 3pm-7pm.

Councillor James Hunt

# Council Meeting – 30 September 2014

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

### 1. Parks

- 1.1 The Taunton Flower Show went very well this year. A shame there were some showers on these dates after such a scorching lead in.
- 1.2 The Vivary Park Partnership will shortly be having another meeting to review how the summer went and look to working better together for the next 12 months.
- 1.3 Great news that we have again secured a Gold Pennant Award from Britain in Bloom.

### 2. Community Leisure and Play

- 2.1 Parish Play Area Grants – Thanks to the decision to support the applications received we have been able to help three Parish Councils with their play projects. I hope to bring a paper to scrutiny soon suggesting a new smaller grant scheme for the future.
- 2.2 Blackbrook Pool Project – Planning permission is now granted and the project continues on track. More information will be shared at the Members' Briefing on 2 October 2014.

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

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

#### **Active Lifestyles**

##### Seated Boccia

- 3.2 In partnership with the Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership (SASP), Tone is running seated Boccia sessions in a variety of locations. The focus is on older people's groups due to the low impact nature of the activity. The project is also being run for Knightstone Housing and North Taunton Partnership's Men's Group and their Monday Club. Being hugely popular, the request for this activity is increasing.

##### Wacky Wednesdays - Project Wellington

- 3.3 Tone, in partnership with Wellington Children's Centre, Knightstone Housing

and Somerset Skills and Learning, held a series of community fun days throughout August in open spaces/parks in Wellington. Team sports, mini-health checks and a signposting/leaflet stand were set up aimed at family activities and young people.

#### Community Pounds

- 3.4 A new Community Pounds project was launched at The Hollies Children's Centre in South Street, Taunton and the Acorns Children's Centre in Halcon, Taunton led by the Children's Centre staff. Tone are offering weekly weigh-ins, nutrition and dietary advice and giving away pedometers for a physical activity challenge with a competitive element. The programme is running for 12 weeks at both centres and aims to encourage a 5% reduction in weight for those participants with a BMI of  $\geq 25$ .

#### **Facility News**

##### Wellsprings Leisure Centre

- 3.5 Wellsprings has recently partnered with Somerset County Council and carried out a week of free NHS health checks to members.
- 3.6 Wellsprings are excited to announce the launch on Wednesday, 8 October 2014 of a new Les Mills workout called 'GRIT', which is a 30 minutes high intensity class.
- 3.7 A new Fast Track terminal system has been installed to allow members the option to check themselves in to enhance and speed up the entrance time.

##### Taunton Pool

- 3.8 From Monday, 8 September 2014, the pool started opening its doors on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 6.30 am for public swimming.

##### St. James Street Baths

- 3.9 Swimschool figures continue to grow, with 1,611 swimmers attending in August, which was 25 more than the same time last year.

##### Vivary Adventure Centre

- 3.10 Tone are currently exploring Footgolf as a new income generating activity at Vivary Park.

Councillor Catherine Herbert

# Council Meeting – 30 September 2014

## Report of Councillor Jean Adkins – Housing Services

### 1. Tenant Services Management Board Election

1.1 The recent election has resulted in the following being elected as Board Members:-

- Richard Balman;
- Jessie Bunn;
- Marion Davis;
- Mark Edwards;
- Dustyn Etherington;
- Dennis Galpin;
- Judith Hegarty;
- Kevin Hellier;
- Ivor Hussey; and
- Robert Middleton.

1.2 I would like to welcome the new Members and welcome back the familiar faces. My thanks go to everyone who stood for election and commiserations to the unsuccessful candidates.

1.3 At the first meeting of the new Board on 15 September 2014, Dustyn Etherington was elected Chairman.

### 2. Deane Housing Development

2.1 Work on the Phase 1 sites at Normandy Drive and Bacon Drive, Taunton and Vale View, West Bagborough is progressing well and completion is hoped for on some plots in December 2014.

2.2 **Creechbarrow Road** - Build here is also progressing well despite some issues with asbestos and a gas main which was discovered that was not shown on the utility company's map of the area.

2.3 The main contractor, Galliford Try and sub-contractors are honouring their

commitment to employ local labour with four sub-contractors within walking distance of the site.

- 2.4 Community engagement is also excellent with the contractor regularly attending both Halcon One Team and Halcon Multi-Agency Group meetings.

### **3. Digital Access Project**

- 3.1 Housing Services have been working on a project to provide tenants with free internet access as part of our response to Welfare Reform, especially the introduction of Universal Credit and to enable them to search for jobs as well as other on-line services.

- 3.2 Four kiosks equipped with touch-screen computers have been opened at:-

- The Deane House Banking Hall;
- Wellington Community Office;
- Priorswood Resource Centre; and
- Creedwell Orchard Community Hall, Milverton.

### **4. Right to move for Social Tenants Consultation**

- 4.1 We are working on a Somerset-wide response to the Government's "Right to Move" consultation with our Homefinder Somerset partners. This closes on 22 October 2014.

### **5. Somerset County Council (SCC) Extra Care Consultation**

- 5.1 SCC is currently consulting service users and their families on the future provision of Extra Care services. Events are being held at Kilkenny Court, Taunton and Lodge Close, Wellington on 22 and 23 September 2014.

### **6. Homefinder Somerset Annual Report**

- 6.1 Homefinder Somerset was the first choice-based lettings system in the South West and was introduced in 2008.

- 6.2 In response to the Localism Act 2013, the policy was reviewed and a local connection requirement was introduced. The way that bedroom requirements were calculated was also amended to reflect changes to Housing Benefit. Some changes to banding were also implemented.

- 6.3 The system has also been improved to allow applicants to report changes of



circumstances and renew applications online.

6.4 Due to a number of factors, including the rolling programme of annual renewal, there has been a reduction in applicants registered of 22%.

6.5 Some figures which may be of interest:-

- For Taunton Deane there were 3084 applicants registered as at 31 March 2014, compared to a high point of 5221 in 2011;
- Our Housing Association partners advertised 391 properties in Taunton Deane in year ended 31 March 2014; and
- Almost 60% of Taunton Deane applicants are in the 25-44 age bracket.

Councillor Jean Adkins

## Taunton Deane Borough Council

At a meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council held in the John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton on 30 September 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, Bowrah, Cavill, Coles, Denington, Edwards, Farbahi, Mrs Floyd, Gaines, A Govier, Mrs Govier, Hall, Hayward, Henley, Mrs Herbert, C Hill, Horsley, Hunt, Miss James, R Lees, Mrs Lees, Ms Lisgo, Meikle, Morrell, Nottrodt, Ms Palmer, Prior-Sankey, D Reed, Mrs Reed, Gill Slattery, T Slattery, Miss Smith, Mrs Smith, Mrs Stock-Williams, Stone, Tooze, Mrs Warmington, Watson, Mrs Waymouth, Ms Webber, A Wedderkopp, D Wedderkopp, Williams and Wren

### 1. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of Taunton Deane Borough Council held on 22 July 2014 and 19 August 2014, copies having been sent to each Member, were signed by the Mayor.

### 2. Apologies

Councillors Bishop, Mrs Gaden, P Smith and Ross.

### 3. Communications

- (a) Mrs Liz Payne-Ahmadi informed the Council that next year would be the seventieth anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz Concentration Camp and, as such Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January 2015 would be even more poignant.

She added that a Holocaust Memorial Service was to be held in St John's Church, Park Street, Taunton at 12.30 p.m. on this day and hoped that as many Councillors as possible would be able to attend.

- (b) Mr Nick Smith representing the South West Action Group (SWAG) gave a short presentation to Members about the dangers of legal highs which, in Taunton, were currently being sold from two shops in the town centre.

He showed a DVD titled 'Lethal Highs' which demonstrated how the substances being sold from outlets across the country had caused or contributed to the deaths of numerous young people.

Mr Smith went on to explain that his daughter had recently pricked herself with a used, discarded syringe in Victoria Park and it would be some months before his family would know if this had had any ill-

effects.

He called on Councillors to support the aims of SWAG which were to encourage the Government to introduce measures to prohibit the sale of legal highs in the future.

It was confirmed that a letter had been sent to the Home Secretary requesting appropriate action to be taken to address this growing issue of concern.

The Mayor thanked both Liz Payne-Ahmadi and Nick Smith for their contributions.

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

Councillors Mrs Baker, Coles, A Govier, 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 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.

#### **5. Public Question Time**

Ms Tracey Peace referred to a current planning application relating to a property in Hillfarrance, near Taunton. She was very concerned about the impact this application would have on another nearby business should planning permission be granted.

Ms Peace asked if this matter could be looked into.

In response, Councillor Edwards undertook to find out more about the current application and its possible implications.

#### **6. Proposed Loan to Somerset Waste Partnership for Waste Vehicles**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning a proposal to make a loan of £3,500,000 to the Somerset Waste Partnership.

Most of the SWP's Refuse Collection Vehicles were approaching the end of their economic working life and needed to be replaced to avoid escalating maintenance costs and the impact of increasing breakdowns on customer service. There was a contractual requirement that vehicles provided should be no more than seven years old.

The SWP sought to borrow £7,000,000 over a seven year period, paying back both principal and interest on an annual basis.

Taunton Deane was able to offer the partnership a fixed rate of 3.50% for £3,500,000 and South Somerset District Council would be recommending the same rate for the residual £3,500,000 to their Full Council meeting in October 2014. This compared with interest rates that Somerset County Council (SCC) and Kier could offer (4.64% and 4.5% respectively) and was therefore considered competitive.

The start date of the loan would be 1 April 2015. In the event that monies were required sooner, SCC would be willing to order the vehicles and pay ahead of completion if required.

This proposal was considered by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 18 September 2014 when the principle of the proposal was supported.

**Resolved** that:-

- (a) The principle of a seven-year fixed rate loan at 3.5% to Somerset Waste Partnership of £3,500,000 be agreed (detailed terms within this framework to be agreed, through delegated authority, by the Section 151 Officer); and
- (b) It be agreed to add this capital expenditure to the Capital Programme with the understanding that the principal payments would be treated as capital receipts offsetting the Capital Financing Requirement.

## **7. Review of Petition Scheme**

Considered report previously circulated, which reviewed the Council's position on dealing with petitions.

The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 had made it a statutory duty for all Councils to adopt a formal petition scheme.

The scheme adopted by the Council in July 2010 had obliged the Council to respond appropriately to compliant petitions and inform people what action would be taken to address their concerns.

The scheme had to be published on the Council's website and by any other method appropriate for bringing it to the attention of those who lived, worked, studied and did business in the area.

The Council was also required to respond to petitions which related to the functions of its partner authorities and which sought an improvement in the economic, social or environmental wellbeing.

The Council was currently required to respond to all compliant petitions and set thresholds for taking certain steps in response to a petition where practicable. There were currently three types of petitions relevant to the scheme:

- Ordinary petitions – which must contain at least 25 signatures. The petition organiser could present their petition to a meeting of the Council who would, without discussion, refer the petition to the relevant decision maker, or the petition organiser could meet with the relevant decision maker direct to present their petition.
- Petitions for Council debate – which had to contain at least 1500 signatures which if validated would be debated or discussed at a meeting of Full Council.
- Petitions calling for the Council employees to give evidence at a Scrutiny Committee meeting – which had to contain at least 750 signatures which could call for a senior Council employee to give evidence at a public meeting of a Scrutiny Committee.

To date, very few petitions had been received that had required a Council debate or a referral to a Scrutiny Committee.

Further reported that the Localism Act 2011 had repealed the requirement for such a statutory petition scheme and there now was the opportunity for the Council to review its position and provide greater clarity and flexibility if it so wished.

As part of a review undertaken by the Constitutional Sub-Committee some research had been undertaken as to the trigger points for petition schemes that were currently operated by nearby and neighbouring local authorities. As a result the following three options had been considered:-

- (1) To retain the current scheme and perhaps consider giving this facility a higher profile to encourage the public to avail themselves of it;
- (2) To withdraw the current scheme and make the receipt and consideration of petitions as flexible as possible so that they could be dealt with in line with any correspondence received by the Council;  
and
- (3) To continue with a more formal scheme but to vary the trigger points in terms of amounts of signatures required to encourage greater participation.

The Sub-Committee had concluded that the authority had an overriding responsibility to promote democracy and it would therefore be advisable for the Council to retain a scheme of some form but to ensure that any such scheme should be flexible and user-friendly to encourage more petitions to be submitted in the future.

It was therefore recommended that consideration be given to instituting a simplified scheme whereby there was only one definition of a petition which must contain at least 200 signatures which, if validated, would be debated or discussed at a meeting of the Full Council. This approach had subsequently been endorsed by the Corporate Governance Committee.

**Resolved** that the revised Petitions Scheme be approved.

## 8. **Review of the Standards Regime**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the future composition and operation of the Standards Regime at the Council.

The Council had agreed in July 2012 to retain a Standards Committee to oversee the Standards Regime following the Localism Act 2011.

At its most recent meeting the Standards Committee had reviewed the processes by which it currently operated. During the debate there was much discussion and concern shared by all Members of the Committee that since the introduction of the Localism Act 2011, the Parish Councillors and Independent Members, who were now co-opted and had no right to vote, and therefore felt increasingly disenfranchised from the process.

In addition, reference was made to the fact that now that only Councillors had the right to vote there was a risk that the Committee could be perceived as operating in a "political" way when any Standards Regime needed to be perceived as being objective and be able to operate in an independent manner.

The Standards Committee had therefore agreed to request the Constitutional Sub-Committee to review the current arrangements. This review had recommended that consideration should be given to amending the Constitution in respect of the Standards Committee as follows:-

- (i) to increase the Parish Council representatives from two to three;
- (ii) the selection process for such membership to be determined and implemented by the Monitoring Officer;
- (iii) Independent and Parish Members of the Committee be granted full voting rights alongside the five elected Members appointed to serve on the Committee;
- (iv) the current requirement for the Committee and all Sub-Committees to be Chaired by an elected Member be amended so that the the Committee and any such Sub-Committees can be chaired by any Committee Member.

It was acknowledged that in the event of these recommendations being adopted, the Standards Committee would need to become an Advisory Committee in order to comply with the requirements of local government legislation and thereby need to make recommendations to Full Council.

The Constitutional Sub-Committee was also cognisant of the financial pressures currently being experienced by the Council and had therefore proposed that the reimbursement arrangements for members of the proposed Advisory Committee should remain as they were now to ensure that the proposal was cost neutral.

The Sub-Committee's proposals had been endorsed by the Corporate Governance Committee.

**Resolved** that the proposals made by the Constitutional Sub-Committee with regard to the Council's Standards Regime be approved, to come into effect after the May 2015 Local Government Elections.

#### 9. **Proposed Membership of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel**

Reported that an opportunity had arisen for the Council to join a Joint Independent Remuneration Panel.

Each Council had to establish an Independent Remuneration Panel to advise on the scheme of Members Allowances. In this respect Taunton Deane had an Independent Panel consisting of three Members.

The legislation nevertheless allowed the creation of a Joint Panel supporting more than one Council and put no limit on the number of Councils that could be supported by an individual Panel.

The legislation recognised that a Joint Panel arrangement could be an appropriate and cost effective local arrangement. In this regard, Somerset County Council, Mendip District Council and West Somerset Council had already agreed to have a Joint Panel and Taunton Deane had been invited to also join.

The Panel would consist of three Independent Persons appointed by the County Council and three Independent Persons appointed by the three District/Borough Councils and would report separately to each of the four Councils to ensure continued sovereignty in terms of decision making.

Each Council could therefore continue to make its own decisions on Remuneration Rates as it saw fit in the light of the particular circumstances that pertained to that Authority.

Further reported that the most significant benefits from the proposal would be accrued via access to County-wide officer expertise and the provision of greater resilience and increased efficiencies in terms of the use of Taunton Deane officer time.

The proposal had been considered at a recent meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee when it was recommended that the Council should agree to join the Panel.

**Resolved** that Taunton Deane Borough Council became a Member of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel alongside Somerset County Council, Mendip District Council and West Somerset Council and that arrangements be made to appoint an Independent person to represent the Council on the Joint Panel.

10. **Motion – Democratic Deficit in Taunton**

Moved by Councillor Ms Lisgo, seconded by Councillor Coles

“This Council recognises that there is an ongoing and increasing concern being expressed within our community about the democratic deficit at the heart of our County Town due to its unparished status.

This Council therefore resolves to ensure that services provided within the Unparished Area are not reduced and furthermore, services previously deleted such as public conveniences, are reinstated until an appropriate body or bodies, with precepting powers, is in place to properly undertake such responsibilities.”

The motion was put and was carried.

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

**Jurston (Wellington) Development Brief**

The Taunton Deane Core Strategy 2011-2028 Development Plan Document had set the strategic framework for development across the district for the period to 2028. It included a number of strategic sites including Cades/ Jurston in Wellington.

In the Core Strategy Jurston was identified in Policy SS4 as a new compact urban extension east of Wellington which would include around 900 new homes at an overall average of 35-40 dwellings per hectare including affordable homes, a new local centre, a north-south link road between Taunton Road and the A38 and a green wedge.

The Core Strategy also stated that development of strategic sites in Wellington should be guided by a Masterplan and design code to ensure a coordinated approach to the delivery of these sites.

At a recent meeting of the Executive it was reported that a draft Development Brief had been prepared which addressed the requirements for a Masterplan.

The Brief which related solely to the Jurston parcel of the allocation had been published for public consultation earlier in the year and a full summary of



representations received together with the Council's responses thereto were detailed in the report to the Executive.

The Executive had also been informed that although the Community Scrutiny Committee had unanimously recommended adoption of the Brief as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) it had highlighted the need for negotiations to continue in respect of highways issues, school provision and sports provision.

Under the National Planning Policy Framework and Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations, the Council could adopt documents such as SPDs where they added value, detail and guidance to the existing policies in the Core Strategy Development Plan Document. A SPD would be an important material consideration in the determination of a future planning application for Jurston.

On the motion of Councillor Edwards, it was

**Resolved** that the Jurston Development Brief be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document to be used in the Development Management Process for assessing future applications of the Jurston site.

## 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:-

- Scottish Referendum Vote;
- Halcon One Team;
- Firepool, Taunton;
- Monkton Heathfield;
- Infrastructure Funding;
- Westpark 26 Development;
- Broadband Availability;
- Garden Cities to Meet Housing Demand;
- Joint Management and Shared Services (JMASS); and
- Accommodation Update.

### (ii) **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.

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

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

- Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP);
- Mid Devon Junction 27;
- Neighbourhood Planning;
- Monkton Heathfield Governance Board;
- Car Parking;
- Taunton Railway Station Enhancement; and
- Communications.

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

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

- Dragon Trail;
- Self Service Kiosks;
- Police Superintendents Association Annual Conference;
- Police Innovation Fund Bid – Wider One Team Working;
- Taunton and District Citizens AD District Advice Bureau (CAB);
- Troubled Families - Family Focus Integration with Getset Services;
- Volunteering Event;
- Creechbarrow Road Hoardings Art Project; and
- Community Awards.

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.

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

The report from Councillor Cavill covered:-

- Staffing Issues;
- Business Support;
- The Brewhouse Theatre;
- Taunton Town Centre;
- Jobs Club;
- Castle Green; and
- Taunton Information Centre (TIC) and Marketing.

(vi) **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;
- Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP); and
- Community Scrap Store.

(vii) **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.

(viii) **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;
- Deane Housing Development;
- Digital Access Project;
- Right to Move for Social Tenants Consultation;
- Somerset County Council (SCC) Extra Care Consultation; and
- Homefinder Somerset Annual Report.

(The meeting ended at 9.51 pm.)