

You are requested to attend a meeting of the Council to be held in Oake Manor Golf Club, Oake, Taunton, Somerset on 10 April 2018 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 meeting of the Council held on 22 February 2018 (attached).
- 2 To report any apologies for absence.
- 3 To receive any communications.
- 4 Declaration of Interests  
To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or personal or prejudicial interests, in accordance with the Code of Conduct, in relation to items on the agenda. Such interests need to be declared even if they have already been recorded in the Register of Interests. The personal interests of Councillors who are County Councillors or Town or Parish Councillors will automatically be recorded in the minutes.
- 5 To receive questions from Taunton Deane Electors under Standing Order 15.
- 6 To receive any petitions or deputations under Standing Orders 16 and 17.
- 7 The 50th Anniversary of the founding of the Taunton and Somerset Branch of the Samaritans. A presentation by Mr Geoff Rickson on the work of the branch.
- 8 Consulting with Hoteliers, room providers, Airbnb and the public to ensure business and public support for tens of millions of Pounds for a proposed hotel investment at Firepool, Taunton with public funds. To consider a Motion proposed by Councillor Habib Farbahi, seconded by Councillor Jefferson Horsley (attached). An assessment of the implications for the Council should the Motion be carried is also attached.
- 9 Acquisition of land near Nerrols Farm, Taunton as a Country Park. Report of the Planning Policy Manager (attached), to be presented by Councillor Norman Cavill. See also Confidential Appendix C at agenda item No. 15.
- 10 Pay Policy Statement. Report of the HR and Organisation Development Manager (attached), to be presented by Councillor Richard Parrish.

- 11 Compulsory Purchase of Third Party Land and Interests at Firepool, Taunton. Report of the Assistant Director - Asset Development Projects (Interim) (attached), to be presented by Councillor Mark Edwards. See also Confidential Appendices A-J at agenda item No, 16.
- 12 Development of an Hotel at Firepool, Taunton. Report of the Assistant Director - Asset Development Projects (Interim) (attached), to be presented by Councillor Mark Edwards. See also Confidential Appendices A - F at agenda item No. 17.
- 13 Part I - To deal with written questions to, and receive recommendations from, the Executive:-  
  
Councillor John Williams - Recommendation relating to Financial Monitoring – 2017/2018 as at 31 December 2017 (attached).
- 14 Part II - To receive reports from the following Members of the Executive (attached):-
  - (a) Councillor John Williams - Leader of the Council;
  - (b) Councillor Terry Beale - Housing Services;
  - (c) Councillor Patrick Berry - Environmental Services and Climate Change;
  - (d) Councillor Mark Edwards - Economic Development, Asset Management, Arts and Culture, Tourism and Communications;
  - (e) Councillor Roger Habgood = Planning Policy and Transportation;
  - (f) Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams - Sports, Parks and Leisure;
  - (g) Councillor Richard Parrish - Corporate Resources; and
  - (h) Councillor Jane Warmington - Community Leadership.

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

- 15 Acquisition of land near Nerrols Farm, Taunton as a Country Park - Confidential Appendix C (attached). See also agenda item No. 9. Paragraph 3 - Financial or business affairs of any particular person.
- 16 Compulsory Purchase of Third Party Land and Interests at Firepool, Taunton - Confidential Appendices A - J (attached). See also agenda item No. 11. Paragraph 3 - Financial or business affairs of any particular person.
- 17 Development of an Hotel at Firepool, Taunton - Confidential Appendices A - F (attached). See also agenda item No. 12. Paragraph 3 - Financial or business affairs of any particular person.
- 18 Proposed Acquisition of Land at Norton Fitzwarren. Report of the Wellington at Risk Project Manager (attached), to be presented by Councillor Roger Habgood. Paragraph 3 - Financial or business affairs of any particular person.

Assistant Chief Executive

07 August 2018

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.

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The meeting rooms at both the Brittons Ash Community Centre and West Monkton Primary School are on the ground floor and are fully accessible. Toilet facilities, with wheelchair access, are available.

Lift access to the Council Chamber on the first floor of Shire Hall, is available from the main ground floor entrance. Toilet facilities, with wheelchair access, are available through the door to the right hand side of the dais.



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

**For further information about the meeting, please contact Democratic Services on 01823 219736 or email [r.bryant@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:r.bryant@tauntondeane.gov.uk)**

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## **Council Members:-**

Councillor H Prior-Sankey (Chairman and Mayor of Taunton Deane)  
Councillor J Adkins  
Councillor M Adkins  
Councillor T Aldridge  
Councillor T Beale  
Councillor P Berry  
Councillor J Blatchford  
Councillor C Booth  
Councillor R Bowrah, BEM  
Councillor W Brown  
Councillor N Cavill  
Councillor S Coles  
Councillor W Coombes  
Councillor D Cossey  
Councillor T Davies  
Councillor D Durdan  
Councillor K Durdan  
Councillor M Edwards  
Councillor H Farbahi  
Councillor M Floyd  
Councillor J Gage  
Councillor E Gaines  
Councillor A Govier  
Councillor A Gunner  
Councillor R Habgood  
Councillor T Hall  
Councillor R Henley  
Councillor C Herbert  
Councillor C Hill  
Councillor M Hill  
Councillor J Horsley  
Councillor J Hunt  
Councillor G James  
Councillor R Lees  
Councillor S Lees  
Councillor L Lisgo, MBE  
Councillor D Mansell  
Councillor S Martin-Scott  
Councillor I Morrell, BA LLB  
Councillor S Nicholls  
Councillor R Parrish  
Councillor J Reed  
Councillor R Ryan  
Councillor F Smith  
Councillor F Smith-Roberts  
Councillor V Stock-Williams  
Councillor P Stone  
Councillor A Sully  
Councillor N Townsend

Councillor C Tucker  
Councillor J Warmington  
Councillor P Watson  
Councillor D Webber  
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 Council Chamber, Shire Hall, Shuttern, Taunton on 22 February 2018 at 6.30 p.m.

Present      The Mayor (Councillor Prior-Sankey)  
                  The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Mrs Herbert)  
                  Councillors Aldridge, Beale, Berry, Mrs Blatchford, Booth, Bowrah,  
                  Cavill, Coles, Davies, D Durdan, Edwards, Farbahi, Mrs Floyd, Gage,  
                  Govier, Mrs Gunner, Habgood, Hall, Henley, C Hill, Mrs Hill, Horsley,  
                  Hunt, James, R Lees, Mrs Lees, Ms Lisgo, Morrell, Nicholls, Parrish,  
                  Mrs Reed, Ryan, Mrs Smith, Mrs Smith-Roberts, Mrs Stock-Williams,  
                  Stone, Sully, Townsend, Mrs Tucker, Mrs Warmington, Watson,  
                  Wedderkopp and Williams

Mrs A Elder – Chairman of the Standards Advisory Committee

### 1.      **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council held on 12 December 2017, copies having been sent to each Member, were signed by the Mayor.

### 2.      **Apologies**

Councillors Mrs Adkins, M Adkins, Brown, Coombes, Ms K Durdan, Gaines, Ms Webber and Wren.

### 3.      **Communications**

The Mayor drew the attention of Members to three matters:-

- (1)      The recent resignation of Steve Ross as a Councillor;
- (2)      The success of the Swimathon. Councillors who had sponsored Members of the Mayor's Team were encouraged to 'pay their dues' as soon as possible; and
- (3)      The Taunton Deane Male Voice Choir Concert that had been arranged for the evening of Saturday, 24 March 2018 at the St James Church, Taunton. She hoped as many Councillors as possible would be able to attend.

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

Councillors Coles, Govier, Hunt and Prior-Sankey declared personal interests as Members of Somerset County Council. Councillors Bowrah, Cavill, Govier, Henley, Hunt, James, Nicholls, Mrs Reed, Mrs Stock-Williams, Stone, Townsend, Mrs Warmington and Watson all declared personal interests as Members of Town or Parish Councils.

Members were reminded that they all had Pecuniary Interests as far as the

setting of the Council Tax rate was concerned but that a specific exemption existed to enable the item to be considered and voted upon.

## 5. Public Question Time

- (a) Beverley Milner-Simonds drew the attention of Members to this year's 'Eat Taunton' Food and Drink Festival which was due to take place on Saturday, 12 May 2018 in and around St Mary Magdalene Church in the town centre.

She thanked Councillors Edwards and Habgood and various officers for their support in making a part of the town which would not normally be used for public events to be made available on the day.

She was aware that many local people had no idea of the quality of food produced by local businesses. The idea of the event was to showcase up to 70 primary food producers, all within 25 miles of Taunton to persuade people to shop locally rather than travelling further afield.

There would be a 'demo' kitchen in the church showcasing local cooks and many stalls and displays outside. This year the event would be 100% single use plastic free, all waste would be fully compostable and people would be encouraged to travel to the festival either by cycling or by bus – great environmental credentials.

The festival was a fully accessible and free event and would showcase Taunton in a very positive light.

Ms Milner-Simonds asked Councillors to support her endeavours by attending the festival on 12 May 2018.

- (b) Liz Payne-Ahmadi referred to the Council's General Fund Budget proposals. She noted that the approach of Taunton Deane to the need to make savings in respect of the Revenue Budget going forward had been to avoid the need for service saving plans while making key savings through 'Transformation'.

She understood from media reports that 'Transformation' would entail a reduction by 22% of the staff budget (30% of current staff). Was this true? If there were to be large staff losses, did this not mean that services would be reduced? If so, the real distinction between transformation and service saving plans was not understood. Was not the end result the same?

Your various impact assessments found more or less zero impact from the savings. How could this be? Could you clarify how many jobs would be lost and the implication for services? If services are not to be impacted, how would such a reduced staff be able to provide the range and quality of current services? It would be useful if transformation plans with detailed impacts could be made public.

It was noted that if a new Council was formed, some £550,000 of savings



would be made. What would be the impact of these cuts to jobs and services?

In reply Councillor Williams stated that the reduction in the size of the Council had been detailed in the original Business Case where a 20% reduction had been outlined.

He was unable to provide precise details as to the number of staff who would continue to be employed by the Council at this time.

In terms of services being reduced, this was unlikely although there would be a noticeable change with an emphasis on service delivery in a smarter and leaner way through the greater use of technology. The transition to this form of delivery would be difficult, but once the Council had come through this, the expectation was the same level of service would be delivered for less cost.

Such action was necessary as the Council simply did not have the funds to stay as they were.

Councillor Williams went on to say that after five years of the Government reducing its funding to Local Government, he was proud that the Council had been able to maintain the services that were so valued by the community and would be very disappointed if local residents noticed a difference in service delivery in the future.

Finally, should a new Council be formed, the predicted saving of £550,000 would be achieved simply by cutting out the duplication of work which currently took place.

(c) Alan Debenham asked the following four questions:-

(i) Yet again we see the Government continuing with its hard-right Austerity programme of cuts upon cuts against Local Government via the systematic cutting of the Revenue Support Grant, reducing year-on-year to zero by 2020. When there were clear economic alternatives to this hard-right slaughter of public services and jobs, what had this Council or its individual Councillors done, or was doing, or would do, to fight back against this extremism and defend the jobs and services they had been elected to maintain?

(ii) How was it the proposed Council Tax demand was to be increased yet again above inflation, simultaneous with continued big cuts in services, temporarily masked by the use of earmarked reserves but, in future years, to be fully revealed by the so-called 'Transformation Project'? This was predicted to bring annual savings of some £1,465,000 by 2020 but at the horrendous cost of not only an overall upheaval for all staff having to re-apply for their jobs, but entailing a forecast savage reduction in posts of from 20 to 30% of the current establishment. Where were the tables describing the detail of Transformation's job losses to 2020 and the staff to be sacrificed?

- (iii) The local Green Party and Friends of the Earth Group had waited for over a decade for the redesign of Taunton Town Centre to make it more pedestrian and shopper friendly, plus of cultural quality befitting our County Town, but the latest news appears to proclaim yet more delay and still no full pedestrianisation to include Corporation Street and North Street. What was the latest position and why were the results of the public consultation exercise not fully published?
- (iv) We had all heard the ominous new range of service cuts to be made by the Somerset County Council regarding libraries, children's Sure Start Centres and bus services which would impact on local residents. What had been Taunton Deane's reaction to these further austerity cuts?

With regard to question (iii), Councillor Habgood confirmed that the Council was working with the County Highway Authority to bring the scheme forward as soon as possible. He added that there was still a great deal of detail to be dealt with even though the scheme would initially be introduced on an experimental basis. He was due to meet with the County Council shortly and would press for dates as to when the trial could begin.

He understood the frustrations of Mr Debenham but it was, in his view, vital for all issues to be addressed at this stage to achieve the real benefits such a scheme would offer. As an example, it was predicted that traffic levels in North Street and Corporation Street was likely to drop by 80% which might necessitate a 20 m.p.h. zone being introduced.

As to the other three questions, Councillor Williams was surprised to receive them as they were broadly the same as those Mr Debenham had asked at the last meeting of the Executive which had been answered in some detail.

In respect of question (ii), Councillor Williams refuted that reserves were being used and confirmed that there were no cuts to services proposed in the budget.

As far as question (iv) was concerned, he felt that this ought to be directed at the County Council. In terms of what Taunton Deane proposed to do, Councillor Williams said that they would send regrets to the County Council but fully understood the position they were in especially in dealing with social services, the elderly, children and the vulnerable. A huge proportion of its budget had to be used for these services and very little was left to fund all the other services that had to be provided. In such circumstances, he applauded their good fiscal management.

- (d) On behalf of the Residents of Staplegrove Action Group (RoSAG), Jackie Calcroft congratulated all involved in securing Housing Infrastructure Funding (HIF) of £7,200,000 to enable the spine road for the new Staplegrove development to be built in advance of and negate the need for a temporary access onto Corkscrew Lane.

The Leader's report stated that this funding would "help *towards* the delivery of the spine road". This statement came as somewhat of a surprise given what was said by Councillors in recent media interviews.

Her understanding of the HIF marginal viability funding was that a list of all in line to receive such monies actually had yet a further final stage to go through to ensure the schemes concerned complied with set criteria.

Could the Council therefore clarify how its bid for funding could be considered within the criterion "getting existing sites unblocked quickly" when outline planning permission had already been granted. Were the Council confident they would pass the next scrutiny stage?

Secondly, if the HIF bid was successful, this would enable the proposed 25% level of affordable housing to be reinstated.

If the total cost of reinstating did not equate to the full extent of the funding, could it be confirmed that any residue would be used to mitigate the effects of the new development on Staplegrove? Would this include serious consideration of the construction of a short stretch of road from Kingston Road across to Cheddon Road thus enabling the new spine road to connect with the Nerrols Farm development which appeared to have been omitted from the latest Transport Strategy which included plans for the new Garden Communities.

Both RoSAG and Staplegrove Parish Council would welcome an opportunity to work with the Council and Somerset County Council in regard to this matter.

In response Councillor Habgood warmly accepted the invitation to work with RoSAG and the Parish Council although further consideration of this link would be needed involving the County Highways Authority. He added that a strong Business Case would be needed to pursue this idea.

With regard to the funding of the spine road, the application for this money preceded consideration of the planning applications. As far as he was aware the funding had been awarded, although officers were currently in communication with the Government to establish what had to happen before the money was actually received.

Councillor Williams confirmed that this was his understanding too. He had been assured that the spine road funding had been part of a single stage process. However, bids made for 'forward funding' from the HIF for major schemes was a two stage process.

- (e) Mr Michael Pitt referred to the proposed Transport Strategy which did not include any plans for linking Trull/Honiton Road with South Road and Kingston Road with Cheddon Road (as recommended by Somerset County Council's Scrutiny Committee on 30 January 2018). He asked the Council to instruct the relevant officers to consult on a face to face basis with the public and the Parish Councils of the areas affected by the

absence of such plans in the hope that proposals were added to the Strategy. He also asked for Variable Message Signage (VMS) to be installed in Station Road, Trull Road and South Road as well as the locations detailed in the Strategy.

Councillor Habgood stated that he was very happy to discuss other proposals with Parish Councils and Ward Councillors. Further debate would undoubtedly result in a diverse set of requirements from different parts of the community.

He added that production of a strategic document often sparked a level of interest. Personally he would have liked the Strategy to have been more aspirational, but the stage was reached with the County Council where the proposals in the Strategy were agreed.

With regard to VMS, there was a particular need to direct traffic to car parks and manage traffic flows. Work on the current project was due to commence shortly. He added that he would be happy to have a further conversation with Mr Pitt with regard to VMS.

6. **Receipt of Petition – Taunton Deane to become a ‘single-use plastic free Local Authority**

Mr Dave Mansell on behalf of Transition Athelney, Quantock Eco, Taunton Transition Town, Transition Town Wellington and Wivey Action on Climate and Environment presented a petition containing over 200 signatures to the Council which called upon Taunton Deane - recognising the waste and pollution caused by plastics - to become a 'single-use plastic free' Council by:-

- (a) Phasing out single-use plastic products, such as bottles, cups, cutlery and drinking straws and the unnecessary use of plastic bags in all Council activities, where reasonable and possible, by April 2019;
- (b) Encouraging users of Council facilities, local businesses and other local public agencies to do the same, by championing alternatives, such as reusable water bottles, cups, cutlery and bags; and
- (c) Submitting a public report to the Council by October 2018, which summarised single-use plastic within the Council, progress and plans for phasing it out, including by encouraging others; with a further update by April 2019.

The aims of the petition were welcomed by Members and following a proposal by the Mayor, seconded by Councillor Berry, it was

**Resolved** that the petition be endorsed.

7. **Motion - Tackling our throw-away culture by providing incentives to reduce, reuse and recycle to safeguard our health and environment**

Moved by Councillor Habib Farbahi, seconded by Councillor Simon Nicholls.

“The Council notes:-

There are now 5.25 trillion pieces of plastic in the World’s Oceans, with an estimated 10% of the plastics we produce ending up in the oceans. Research from the University of Exeter shows that plastic damages marine life; in particular micro-plastics can enter the food chain at the zooplankton stage and by stunting growth may cause damage all the way up the chain<sup>1</sup>. There is universal agreement that this must be stopped.

Professor Galloway and her colleagues of Exeter University gave evidence to the Government’s Environment Audit Committee, as well as delivering a high-level presentation at the United Nations headquarters in America, outlining the effect micro-plastics have on the ocean environments<sup>4</sup>.

We want to raise awareness of the issue of micro-plastics, as it is one of the major threats to the health of our oceans and is something everyone, including school children, can all do something about. Potentially hazardous chemicals used in plastic food packaging have been found in the digestive system of 86% of teenagers who took part in a recent study at Exeter University<sup>2</sup>. These chemicals could be linked to breast cancer and heart diseases<sup>3</sup>.

The plastic bag charge reduced usage by 85% in the first year and the recent disposable coffee cups campaign has led to a “latte levy” being proposed by a group of influential cross-party MPs, and indeed to our own recycling centres accepting these cups. Now we need local government to commit to a Plastic-Free Charter.

This could include a plastic bottle return scheme. Tackling plastic pollution will require us to work closely with local businesses to find non-plastic alternatives. It will take research and investment, but most of all it will take a willingness to change.

We all recognise and accept that action needs to be taken and welcome the petition on the single use plastic and wish to go a step further by:-

Recommending that:-

- 1) This Council will set up a cross-party working group including, parish representatives, to research ways and costs of reducing or eliminating not only single use plastic on its premises but the wider implications which the Council may wish to become involved with. To engage with small, independent businesses such as coffee shops, pubs and restaurants and give the working group a practical time scale to work to;
- 2) This Council supports the potential idea of working with the University of Exeter on an advisory basis to achieve this goal with no costs to Taunton Deane taxpayers; and
- 3) This Council widely promotes through Council-wide email footers and footers on all news releases that both Taunton (Priorswood) and Poole Household Waste Recycling Centres and twelve other Recycling Centres

across the County can now accept plastic-lined paper cups and emphasise that plastic can damage our health.

The motion was put and was carried.

## 8. **Capital Improvements – Cemetery and Crematorium**

Considered report previously circulated, which sought support for capital improvement works to the waiting room and toilet facilities within the Chapel complex at Taunton Crematorium.

This work was necessary to support the increased volume of people who attended services and meet their needs in terms of accessible toilet facilities.

The current waiting room did not have the same capacity as the Chapel leading to frequent instances of the public having to wait outside until the prior funeral had come to an end. It also led to mourners from different services having to co-mingle.

The request was greater than just one of convenience for service users. The ability to manage the flow of people through the site was important especially where services had often to be planned back to back. There were approximately 2,000 services per year and around half of these services could not be fully accommodated within the waiting room without leaving people standing outside.

This situation would only get worse unless appropriate action was taken as there was an increasing trend towards greater numbers of mourners attending services. It was possible that unless the proposed improvements were introduced, the Crematorium might begin to lose some of its current business to other local providers.

Noted that the changes would nearly double the amount of waiting room space available to the public.

The additional resources being requested took account of the need for out of hours working and the provision of temporary toilets and a temporary waiting room. This was necessary to ensure the impacts on services were kept to a minimum.

Reported that whilst the work had yet to be competitively tendered, the design had been drawn up by Stone and Partners along with a quantity surveyors assessment. The build timeline was estimated at five months with additional time for tendering.

The budget request might appear high as this was fundamentally a reuse of existing space. There were however a number of factors which would increase the costs but were considered unavoidable for operational purposes. These factors were set out in the report.

**Resolved** that a supplementary estimate of £400,000 to be added to the Capital Programme be approved. £20,000 of this sum to be reallocated from

the Capital approval for the Cremator brickwork which was now being funded from revenue resources and another £20,000 for the Chapel roof which was no longer required in the Capital Programme. The residual Capital sum of £360,000 to be funded from borrowing.

## 9. Refresh of Taunton Parking Strategy

Considered report previously circulated, which sought adoption of a refreshed Parking Strategy for Taunton.

The Parking Strategy was a key component of the Council's plans for Taunton and covered the period to 2027. This document would replace the current strategy which had been adopted in 2011.

There had been significant change since 2011 related to development activity in the town which meant that this new document was required to give clear guidance on the approach to parking over the strategy period. Whilst this period was for ten years, the strategy actions would become part of the Council's overall approach to management of its objectives.

The strategy had been produced using five key objectives which were derived from national and local policy. These objectives were:-

- (1) Prioritise town centre spaces for short term visitors shoppers and visitors;
- (2) Provide for specific users for example disabled spaces and motorcycle bays;
- (3) Reduce the impact of congestion and pollution;
- (4) Improve actual and perceived safety and security of car parking; and
- (5) Improve the quality of car parks and the customer experience.

A range of data had been analysed which was outlined in the strategy and enabled the evaluation of a range of options matched to the Council's objectives. This gave a comprehensive view of current provision, costs and existing issues.

There were a number of key statistics which were of interest within the strategy documents:-

- There were 4000 publicly accessible off-street parking bays in Taunton Town Centre. 2800 (68%) were owned by the Council with the remaining 1200 being associated with major supermarkets;
- There were 1600 Park and Ride spaces. 1000 at Gateway (Junction 25) and 600 at Silk Mills;
- There were 145 on-street bays owned by Somerset County Council;
- 25% of income was derived by 'Pay and Phone' and 75% through 'Pay and Display' terminals;
- Shopper Car Parks 70% of all stays were 2 hours and below and 10% of all stays averaged 4 hours;
- Commuter sites – On average 50% paid for 4 hours. Kilkenny had the highest average at 6 hours;
- Park and Ride use at Silk Mills was 75% Monday – Friday and 32% on Saturday;

- Park and Ride use at Gateway was 37% Monday – Friday and 15% on Saturday;
- Variable Message Signing would service nine sites – the two Park and Rides and seven Council owned sites;
- There was 25% capacity in the Council car parks and 17% spare capacity in privately owned car parks at peak times; and
- The strategy accounted for 425 spaces at Firepool and a reduction of 70 at Coal Orchard.

Analysis of these statistics and application of the Taunton Strategic Transport model, which indicated a rise of 10% traffic through to 2031 meant that there was adequate town centre stock for demand across the strategy period.

Building on the statistics and using the objectives a range of options had been assessed to address parking requirements in the town centre. These had resulted in nine areas that were recommended for action by Taunton Deane or partners:-

- (1) The proposed creation of long and short stay tariffs/designations to simplify the tariff approach for customers. Short stay would be a maximum of three hours;
- (2) Visitor Management Plans for major events - for example cricket and the Flower Show were needed and further development of these was required to ensure that adequate travel plans were in place for these activities;
- (3) It was suggested that the Council should explore incentives for the use of the Orchard (Paul Street) and High Street sites due to available capacity. This should include addressing their appearance and reviewing tariff rates;
- (4) Extend the use of the Variable Message Signage to utilise live data or App`s when generating parking data.
- (5) Review the provision of Blue Badge spaces and motorcycle spaces to provide them in suitable and appropriate locations;
- (6) Improve the maintenance and aesthetic environment of the car parks. Improve wayfinding and information for those leaving the car parks.
- (7) Installation of electric points. Review how to deliver these, the most appropriate route to do so and implement spaces in appropriate locations;
- (8) More efficient use of the spaces by possible consolidation into larger car parks and reduce the use of smaller car parks;
- (9) In partnership with Somerset County Council, review the model of operation of the Park and Ride sites to enable delivery of a comprehensive solution for parking.

These recommendations would now be formed into a five year Action Plan which would be reviewed annually or at a frequency in line with the performance approach of the Transformed Council. This would be progressed by the operational Car Park Team in association with the necessary partner organisations.

**Resolved that:-**



- (a) The refreshed Taunton Parking Strategy be adopted; and
- (b) The nine recommended areas for action within the Taunton Parking Strategy and the proposed creation of a five year Action Plan to address them be noted.

10. **Designation of Car Parks into Short and Long Stay and Pricing Strategy**

Considered report previously circulated, which proposed the re-designation of the Council’s Car Parks into either ‘short’ and ‘long’ stay together with a corresponding pricing strategy.

The Taunton Car Parking Strategy 2017 had highlighted the creation of dedicated short stay tariff car parks as desirable to ensure ‘that spaces were available and used for short stay visits and to give certainty to customers’. In parallel a small number of car parks would be dedicated to long stay users.

As part of the Pay on Foot (POF) and Variable Message Signing (VMS) project it was desirable to also simplify the designations of the car parks for the benefit of visitors to the town and achieve the maximum benefit of VMS.

Currently the following designations were used:-

- Shopper 1;
- Shopper 2; and
- Commuter.

These designations did not mean a great deal to the public and if they continued to be used with on the VMS signs they would not support customer choice in selecting the most appropriate car park for their needs.

The universal language of short stay and long stay was much more descriptive and better recognised.

It was therefore proposed that all car parks were re-designated with this language, including those not within the POF and VMS project. This would mean that signage in the VMS scheme and fixed finger post signs would be updated to reflect this.

The proposed designations were:-

**Long Stay**

Canon Street  
 High Street  
 Orchard  
 Belvedere Road  
 Castle Street  
 Wood Street  
 Enfield  
 Firepool  
 Kilkenny

**Short Stay**

Coal Orchard\*<sup>1</sup>  
 Crescent  
 Ash meadows  
 Duke Street  
 Elms Parade  
 Whirligig  
 Fons George

Tangier  
Victoria Gate

Further reported that a number of pricing options had been explored. It had become apparent that two principles should underpin the process.

Firstly, that the changes should aim to be neutral in terms of income to the Council and therefore overall costs to the motorist, even though the service to the public should be enhanced by VMS and POF. Secondly, that the public in Wellington should not have to bear any cost through their car parking charges for a project that only had benefits in Taunton. These options were nonetheless originally costed and explored before being rejected.

It was considered that these changes could support the POF project and business case, whilst providing the necessary mix of parking opportunities.

The Fons George Car Park was considered an exception to the above rules due to it serving both Vivary Park and the golf course. It was therefore proposed that this car park should be classified as a short stay car park with relaxed limits to six hours in recognition of the area it served. It was further proposed that the pricing structure was maintained at £1 per hour.

To enable these changes, the Council would require a new Off Street Parking Place Order prior to implementation of POF to the Canon Street, Castle Street, Enfield, High Street, Orchard Multi Storey, Tangier and Wood Street Car Parks.

**Resolved** that the proposed change in designation from Shopper 1, Shopper 2 and Commuter to the more readily understood Short and Long Stay, alongside changes to the charging regime to allow this to be carried out with a neutral effect on income, be supported.

11. **Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy 2018/2019**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the recommended strategy for managing the Council's cash resources including the approach to borrowing and investments. Approval was also sought for the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy (TMSS), the Annual Investment Strategy (AIS) and the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy.

It was noted that the Council currently held £85,500,000 of loans, which related solely to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). This sum had increased significantly in March 2012 when the Council took on £82,000,000 of loans through the introduction of HRA Self Financing and the abolition of the old Housing Subsidy system.

General Fund borrowing might therefore be required in 2018/2019 to support new projects which had been approved in 2018/2019 although the TMSS had suggested that this might be covered initially from internal funds.

Also noted that the Council's investment balances had ranged between £34,400,000 and £55,400,000. This was expected to reduce in 2016/2017 as more of the Capital Programme was delivered.

The Council's Treasury Management Advisor, Arlingclose, had advised that its central case was for the UK Bank Rate to remain at 0.5% during 2018/2019.

The TMSS and related policies had been prepared taking into account the 2011 revised Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Treasury Management in Public Services Code of Practice and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes ("the Code") and the Department of Communities and Local Government's Guidance on Local Government Investments ("the Guidance").

The key principles of the Code were as follows:-

- Ensuring that public bodies put in place the necessary framework to ensure the effective management and control of treasury management activities;
- That the framework clearly stated that responsibility for treasury management lay clearly within the organisation and that the Strategy clearly stated the appetite for risk; and
- That value for money and suitable performance measures were reflected in the framework.

The Council's Finance Officers had worked closely with Arlingclose to consider the requirements of the Code and Guidance and determine the proposed TMSS, AIS and MRP Policy that would ensure compliance and provide a set of 'rules' for the Council to follow in dealing with investments, borrowing and cash flow management.

The TMSS for 2018/2019 continued to recognise the increasing risks due to the new regulations in respect of 'bail in' for banks. In response to this risk and the wider continuing risks in the financial sector, the TMSS continued to build in greater "diversification" – so that surplus funds were held in a wider range of investments/accounts.

**Resolved** that:-

- (a) The Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Reserve Provision Policy as set out in the Appendix to the report be approved; and
- (b) The Prudential Indicators included within the Treasury Management Strategy Statement which included limits for borrowing and investments be also approved.

## 11. **General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Estimates 2018/2019**

Considered report previously circulated, which set out the General Fund Revenue budget proposals and the Council's Capital Programme for 2018/2019.

### **General Fund Revenue Budget**

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

The 2018/2019 Budget had been prepared within the context of priorities identified by Members which were embedded in the Council's current Corporate Plan.

The budget contained details on:-

- (i) the General Fund Revenue Budget proposals for 2018/2019, including a proposed Council Tax increase; and
- (ii) draft figures on the predicted financial position of the Council for subsequent years.

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee had considered the draft budget proposals at its meeting on 25 January 2018. The proposals had been noted.

Details of the final "Settlement Funding Assessment" for 2018/2019 had recently been announced by the Department of Communities and Local Government and this was reflected within the budget proposals.

Alongside the Finance Settlement, the Government had confirmed that it was looking to implement the Fair Funding Review in April 2020 and had published the consultation: Fair funding review: a review of relative needs and resources which focussed specifically on potential approaches that had been identified to measure the relative needs of local authorities.

The consultation did not cover the relative resources adjustment, transition or other technical matters but these would be the subject of a later series of discussion papers.

The grant funding from the Government was in line with the confirmed multi-year settlement (2016/2017 to 2019/2020), with the expected reduction in 2018/2019 as shown below – a 55% reduction in General Revenue Grant funding:-

### **General Government Grant**

	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	Change £	
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	644,801	279,788	-365,013	-48%
Rural Services Delivery Grant (RSDG)	22,271	27,754	5,483	+25%
Transition Grant	16,864	0	-16,864	-100%
<b>Total General Revenue Grant Funding</b>	<b>683,936</b>	<b>307,542</b>	<b>-376,394</b>	<b>-55%</b>

The multi-year settlement included further reductions in subsequent years. The following table summarised how these grants were projected to reduce from 2013/2014. During this period the settlement had reduced by 55% in cash terms (estimated 61% in real terms).

### Settlement Funding

	13/14 £k	14/15 £k	15/16 £k	16/17 £k	17/18 £k	18/19 £k	19/20 £k
RSG	3,556	2,766	1,911	1,235	645	280	0
RSDG*	0	0	5	28	22	28	22
Transition Grant	0	0	0	17	17	0	0
BR Baseline	2,366	2,412	2,458	2,478	2,529	2,605	2,665
<b>Govt Settlement</b>	<b>5,922</b>	<b>5,178</b>	<b>4,374</b>	<b>3,758</b>	<b>3,213</b>	<b>2,913</b>	<b>2,687</b>

Reported that following an invitation from Central Government a bid to become a 100% Business Rates (BR) Retention Pilot, had been submitted in conjunction with Somerset County Council and our other Somerset district partners.

Unfortunately, despite putting forward a strong case, the bid had been unsuccessful. The Government had however approved the formation of a new Somerset Business Rates Pool under the existing 50% retention scheme. This provided potential benefits which would accrue from the mixture of tariff and top-up authorities from the lower and upper tiers, resulting in a lower levy rate for the Pool.

From initial estimates the potential gain was forecast in the region of £100,000 to £200,000. The Council was confident that the potential gains far outweighed the risk of being in a pool, but prudently any gain had not been factored into budget at this stage and would be monitored carefully during the year.

Noted that the Provisional Settlement announcement by the Government had incorporated adjustments to both the baseline and tariff methodology.

Further reported that the New Homes Bonus (NHB) had incentivised and rewarded housing growth. The Council only used £392,000 of its NHB allocations each year to help fund the revenue budget. The remaining grant was allocated to the Growth Earmarked reserve.

The confirmed NHB Grant for 2018/2019 was £3,564,556, which was £470,176 or 12% less than 2017/2018 but above the initial budget estimates.

The Government had not changed the NHB methodology this year with a “top-

slice” of 0.4% of growth. In addition to the top-slice confirmation had been received that the legacy amounts included in the annual grant allocation had reduced to four years from 2018/2019.

The impact of this new growth baseline was significant. Housing growth of 196.7 Band D equivalents had not been rewarded in 2018/2019 resulting in a loss of funding of approximately £250,289.

Despite the reduction in the level of “reward” for housing growth, the growth trajectory indicated that the level of receipts would be fairly static in future years.

The budget for Taunton Deane contained a proposed Council Tax increase of 3.34% of the basic Council Tax element (£5 on a Band D) for 2018/2019 which would mean that the Band D Council Tax would rise to £154.62 per year. This figure again included the sum of £1.74 in respect of the Somerset Rivers Authority because it was still unable to raise its own precept. The Band D taxpayer would, therefore, receive all the services provided by the Council in 2018/2019 at a cost of £2.97 per week.

The approved Tax Base for 2018/2019 was 41,486.3 Band D Equivalents, an increase of 643.1 (1.6%) compared to 2017/2018. The draft budget estimates for Council Tax income was therefore  $41,486.3 \times £152.88 = £6,342,426$  (rounded). This represented a total increase of £302,539 compared to the previous year.

The Executive had proposed an increase to the Special Expenses (Unparished Area) precept by 2p (to £3.02) on a Band D property, raising an additional £302 whilst still remaining within the £5 Band D referendum trigger level.

Following the phasing out of the Council Tax Support grant funding provided to Town and Parish Councils the proposed budget for 2018/2019 would be £45,534 entirely funded through Special Expenses levied within the Unparished Area.

### **Revenue Budget 2018/2019**

The following table provided a summary of the Budget position for 2018/2019:-

	<b>Revised Budget 2017/18 £</b>	<b>Estimates 2018/19 £</b>
Total Spending on TDBC Services	11,786,444	10,150,489
Somerset Rivers Authority Contribution	71,067	72,186
Revenue Contribution to Capital	401,500	401,500
Capital Debt Repayment Provision (MRP)	235,060	400,010
Interest Costs	0	170,420
Interest Income	-380,875	-614,000
Parish Precepts	766,134	766,134
Grants to Parishes for CTS	12,990	0
Special Expenses	44,901	45,534
Grants to Unparished Area	2,010	0
Transfers to/from Earmarked Reserves	1,868,242	2,425,878
Transfer to/from General Reserves	0	0
<b>AUTHORITY EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>14,807,473</b>	<b>13,818,151</b>
Retained Business Rates	-3,038,286	-3,592,545
Revenue Support Grant	-644,801	-279,788
Rural Services Delivery Grant	-22,271	-27,754
Transition	-16,864	0
New Homes Bonus	-4,034,730	-3,564,560
Surplus(-)/Deficit on Collection Fund – Council Tax	-166,957	-64,664
Surplus(-)/Deficit on Collection Fund – Business Rates	38,425	937,440
Demand on Collection Fund – Parishes and SER	-811,035	-811,668
Total Council Tax Raised by TDBC	<b>6,110,954</b>	<b>6,414,612</b>
Divided by Council Tax Base	40,843.2	41,486.3
<b>Council Tax Band D – Taunton Deane Services</b>	<b>147.88</b>	<b>152.88</b>
<b>Council Tax Band D – Somerset Rivers Authority</b>	<b>1.74</b>	<b>1.74</b>
<b>Council Tax Band D – TDBC including SRA</b>	<b>149.62</b>	<b>154.62</b>
<b>Cost per week per Band D equivalent</b>	<b>2.87</b>	<b>2.97</b>

	<b>£k</b>	<b>£k</b>
<b>Net Expenditure Base Budget 2017/18</b>		<b>14,807</b>
Inflation costs	422	
SRA Contribution tax base increase	1	
Annual pension deficit payment increase	31	
Assets – Void Pressure	46	
SHAPE Contract	89	
DLO Trading	51	
Assets – Void Pressure	40	
Other Service Changes	261	
Transformation savings	-152	
Increase fees and charges	-250	
Other Service savings	-295	
Remove 17/18 one-off Deane House project and maintenance costs	-1,893	
Financing Costs (net interest income and repayment of borrowing)	102	
<b>Subtotal costs</b>		<b>-1,547</b>
Transfer from Business Rates Smoothing Reserve	-665	

Reduction in NHB contribution to reserves	-470	
Remove previous year transfers to reserves	50	
Remove 17/18 one-off transfer from Capital Financing Reserve for Deane House project	1,643	
<b>Subtotal Reserve movement</b>		<b>558</b>
<b>Net Expenditure Base Budget 2018/19</b>		<b>13,818</b>

	<b>£k</b>	<b>£k</b>
<b>Total Funding 2017/18</b>		<b>-14,807</b>
Reduction in RSG	365	
RSDG	-6	
Increased Retained Business Rates	-554	
Transition Grant	17	
Reduction in NHB	470	
Increased funding from Council Tax	-303	
SRA tax base	-1	
Collection Fund Deficit	1,001	
<b>Subtotal - change in funding</b>		<b>989</b>
<b>Total Funding 2017/18</b>		<b>-13,818</b>

It was a requirement for the Council to prepare not only budgets for the following financial year but to also provide indicative figures into future years. The MTFP provided an indication of the expected budget gap going forward into 2018/2019 and beyond and a summary of this position was reflected in the following table:-

#### MTFP Summary as at 8 February 2018

	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	2021/22 £	2022/23 £
Services Costs	11,786,444	10,150,489	9,671,585	10,067,896	10,266,292	10,773,017
Net Financing Costs	255,685	357,930	351,040	327,275	306,010	304,120
SRA Contribution	71,067	72,186	0	0	0	0
Special Expenses	44,901	45,534	45,534	45,534	45,534	45,534
CTRS Grants	15,000	0	0	0	0	0
Earmarked Reserves-Growth	3,642,752	3,172,576	2,937,042	3,302,435	3,087,062	2,987,957
Earmarked Reserves-Other	-1,774,510	-752,181	302,718	302,725	302,718	302,723
General Reserves	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>14,041,339</b>	<b>13,046,534</b>	<b>13,307,919</b>	<b>14,045,865</b>	<b>14,007,616</b>	<b>14,413,351</b>
Retained Business Rates	-3,038,286	-3,592,545	-3,463,975	-3,531,314	-3,595,008	-3,655,133
Business Rates prior year surplus/deficit	38,425	937,440	0	0	0	0
Revenue Support Grant	-644,801	-279,788	0	0	0	0
Rural Services Delivery Grant	-22,271	-22,271	-22,271	-22,271	-22,271	-22,271
Transitional Grant	-16,864	0	0	0	0	0
New Homes	-4,034,730	-3,564,560	-3,329,020	-3,694,420	-3,479,040	-3,379,940



	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	2021/22 £	2022/23 £
Bonus						
Council Tax– TDBC	-6,039,887	-6,342,426	-6,533,235	-6,729,758	-6,932,125	-7,140,450
Council Tax–SRA	-71,067	-72,186	0	0	0	0
Council Tax– Special Expenses	-44,901	-45,534	-45,534	-45,534	-45,534	-45,534
Council Tax prior year surplus/deficit	-166,957	-64,664	0	0	0	0
<b>Net Funding</b>	<b>14,041,339</b>	<b>13,046,534</b>	<b>13,394,035</b>	<b>14,023,297</b>	<b>14,073,978</b>	<b>14,243,328</b>
<b>Budget Gap</b>	0	0	-86,116	22,568	-66,362	170,023
Budget Gap Increase	0	0	-86,116	108,684	-88,930	236,385

The MTFP position above already included the projected savings arising through the implementation of the Transformation Business Case. Without these savings the forecast budget gap would be a deficit of £1,729,000 per year by 2022/2023.

Noted that the Transformation savings for 2018/2019 included a prudent contingency for the phasing of implementation and transitional costs. It was anticipated that the savings would be delivered in full in 2019/2020.

These figures did not include the further savings that were identified in the Business Case that would be delivered through the creation of a new Council.

### **DLO Trading Account**

The General Fund budget included the trading surplus of £50,000 providing a contribution to the net income for the Council. Any additional surplus would be transferred to the Deane DLO Trading Reserve.

The forecast reserves position of Deane DLO for 2018/2019 remained positive, and provided some resilience to volatility in trading performance and future investment needs.

### **Deane Helpline Trading Account**

The budget had assumed no increase in fees to private customers which was currently £5.86 per week and no increase in the charge to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for Taunton Deane Tenants which was currently £4.86 per week. This had been approved by Full Council in December 2017.

Reported the current reserves position which was shown below. The forecast Outturn for the 2017/2018 budget was currently being reviewed but recent projections predicted an underspend of £318,000. Any final projected under/overspend would be adjusted through General Reserves.

	£
Balance Brought Forward 1 April 2017	2,186,155
<b>Current Budgeted Balance</b>	<b>2,186,155</b>

	£
2017/18 Projected Outturn Variance	318,000
2017/18 Earmarked Reserves returned to general balances	91,649
<b>Projected Balance 31 March 2018</b>	<b>2,595,804</b>
Recommended Minimum Balance	1,700,000
Projected Balance above recommended minimum	895,804

A review of the level of General Reserves had recently been undertaken and it was recommended that the minimum balance of General Reserves was increased from £1,600,000 to £1,700,000. Given the future funding risks it was strongly advised to maintain reserves above the minimum.

### **2018/2019 General Fund Capital Programme**

The current General Fund Capital Programme in 2017/2018 included approved projects totalling £33,320,000.

The current capital strategy included the following basis for prioritising schemes:-

- 1) Business Continuity (corporate/organisational/health and safety);
- 2) Statutory Service Investment (to get statutory minimum/contractual/continuity);
- 3) Growth / Transformation;
- 4) Invest to Save; and
- 5) Other.

The recommended General Fund Capital Programme for 2018/2019 totalled £3,797,000 split between Deane DLO Schemes, General Fund Schemes and Growth Schemes, full details of which were submitted for the information of Councillors.

Funding for capital investment by the Council could come from a variety of sources including:-

- Capital Receipts;
- Grant Funding;
- Capital Contributions (for example from another Local Authority or Section 106 Agreement funding);
- Revenue budgets/reserves (often referred as RCCO – Revenue Contributions to Capital Outlay); and
- Borrowing.

All of the schemes in the Capital Programme could be fully funded through a combination of revenue contributions (DLO and General), capital reserves plus grant funding provided via Somerset County Council. As a result, the Capital Programme which incorporated all of the reported bids was supported by the Executive.

### **Capital Programme for Growth and Regeneration 2018/2019**

In December 2015 the Council had approved an allocation £16,600,000 of New Homes Bonus (NHB) funding over the five year period 2016/2017 to 2020/2021, to support its priorities relating to growth and regeneration. A number of 'spend categories' had been approved, as follows:-

- Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation;
- Major Transport Schemes;
- Town Centre Regeneration;
- Employment site enabling and promoting enterprise and innovation;
- Marketing, promotion and inward investment;
- Supporting urban extension delivery; and
- Preparation of Local Development Orders.

Reported that the profile of spending over the five year period was indicative and needed to be refreshed annually, to ensure that spending plans remained aligned with an evolving picture of external funding secured, opportunities for new funding and new growth priorities.

The Growth and Regeneration Capital Budget approved to date totalled £3,900,000. If approved, a further £2,470,000 would bring the total budget to £6,370,000.

Having now carried out the above mentioned annual review, a refreshed annual profile of spending on growth was proposed. Although the spending categories and the overall allocation of £16,600,000 remained the same, a number of changes to the original profile were proposed in some categories, as follows:-

- **Taunton Strategic Flood Allocation** – The allocation had been increased to £5,000,000 in line with the Councils commitment to flood relief, by reallocation from the Urban Extension Project;
- **Major Transport Schemes** – The overall allocation had increased from £3,500,000 to £3,900,000 mainly due to the Access and Signage Project to provide the Variable Messaging System and Pay on Foot system;
- **Town Centre Regeneration** – The allocation had increased from £2,500,000 to £3,500,000 to enable the delivery of major Town Centre schemes, such as Firepool and Coal Orchard;
- **Employment sites, enterprise and innovation** – A reduction to the overall allocation (now £3,500,000) due to a reduction in the Junction 25 Nexus allocation; and
- **Supporting Urban Extension delivery** – The previous allocation of £2,000,000 had been reallocated to the Strategic Flood Alleviation Project in 2020/2021.

Noted that subject to a Business Case, the Council could also consider the use of prudential borrowing to provide additional resources.

The Council's Section 151 Officer had a duty to comment, as part of the budget setting process on the robustness of the budget and the adequacy of reserves. In his response, Paul Fitzgerald had stated that he believed the Council's reserves to be adequate and the budget estimates used in preparing the 2018/2019 budget to be robust.

In accordance with Standing Order 18(2)(i), the Mayor called for a formal roll call of votes to be taken and recorded in the Minutes.

The recommendations, which are detailed below, were put and were carried with twenty six Councillors in favour, sixteen Councillors voting against and two abstaining:-

**Resolved** that the General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for 2018/2019 be agreed and that:-

- (a) The forecast Medium Term Financial Plan and Reserves position and the Section 151 Officer's Robustness Statement both be noted;
- (b) The General Fund Net Revenue Budget 2018/2019 be approved;
- (c) A Council Tax increase of 3.34%, increasing the Band D tax rate by £5 to £154.62 per year be approved. This comprised £152.88 for services and £1.74 on behalf of the Somerset Rivers Authority;
- (d) An increase to the Special Expenses Precept of 0.7% increasing the Band D rate from £3.00 to £3.02 for the Unparished Area of Taunton be approved;
- (e) The minimum General Reserves level be increased to £1,700,000;
- (f) The new capital schemes of the General Fund Capital Programme Budget of £3,796,711 for 2018/2019 be approved; and
- (g) Authority be delegated to the Section 151 Officer to the 2018/2019 Disabled Facilities Grant Capital Budget to reflect the final grant funding received from the Better Care Fund.

Yes	No	Abstain
Councillor Beale	Councillor Booth	Councillor Aldridge
Councillor Berry	Councillor Coles	Councillor Prior-Sankey
Councillor Mrs Blatchford	Councillor Farbahi	
Councillor Bowrah	Councillor Mrs Floyd	
Councillor Cavill	Councillor Govier	
Councillor Davies	Councillor Henley	
Councillor D Durdan	Councillor Mrs Hill	
Councillor Edwards	Councillor Horsley	
Councillor Gage	Councillor R Lees	

Councillor Mrs Gunner	Councillor Mrs Lees	
Councillor Habgood	Councillor Ms Lisgo	
Councillor Hall	Councillor Morrell	
Councillor Mrs Herbert	Councillor Nicholls	
Councillor C Hill	Councillor Mrs Smith	
Councillor Hunt	Councillor Mrs Smith-Roberts	
Councillor James	Councillor Wedderkopp	
Councillor Parrish		
Councillor Mrs Reed		
Councillor Ryan		
Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams		
Councillor Sully		
Councillor Townsend		
Councillor Mrs Tucker		
Councillor Mrs Warmington		
Councillor Watson		
Councillor Williams		

**12. Housing Revenue Account Budget Estimates and Capital Programme 2018/2019**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for the 2018/2019 Financial Year.

**2018/2019 HRA Budget**

In 2012 Taunton Deane moved away from a national subsidy system to be 'self-financing'. As part of the self-financing agreement, a one-off payment of £85,120,000 was made to the Government, in return for being able to retain all income locally to manage and maintain the housing stock. The total debt in the HRA at the start of self-financing was £99,700,000.

In order to manage the freedoms gained by the HRA through self-financing, a new 30 year Business Plan (2012-2042) was introduced. This set out the Council's overall aims and objectives for Housing Services, as well as laying out plans to manage the increased risks and opportunities.

The Business Plan had been reviewed and updated annually since 2012, but since 2015 there had been many changes in national policies and local aspiration and a full review of the Business Plan was undertaken in 2016. The draft estimates for 2018/2019 therefore reflected the amendments approved in the Business Plan.

**Business Plan Review 2016**

A full review of the HRA 30 Year Business Plan was approved by Council in July 2016.

This had included a number of changes which affected the base budget for 2018/2019. The key amendments were summarised below:-

**2018/2019 Changes in Approved Business Plan**

	£k
<b>Impact in 2018/19 of key changes within the Business Plan</b>	0.0
Starting position - balanced budget	-15.3
Social Housing Development Fund	-528.4
Repairs and Maintenance savings	-672.3
Management savings	396.8
Decrease in operating income	821.7
Reduction in movement in reserves	56.6
Depreciation	24.9
Other minor changes	<b>84.0</b>
<b>Position in Business Plan - approved by Council in July 2016 (budgeted transfer from HRA General Reserves)</b>	0.0

Full details of these changes were detailed in the report.

**Dwelling Rents for 2018/2019**

Dwelling rents for approximately 5,800 properties provided annual income of approximately £23,700,000 for the HRA.

The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 had set out a 1% reduction in social housing rents from 1 April 2016 for four years. For the first year, 2016/2017, supported housing rents were exempt, but all social rents were to be included for the remaining three years.

During the four year period, rents had to be set with at least a 1% reduction. However, each additional 0.5% decrease would reduce the average weekly rent for tenants by £0.42, or £21.84 per year, and decrease dwelling rent income to the HRA by £123,000 per year.

In line with the national rent guidance, it was proposed that the average weekly rent for dwellings for 2018/2019 should be set at the guideline rent of £81.69, a decrease of 1.0%, or £0.83 per week.

It had been expected from the Housing and Planning Act that from April 2017 tenants with a household income of over £31,000 would need to pay additional rent under 'Pay to Stay'. However, it was announced in November 2016 that this policy would no longer be implemented and social housing providers would continue to have discretion to charge a higher rent on tenants with a household income of over £60,000.

Any additional income raised from the Pay to Stay policy would have been repaid to the Government and so this would not have directly affected the Business Plan. However it was expected that this policy would increase Right to Buys in the short term as the tenants who would have been affected by

higher rents would have been likely to be those more able and willing to secure a mortgage.

As this policy was no longer being implemented the assumption of Right to Buys (RTBs) had been reduced in the Business Plan to reflect the current level. Noted that for 2018/2019 this equated to expected additional income of £128,000, although expected capital receipts from RTB would reduce.

Rent lost through void periods continued to be lower than the 2% allowed in the Business Plan. Future changes, such as the introduction of flexible tenancies, where new tenants were offered a fixed term tenancy which was renewed if appropriate might affect this in the future, but it was deemed appropriate to reduce the expected void rate to 1% for a two year period. This would be reviewed within future Business Plan reviews. This reduction in void rate from 2% to 1% would increase the rental expectation in 2018/2019 by £205,000.

These changes would give a total forecasted dwelling rent income of £24,100,000.

Further reported that in October 2017 the Department for Communities and Local Government announced that “increases to social housing rents would be limited to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1% for five years from 2020.” Dwelling rents were therefore forecast to increase by £237,000 over the current Business Plan to £24,300,000.

### **Other Income**

About 9.8% of HRA income, amounting to £2,600,000 in total, came from non-dwelling rent (mainly garages, but also shops and land), charges for services and facilities, and contributions to HRA costs from leaseholders and others. The proposed changes to specific budget lines reflected changes agreed by Full Council in the Fees and Charges report on 12 December 2017.

### **Expenditure 2018/2019**

The main areas of spending planned for the 2018/2019 financial year included:-

- Management expenses;
- Maintenance;
- Transformation;
- Special services;
- Provision for bad debts;
- Depreciation;
- Debt Management Expenses;
- Repayment of Borrowing and Interest;
- Interest receivable; and
- Social Housing Development Fund.

The following table provided a summary of the main changes to the budget estimates for the HRA Revenue Account since the approval of the HRA

Business Plan.

### ***HRA Budget 2018/2019 Changes***

	<b>£k</b>
<b>Position in Business Plan (budgeted transfer from HRA General Reserves)</b>	<b>84.0</b>
<b><u>Proposals included in the report</u></b>	
Service charges	-352.2
Garages	-9.4
Leasehold Charges	-50.1
Repairs and maintenance savings	-626.4
Management savings	-185.5
Depreciation	-55.1
Increase in pension deficit contribution	45.9
Inflation costs excluding salaries	936.6
Staff 2% pay award and pay grade change	250.0
Other minor changes	-51.4
<b>Balanced budget for 2018/19 ie net transfer to reserves</b>	<b>-13.6</b>

The HRA Business Plan recommended that the minimum unearmarked reserve balance for the HRA should be £1,800,000. If the HRA budget was approved by Council, the balance would increase by £136,000, to £3,400,000.

Further reported that the HRA faced a number of risks and uncertainties, both external to the Council and internal changes.

A number of legislative changes were being implemented, as follows:-

Universal Credit – It was not known what impact the full roll out of Universal Credit would have on the HRA although steps had already been taken to try and prevent loss of income where possible. These were set out in the report.

Higher Value Asset Sales (Housing and Planning Act 2016) – This was the sale of vacant social housing with some of the proceeds being returned to the Government in order to fund the extension of Right to Buy in Housing Associations.

The regulations had not yet been published, but it was expected that an amount would be payable to the Government based on the value of the housing held by the Council. It was currently expected that this would commence from April 2019.

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) Rates - Tenants in social housing would in future only be able to claim Housing Benefit up to the LHA rate. Currently the LHA rates were only applicable for Housing Benefit claims in private rented stock. From April 2019, this would also apply to tenants in social housing. This might have an impact on some of our Supported Housing residents, but the majority of Taunton Deane housing was within the LHA rates for the area.



Fixed term tenancies (Housing and Planning Act 2016) – Councils would be required to review tenancies every five years rather than granting a lifetime tenancy, with extensions for tenants with a disability or school age children. This was expected to be in place for April 2018 and would impact on the way in which tenancies are managed.

The HRA also faced a number local risks including Transformation, Extra Care Housing and Asbestos, details of which were provided.

### **HRA Borrowing**

In 2012 Taunton Deane took out additional borrowing of £85,200,000 as part of the self-financing settlement with the Government. This brought the total borrowing in the HRA up to £99,600,000 at the start of self-financing, including £5,500,000 internal borrowing from the General Fund.

The opening balance of external borrowing currently totalled £91,000,000 with an additional £10,500,000 of internal borrowing within the HRA (for approved capital schemes such as Creechbarrow Road, Taunton). This internal borrowing was currently funded from reserves held by the HRA, but external borrowing would be required in the short term. Repayment of £3,000,000 would be made during 2018/2019.

An annual provision of £1,800,000 for repayment of debt was included in the Business Plan, and ongoing repayments of borrowing would be made.

The headroom was due to increase annually, as no additional borrowing was included within the Business Plan. In 2018/2019 this was expected to be £19,300,000, and would increase annually by £1,800,000 until further borrowing was agreed by the Council. The intention was for this borrowing headroom to be available for the larger regeneration schemes that could not be funded from the Social Housing Development Fund budget.

### **Right to Buy (RTB) Receipts**

In 2012 the maximum discounts offered to tenants who exercised their Right to Buy increased significantly to £77,000. Taunton Deane had signed up to retain the additional receipts, and agreed that these receipts would be used to fund new affordable housing. The additional RTB receipts could only account for 30% of spend on new housing, with the remaining 70% coming from other funds such as revenue funding or borrowing. The RTB receipts could not be used in the same scheme as other Government funding such as Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) funding.

The full spend on new housing had to be spent within three years of the capital receipt, or the RTB receipt had to be returned to the Government with interest at 4% over base rate from the date of the receipt.

The latest forecast showed that spend would be enough to meet the match funding requirements to quarter 3 of 2019/2020.

Noted that new housing did not need to be provided by the Council. The 30%

RTB funding could also be used by Housing Associations in the area, provided they met the same match funding requirements.

Further options for the 70% match funding of RTB receipts in excess of planned development expenditure included:-

- Increasing spend through borrowing – limited to debt cap;
- Increasing spend from revenue – which would lead to reduced service provision as revenue was allocated within the Business Plan;
- The use of other Council funding; or
- Return funding to Government.

The requirement for the funding to be spent within three years did mean that there was flexibility to allocate funding after the capital receipts were retained. However development schemes usually had large lead in times receipts therefore needed to be allocated as soon as possible to reduce the risk of having to repay the capital receipt to the Government with interest payments.

### **2018/2019 HRA Capital Programme**

The HRA Capital Programme 2018/2019 totalled £8,973,000 and was shown in the table below. This was provided to deliver the prioritised capital investment requirements included in the current Business Plan for the next budget year.

#### **Draft HRA Capital Programme 2018/2019**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Total Cost £k</b>
Major Works	5,800
Improvements	150
Exceptional Extensive Works	492
Disabled Facilities Grants and Aids and Adaptations	381
Building Services Vehicles	121
Social Housing Development Fund	2,029
<b>Total Proposed HRA Capital Programme 2018/19</b>	<b>8,973</b>

Full details of proposed spending under the above project categories were set out in the report. The current five-year HRA Capital Programme included forecast capital expenditure requirements for the period 2018/2019 to 2022/2023, as identified in the Business Plan.

The programme would be funded from the Major Repairs Reserve (from depreciation), revenue contribution (RCCO) from the Social Housing Development Fund and capital receipts (Right to Buy).

In accordance with Standing Order 18(2)(i), the Mayor called for a formal roll call of votes to be taken and recorded in the Minutes.

The recommendations, which are detailed below, were put and were carried

with forty one Councillors in favour and three abstaining:-

**Resolved** that that the Housing Revenue Account Budget and Capital Programme for 2018/2019 be agreed and that:-

- (a) The proposed rent decrease of 1%, with proposed average rents of £81.69 per week in 2018/2019 be approved;
- (b) The Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2018/2019 be approved; and
- (c) The new capital schemes of the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme of £8,973,000 for 2018/2019 be also approved.

Yes	Yes	Abstain
Councillor Beale	Councillor James	Councillor Aldridge
Councillor Berry	Councillor R Lees	Councillor Henley
Councillor Mrs Blatchford	Councillor Mrs Lees	Councillor Horsley
Councillor Booth	Councillor Ms Lisgo	
Councillor Bowrah	Councillor Morrell	
Councillor Cavill	Councillor Nicholls	
Councillor Coles	Councillor Parrish	
Councillor Davies	Councillor Prior-Sankey	
Councillor D Durdan	Councillor Mrs Reed	
Councillor Edwards	Councillor Ryan	
Councillor Farbahi	Councillor Mrs Smith	
Councillor Mrs Floyd	Councillor Mrs Smith-Roberts	
Councillor Gage	Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams	
Councillor Govier	Councillor Sully	
Councillor Mrs Gunner	Councillor Townsend	
Councillor Habgood	Councillor Mrs Tucker	
Councillor Hall	Councillor Mrs Warmington	
Councillor Mrs Herbert	Councillor Watson	
Councillor C Hill	Councillor Wedderkopp	
Councillor Mrs Hill	Councillor Williams	
Councillor Hunt		

**13. Council Tax Setting 2018/2019**

Considered report previously circulated, which made recommendations on the level of Council Tax for 2018/2019.

The Localism Act 2011 had made significant changes to the Local Government Finance Act 1992, and now required the billing authority to calculate a Council Tax requirement for the year.

Submitted details of the Town and Parish Council Precepts that had been received for 2018/2019 which totalled £819,022.

The increase in the average Band D Council Tax for Town and Parish Councils was 5.22% which resulted in an average Band D Council Tax figure of £19.74 (£18.76 for 2017/2018).

Reported that the Precept for the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) had approved its tax requirement on 1 February 2018. The precept would be £8,040,307.93 which would result in a Band D Council Tax of £193.81, an increase of 6.60%. The Precept would be adjusted by a Collection Fund contribution of £69,821.

The County Council had approved its Council Tax requirement on 21 February 2018 and had set its precept at £49,458,314.77, adjusted by a Collection Fund surplus of £431,963. This was calculated as an increase on base of 2.99% for the general precept and 3% for Adult Social Care and had resulted in a total Band D Council Tax of £1,192.16. This figure included a precept of £12.84 (1.25%) in respect of the Somerset Rivers Authority which was unchanged from the 2017/2018 precept.

Noted that the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority had approved its Council Tax requirement on 16 February 2018. The precept would be £3,485,264, which resulted in a Band D Council Tax of £84.01. The Precept would be adjusted by a Collection Fund contribution of £31,326.

As far as Taunton Deane Borough Council was concerned, Members were being asked to approve a total Council Tax requirement of £6,414,612 for 2018/2019. This incorporated an increase of 3.38% in the basic Council Tax rate and also included £1.74 in respect of the Somerset Rivers Authority. Together this equated to a Band D equivalent of £154.62, a total increase of £5.00 for 2018/2019.

The estimated balance on the Council Tax Collection Fund was forecast on 15 January each year. Any surplus or deficit was shared between the County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Fire Authority and the Council, in shares relative to the precept levels.

The estimated balance on the Council Tax Collection Fund was a surplus of £597,774. Taunton Deane's share of this amounted to £64,664, and this had been reflected in the General Fund Revenue Estimates.

In accordance with Standing Order 18(2)(i), the Mayor called for a formal roll call of votes to be taken and recorded in the Minutes.

On the motion of Councillor Williams, the substantive Motion, which is detailed below, was put and was carried with thirty Councillors in favour, six Councillors voting against and nine abstaining:-

**Resolved that:-**

- (1) The formal Council Tax Resolution set out in Appendix A to these Minutes be approved; and
- (2) The total Band D Council Tax would be:-

	2017/18	2018/19	Increase
	£	£	%
Taunton Deane Borough Council	147.88	152.88	3.38
Taunton Deane Borough Council - SRA	1.74	1.74	0.00
Somerset County Council	1,069.52	1,103.15	2.99
Somerset County Council – Social Care	42.43	76.17	3.00
Somerset County Council – SRA	12.84	12.84	0.00
Police and Crime Commissioner	181.81	193.81	6.60
Devon & Somerset Fire Authority	81.57	84.01	2.99
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>1,537.79</b>	<b>1,624.60</b>	<b>5.65</b>
Town and Parish Council (average)	18.76	19.74	5.22
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,556.55</b>	<b>1,644.34</b>	<b>5.64</b>

Yes	No	Abstain
Councillor Beale	Councillor Booth	Councillor Aldridge
Councillor Berry	Councillor Coles	Councillor Farbahi
Councillor Mrs Blatchford	Councillor Govier	Councillor Mrs Floyd
Councillor Bowrah	Councillor Henley	Councillor Prior-Sankey
Councillor Cavill	Councillor Mrs Hill	
Councillor Davies	Councillor Horsley	
Councillor D Durdan	Councillor R Lees	
Councillor Edwards	Councillor Mrs Lees	
Councillor Gage	Councillor Ms Lisgo	
Councillor Mrs Gunner	Councillor Morrell	
Councillor Habgood	Councillor Nicholls	
Councillor Hall	Councillor Mrs Smith	
Councillor Mrs Herbert	Councillor Mrs Smith-Roberts	
Councillor Hunt	Councillor Wedderkopp	
Councillor James		
Councillor Parrish		
Councillor Mrs Reed		
Councillor Ryan		
Councillor Miss Smith		
Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams		

Councillor Sully		
Councillor Townsend		
Councillor Mrs Tucker		
Councillor Mrs Warmington		
Councillor Watson		
Councillor Williams		

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

**From Councillor Horsley to Councillor Williams**

Under a Press Release dated 1 February 2018, the Leader informed us of the success of the Council earning £7,200,000 for the new Garden Community development for North Taunton to provide vital infrastructure and thus achieving our desired Garden Town status.

I warmly congratulate our officer team for putting together so quickly a bid to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to attaining this Housing Infrastructure Fund Marginal Viability Scheme as it simultaneously means that there is a real prospect of meeting our corporate strategy of providing 25% affordable housing on all sites.

Can he reassure me that we do have “the money in the bag” for this when we were informed that the bids nationally for this pot of money was a two stage proposal?

As I understand it, the first part was to be announced at the end of January and this would simply identify those Councils whose bids would be shortlisted and that the final determination of the successful Councils would not be known until late June/July?

Bearing in mind the extraordinary pressures around the country and the overall severe reductions/cuts especially in Local Government expenditure by Whitehall, is this yet another indication of premature Tory promises of over claiming and under delivering as they have done on both Firepool and Coal Orchard to date and the whole regeneration of the Taunton Town Centre?

**Reply** – I thank Councillor Horsley for notice of his question.

Far from being premature, it demonstrates we have a good track record of delivering continued services and investment so funding such as this is won.

For the record a detailed planning application for the re-development of Coal Orchard, Taunton is imminent, as is an outline application for Firepool, Taunton.

There seems to be some confusion as to the two Housing Infrastructure Funds. We have secured £7,200,000 Marginal Viability funding which was a single stage process – so the funds are secure.

However, a Forward Funding bid of approximately £80,000,000 submitted jointly by Somerset County Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council and Sedgemoor District Council has recently been submitted. This is a two stage bid and we currently await the announcement as to whether the bid has been shortlisted for the second stage.

**15. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**Resolved** that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item as it included exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

**16. Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 – Listed Buildings at Tonedale Mill, Milverton Road, Wellington**

Considered report previously circulated, relating to proposed actions proposed to be taken to secure the repair of the historic buildings at Tonedale Mill, Milverton Road, Wellington.

An Urgent Works Notice was to be served on the owner of the property identified in the report requiring the execution of works which were urgently necessary for the preservation of the building.

If the works were not carried out, the Council would need to step in and carry out the required works.

Historic England (HE) had confirmed that, in such circumstances, it would provide grant funding subject to match funding being provided by Taunton Deane.

The action proposed was the first step of a large programme of works with HE to secure the buildings on the site.

**Resolved** that a supplementary estimate to the Capital Programme be approved at the level set out in the report, in the event that the owner of the property failed to carry out the required works. The funding of these works to come from Historic England as detailed, with the remainder from a virement to the Council's Revenue Contribution to Capital in 2017/2018 funded from additional investment interest receipts.

Due to the lateness of the hour, the Mayor suggested that rather than extend the duration of the meeting, questions for the Executive Councillors in respect of their reports (details follow) could be dealt with via e-mail. This was agreed.

**17. 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:-

- Formation of a Single Council;
- Budget Setting 2018/2019;
- Housing Infrastructure Funding – Successful Bid;
- Firepool, Taunton;
- Lisieux Way Business Park, Taunton;
- The Deane House Accommodation Project; and
- Nexus 25.

(ii) **Environmental Services and Climate Change (Councillor Berry)**

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

- Environmental Health (Dog Warden Service; Public Health Funerals; Food – New Registrations and Tattoo Safety);
- Licensing (Staffing; Performance; and HM Revenues and Customs);
- Street Sweeping and Toilet Cleaning;
- Somerset Waste Partnership (New Resource Recovery Centre; and Food Waste; and
- Cemeteries and Crematorium.

(iii) **Economic Development, Asset Management, Arts and Culture, Tourism and Communications (Councillor Edwards)**

The report from Councillor Edwards covered:-

- Communications;
- Business Development - Productivity Strategy; and Taunton Deane Business Awards;
- Events, Place, Retail Marketing and Visitor Centre – Events; Place and Retail Marketing; and Visitor Centre;
- Growth Strategy and Specific Projects – Coal Orchard Redevelopment, Taunton; Lisieux Way Site, Taunton; Crown Industrial Estate; Taunton Vale (Throup's Site); Wiveliscombe; and Asset Management Service Update – February 2018.

(iv) **Planning Policy and Transportation (Councillor Habgood)**

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

- Planning Policy;
- Garden Town Strategy and Plan;
- Nexus 25 – Local Development Order;
- Junction 25 Upgrade – Somerset County Council Highways Authority;
- Highways England Consultation – Taunton to Southfields



- Dualling Scheme;
- Taunton Urban Realm;
- Car Park Pay on Foot and Variable Message Signage and Pay on Exit parking;
- Neighbourhood Plans; and
- Major Planning – Staplegrove; Firepool, Taunton; and Tonedale Mill, Wellington.

(v) **Sport, Parks and Leisure (Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams)**

The report from Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams` dealt with activities taking place in the following areas:-

- Community Leisure – Play and Recreation; Summer Sunday Bandstand Concerts; Council's Capital Grant Scheme; and Parish Play Area Grant Scheme;
- GLL (Taunton Deane) – Community Sport and Health; and Facilities;
- Parks and Open Spaces – Grass Cutting; Streams; Vivary Park; and Wellington Park;
- Property – Wilton Lands, Taunton; and
- Transition Town Wellington – Working in Partnership.

(vi) **Corporate Resources (Councillor Parrish)**

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

- Revenues and Benefits;
- Corporate Services;
- Corporate Performance – General Data Protection Regulations;
- Customer Services;
- Facilities Management;
- ICT/Technology;
- Member Case Management;
- HR and Organisational Development;
- The Mayoralty and Democratic Services;
- Procurement Team; and
- Finance.

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

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

- Voluntary Sector Partners with Funding Agreements;
- Community Council for Somerset;
- Compass Disability;
- Engage;

- Fuse Streetlinkz;
- North Taunton Partnership, Priorswood, Taunton;
- Taunton East Development Trust, Link Centre;
- Taunton Citizens Advice; and
- Wiveliscombe Area Partnership and Wivey Link Community Transport.

(viii) **Housing Services (Councillor Beale)**

Councillor Beale submitted his report which drew attention to the following:-

- Deane Housing Development – Weavers Arms, Rockwell Green, Wellington; 12 Moorland Close, Taunton; North Taunton; and Housing Enabling;
- Welfare Reform – Discretionary Housing Payment; and Universal Credit;
- Deane Helpline;
- Anti-Social Behaviour Service; and
- Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership.

(Councillor Stone left the meeting at 8.11 p.m.)

(The meeting ended at 9.34 p.m.)

## APPENDIX A

### The Council is recommended to resolve as follows:

1. It be noted that the Council calculated the Council Tax Base 2018/19
  - (a) for the whole Council area as **41,486.30** [Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the Act)] (**the tax base for the whole district**); and
  - (b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept relates as in the attached Appendix C (**the tax base for each parish or town council area**).
2. Calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2018/19 (excluding Parish precepts) is £6,414,612.
3. That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2018/19 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:

(a)	£58,875,808	being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act; (expenditure, including all precepts issued to it by parish and town councils).
(b)	£51,642,174	being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act (income, including government grants, benefits subsidy and adjustments for surpluses on the Collection Fund).
(c)	£7,233,634	being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act; as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act); (expenditure less income).
(d)	£174.36	being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year; (this is an overall average amount of Council Tax, per Band D property including Parish precepts).
(e)	£819,022	being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as per the attached Appendix C).
(f)	£154.62	being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates (the District Council element of the tax for Band D dwellings).

4. To note that the County Council, the Police Authority and the Fire Authority have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated in the table below.

5. That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in the table below as the amounts of Council Tax for 2018/19 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings. The table excludes parish and town precepts and special expenses.

**VALUATION BANDS**

**TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH  
COUNCIL**

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£103.08	£120.26	£137.44	£154.62	£188.98	£223.34	£257.70	£309.24

**SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL**

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£794.76	£927.24	£1,059.70	£1,192.16	£1,457.08	£1,722.01	£1,986.93	£2,384.32

**POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR AVON AND SOMERSET**

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£129.21	£150.74	£172.28	£193.81	£236.88	£279.95	£323.02	£387.62

**DEVON AND SOMERSET FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES**

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£56.01	£65.34	£74.68	£84.01	£102.68	£121.35	£140.02	£168.02

**AGGREGATE OF COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENTS**

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£1,083.06	£1,263.58	£1,444.10	£1,624.60	£1,985.62	£2,346.65	£2,707.67	£3,249.20

Valuation Bands								
Council Tax Schedule 2018/19	Band A £	Band B £	Band C £	Band D £	Band E £	Band F £	Band G £	Band H £
Taunton Deane Borough Council	101.92	118.91	135.89	152.88	186.85	220.83	254.80	305.76
Taunton Deane Borough Council (Somerset Rivers Authority)	1.16	1.35	1.55	1.74	2.13	2.51	2.90	3.48
Somerset County Council	735.43	858.01	980.58	1,103.15	1,348.29	1,593.44	1,838.58	2,206.30
Somerset County Council (Social Care)	50.78	59.24	67.71	76.17	93.10	110.02	126.95	152.34
Somerset County Council (Somerset Rivers Authority)	8.55	9.99	11.41	12.84	15.69	18.55	21.40	25.68
Police and Crime Commissioner	129.21	150.74	172.28	193.81	236.88	279.95	323.02	387.62
Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority	56.01	65.34	74.68	84.01	102.68	121.35	140.02	168.02
<b>Totals excluding Parish/Town Precepts</b>	<b>1,083.06</b>	<b>1,263.58</b>	<b>1,444.10</b>	<b>1,624.60</b>	<b>1,985.62</b>	<b>2,346.65</b>	<b>2,707.67</b>	<b>3,249.20</b>
Average Parish / Town	13.16	15.35	17.54	19.74	24.13	28.52	32.90	39.48
<b>Total including Average Parish/Town Precept</b>	<b>1,096.22</b>	<b>1,278.93</b>	<b>1,461.64</b>	<b>1,644.34</b>	<b>2,009.75</b>	<b>2,375.17</b>	<b>2,740.57</b>	<b>3,288.68</b>
<b>Parish:</b>								
Ash Priors	1,083.06	1,263.58	1,444.10	1,624.60	1,985.62	2,346.65	2,707.67	3,249.20
Ashbrittle	1,097.99	1,281.00	1,464.01	1,647.00	2,013.00	2,379.01	2,745.00	3,294.00
Bathealton	1,086.87	1,268.02	1,449.18	1,630.31	1,992.60	2,354.90	2,717.19	3,260.63
Bishops Hull	1,095.57	1,278.17	1,460.78	1,643.36	2,008.55	2,373.75	2,738.94	3,286.72
Bishops Lydeard/Cothelstone	1,111.51	1,296.78	1,482.04	1,667.28	2,037.78	2,408.30	2,778.80	3,334.56
Bradford on Tone	1,098.28	1,281.34	1,464.39	1,647.43	2,013.52	2,379.63	2,745.72	3,294.86
Burrowbridge	1,103.01	1,286.85	1,470.70	1,654.52	2,022.19	2,389.87	2,757.54	3,309.04
Cheddon Fitzpaine	1,103.01	1,286.86	1,470.70	1,654.53	2,022.20	2,389.88	2,757.55	3,309.06
Chipstable	1,099.48	1,282.74	1,465.99	1,649.23	2,015.72	2,382.23	2,748.72	3,298.46
Churchstanton	1,100.32	1,283.72	1,467.11	1,650.49	2,017.26	2,384.05	2,750.82	3,300.98
Combe Florey	1,104.85	1,289.00	1,473.15	1,657.28	2,025.56	2,393.85	2,762.14	3,314.56
Comeytrowe	1,090.96	1,272.80	1,454.63	1,636.45	2,000.10	2,363.77	2,727.42	3,272.90
Corfe	1,097.89	1,280.88	1,463.87	1,646.84	2,012.80	2,378.77	2,744.74	3,293.68
Cotford St Luke	1,102.99	1,286.84	1,470.68	1,654.50	2,022.16	2,389.84	2,757.50	3,309.00
Creech St Michael	1,113.09	1,298.62	1,484.14	1,669.65	2,040.68	2,411.72	2,782.75	3,339.30
Durston	1,098.22	1,281.27	1,464.31	1,647.34	2,013.41	2,379.50	2,745.57	3,294.68
Fitzhead	1,109.84	1,294.82	1,479.81	1,664.77	2,034.72	2,404.67	2,774.62	3,329.54
Halse	1,095.49	1,278.08	1,460.67	1,643.24	2,008.40	2,373.57	2,738.74	3,286.48
Hatch Beauchamp	1,099.50	1,282.76	1,466.02	1,649.26	2,015.76	2,382.27	2,748.77	3,298.52
Kingston St Mary	1,098.53	1,281.63	1,464.73	1,647.81	2,013.99	2,380.18	2,746.35	3,295.62
Langford Budville	1,099.95	1,283.29	1,466.62	1,649.94	2,016.59	2,383.25	2,749.90	3,299.88
Lydeard St Lawrence/Tolland	1,095.92	1,278.58	1,461.25	1,643.89	2,009.20	2,374.51	2,739.82	3,287.78
Milverton	1,111.80	1,297.11	1,482.42	1,667.71	2,038.31	2,408.92	2,779.52	3,335.42
Neroche	1,095.38	1,277.95	1,460.53	1,643.08	2,008.21	2,373.34	2,738.47	3,286.16
North Curry	1,099.25	1,282.46	1,465.68	1,648.88	2,015.30	2,381.72	2,748.14	3,297.76
Norton Fitzwarren	1,100.85	1,284.33	1,467.82	1,651.28	2,018.23	2,385.19	2,752.14	3,302.56
Nynehead	1,096.13	1,278.83	1,461.53	1,644.21	2,009.59	2,374.98	2,740.35	3,288.42
Oake	1,094.67	1,277.12	1,459.58	1,642.01	2,006.90	2,371.80	2,736.69	3,284.02
Otterford	1,083.06	1,263.58	1,444.10	1,624.60	1,985.62	2,346.65	2,707.67	3,249.20
Pitminster	1,094.65	1,277.10	1,459.55	1,641.98	2,006.86	2,371.75	2,736.64	3,283.96
Ruishton/Thornfalcon	1,107.65	1,292.27	1,476.89	1,661.49	2,030.71	2,399.94	2,769.15	3,322.98
Sampford Arundel	1,113.73	1,299.36	1,484.99	1,670.60	2,041.84	2,413.09	2,784.34	3,341.20
Staplegrave	1,090.80	1,272.61	1,454.42	1,636.21	1,999.81	2,363.42	2,727.02	3,272.42
Stawley	1,094.65	1,277.10	1,459.55	1,641.98	2,006.86	2,371.75	2,736.64	3,283.96
Stoke St Gregory	1,110.43	1,295.51	1,480.59	1,665.65	2,035.79	2,405.94	2,776.09	3,331.30
Stoke St Mary	1,093.29	1,275.52	1,457.74	1,639.95	2,004.38	2,368.82	2,733.25	3,279.90
Taunton	1,085.07	1,265.93	1,446.78	1,627.62	1,989.31	2,351.01	2,712.70	3,255.24
Trull	1,101.30	1,284.86	1,468.42	1,651.96	2,019.06	2,386.17	2,753.27	3,303.92
Wellington	1,110.81	1,295.95	1,481.10	1,666.22	2,036.49	2,406.77	2,777.04	3,332.44
Wellington Without	1,097.11	1,279.97	1,462.83	1,645.67	2,011.37	2,377.08	2,742.79	3,291.34
West Bagborough	1,096.65	1,279.43	1,462.22	1,644.98	2,010.53	2,376.09	2,741.64	3,289.96
West Buckland	1,094.95	1,277.46	1,459.96	1,642.44	2,007.42	2,372.42	2,737.40	3,284.88
West Hatch	1,095.81	1,278.46	1,461.10	1,643.73	2,009.00	2,374.28	2,739.55	3,287.46
West Monkton	1,102.22	1,285.93	1,469.65	1,653.34	2,020.75	2,388.16	2,755.57	3,306.68
Wiveliscombe	1,106.82	1,291.30	1,475.78	1,660.24	2,029.18	2,398.13	2,767.07	3,320.48

## APPENDIX C

## TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL PRECEPTS

Parish/Town Council	2017/18			2018/19			Council Tax Increase
	Tax Base	Precept Levied	Council Tax Band D	Tax Base	Precept Levied	Council Tax Band D	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Ash Priors	79.67	-	-	81.39	-	-	0.00%
Ashbrittle	94.01	2,053	21.84	92.84	2,080	22.40	2.59%
Bathealton	89.05	650	7.30	87.51	500	5.71	-21.72%
Bishops Hull	1,136.89	21,328	18.76	1,167.36	21,900	18.76	0.00%
Bishops Lydeard/Cothelstone	1,131.59	44,132	39.00	1,148.11	49,000	42.68	9.43%
Bradford on Tone	306.68	7,000	22.83	306.67	7,000	22.83	0.00%
Burrowbridge	201.47	5,500	27.30	200.53	6,000	29.92	9.60%
Cheddon Fitzpaine	633.46	18,929	29.88	648.13	19,401	29.93	0.17%
Chipstable	131.97	3,156	23.92	131.32	3,235	24.63	3.00%
Churchstanton	363.47	9,410	25.89	366.53	9,489	25.89	0.00%
Combe Florey	122.69	4,000	32.60	122.41	4,000	32.68	0.23%
Comeytrove	2,019.81	23,915	11.84	2,017.29	23,896	11.85	0.05%
Corfe	133.32	2,750	20.63	134.92	3,000	22.24	7.80%
Cotford St Luke	780.75	20,300	26.00	789.35	23,600	29.90	14.99%
Creech St Michael	1,091.37	46,165	42.30	1,104.06	49,738	45.05	6.50%
Durstun	55.39	600	10.83	57.17	1,300	22.74	109.92%
Fitzhead	118.66	3,600	30.34	117.15	4,706	40.17	32.41%
Halse	140.42	2,600	18.52	139.50	2,600	18.64	0.66%
Hatch Beauchamp	262.82	6,500	24.73	263.63	6,500	24.66	-0.31%
Kingston St Mary	461.36	8,061	17.47	442.68	10,274	23.21	32.83%
Langford Budville	235.31	6,840	29.07	236.78	6,000	25.34	-12.83%
Lydeard St Lawrence/Tolland	210.12	4,053	19.29	212.72	4,103	19.29	-0.02%
Milverton	584.24	20,000	34.23	579.97	25,000	43.11	25.92%
Neroche	247.67	4,446	17.95	247.79	4,580	18.48	2.96%
North Curry	722.57	17,312	23.96	741.42	18,000	24.28	1.33%
Norton Fitzwarren	1,139.35	30,400	26.68	1,193.69	31,850	26.68	0.00%
Nynehead	165.00	3,300	20.00	173.38	3,400	19.61	-1.95%
Oake	317.06	5,300	16.72	321.69	5,600	17.41	4.14%
Otterford	186.45	-	-	190.57	-	-	0.00%
Pitminster	479.45	7,973	16.63	489.03	8,500	17.38	4.52%
Ruishton/Thornfalcon	584.09	21,210	36.31	592.28	21,852	36.89	1.60%
Sampford Arundel	128.38	6,000	46.74	130.43	6,000	46.00	-1.57%
Staplegrove	806.61	8,500	10.54	809.47	9,400	11.61	10.20%
Stawley	139.45	2,400	17.21	138.08	2,400	17.38	0.99%
Stoke St Gregory	367.69	10,500	28.56	369.85	15,181	41.05	43.74%
Stoke St Mary	208.98	3,236	15.48	210.79	3,236	15.35	-0.86%
Taunton	14,966.85	44,901	3.00	15,077.37	45,534	3.02	0.67%
Trull	1,068.96	29,000	27.13	1,060.12	29,000	27.36	0.83%
Wellington	5,012.27	200,490	40.00	5,132.95	213,633	41.62	4.05%
Wellington Without	307.12	6,150	20.02	306.12	6,450	21.07	5.22%
West Bagborough	166.05	3,500	21.08	171.75	3,500	20.38	-3.32%
West Buckland	432.70	7,720	17.84	438.05	7,815	17.84	-0.01%
West Hatch	135.06	2,330	17.25	133.96	2,563	19.13	10.90%
West Monkton	1,757.15	49,923	28.41	1,973.12	56,707	28.74	1.16%
Wiveliscombe	1,119.72	40,000	35.72	1,136.37	40,500	35.64	-0.23%
Totals	40,843.15	766,134	18.76	41,486.31	819,022	19.74	5.22%

## Full Council – 10 April 2018

### Consulting with Hoteliers, room providers, Airbnb and the public to ensure business and public support for tens of millions of Pounds for a proposed hotel investment at Firepool, Taunton with public funds

#### Motion proposed by Councillor Habib Farbahi, seconded by Councillor Jefferson Horsley

##### Preamble:-

The idea of an international hotel brand coming to Taunton is really interesting and exciting to us all. We are all for commercial investment and a healthy return on our capital. In fact we have been vocal in the last nine years, calling for more commerciality on a win-win basis, especially now that we are at the mercy of the financially challenged authority of West Somerset. As custodians of public funds, we have to ensure there are no risks attached to the Business Case.

Some Members witnessed at the Corporate Scrutiny Committee meeting on 22 March 2018 which exposed that no consultation with local businesses had occurred to assess the impact such a development may have on them, some of whose Business Rates will go directly to pay towards a proposal that could potentially push them out of the market.

No evidence was produced as to how many established hotels and other related hospitality facilities were currently in the market within a five-mile radius of the proposed development, to indicate current capacity in this market.

If you do not know your market how do you go about investing in it?

According to Visit England figures for 2017<sup>1</sup>, the reported occupancy for the South West is 69%. This is much lower than reported to us on the night. Furthermore officers confirmed that the bedroom demand has been steady in the last year and is going to be so in the next year.....but according to PwC **key finding**<sup>2</sup>...

*“While the full impact of the UK vote to leave the EU will not be known for some time, economic growth is expected to slow. A weak pound should provide a boost to inbound leisure travel, but security concerns, tight corporate travel budgets, above average supply growth (especially in London) and consumer and corporate uncertainty will create an unfavourable backdrop. The industry is also tackling on going disruption via the Sharing Economy. We retain a cautious outlook”.*

Officers could not confirm whether more supply into the Taunton market would help or just dilute the market share of the current operators.

No one was aware of the number of Airbnb beds and the impact on this market. Furthermore the new Hotel Mercure in Bridgwater will take the majority of the Hinkley Point business, who currently stay in Taunton. This will apply to other corporate clients with business in Bridgwater.

There was no idea of how many white-collar jobs were created in Taunton Deane in the last five years, so that we could justify demand.

In the related restaurant sector we have, over the last 24 months witnessed extra seats locally and the additional supply has put pressure on the operators, which has resulted in unsustainable outlets. None of the officers or the Portfolio Holder were aware of this despite national discussion and known closures within a number of chains. We have learned only this week Prezzo is going to close its Taunton restaurant<sup>4</sup>.

At present there are financial pressures on hotels and the hospitality industry from minimum/living wage increases, Business Rate increases, utility and insurance cost increases and general cost inflation, an additional supply in to this market may depress average rates for all hotels.

Interest rates on loans are due to be raised in May<sup>3</sup>; the days of “cheap money” is rapidly disappearing. How would this affect the potential Business Plan?

There is no clear Business Case to justify the use of public money, as the risk and the return have not been properly assessed. There is a real risk that millions of pounds of public money and a long term debt carried by Council Tax and Business Rate payers will merely facilitate an external operator to make money with no investment and no risk.

We are being asked to pay tens of millions of pounds to build a hotel so that they could put their brand name on it for a disproportionately large fee.

**Recommending that:-**

- 1- The decision for the taxpayer’s to invest in a hotel venture be delayed until a consultation has taken place with the hoteliers, Airbnb and room providers as well as Taunton Deane taxpayers;
- 2- Should the Council decide to invest and operate a hotel business, the authority should ensure that the Business Plan is solid and not based on assumptions;
- 3- The option of not to pay the franchise fee and have our own distinct name should be on the table, saving taxpayers millions of pounds over the period;



- 4- Future investment strategy should be open, transparent and open to public scrutiny; and
- 5- The decision should only be taken after the new Council is established, as Taunton Deane should not commit a successor organisation to such a financial commitment.

**References:**

1- [https://www.visitbritain.org/sites/default/files/vb-corporate/Documents-Library/documents/may\\_2017\\_eos\\_newsletter.pdf](https://www.visitbritain.org/sites/default/files/vb-corporate/Documents-Library/documents/may_2017_eos_newsletter.pdf)

2- <https://www.pwc.co.uk/industries/hospitality-leisure/insights/uk-hotels-forecast-2017.html>

3- [https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2018/03/23/bank-england-policymaker-adds-speculation-rate-rises-may/?WT.mc\\_id=tmgliveapp\\_iosshare\\_AqYdNSqybbRD](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2018/03/23/bank-england-policymaker-adds-speculation-rate-rises-may/?WT.mc_id=tmgliveapp_iosshare_AqYdNSqybbRD)

4- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-43515133>

## Taunton Deane Borough Council

### Motions to Council – Assessment Form

On receipt of a Motion from a Councillor, the Democratic Services Manager will carry out an assessment as to its contents to establish whether there are likely to be significant consequences to the Council should the Motion be carried at the subsequent Full Council meeting.

The first question to be addressed will be:-

“Can the Motion, if approved, be implemented without the need for any resource (financial and otherwise) to be identified outside existing budgets or staffing capacity?”

If the answer is ‘yes’, then the Motion can proceed towards discussion and resolution.

An example of a Motion which would fall into the above category would be where the Council is being asked to lobby the Government, Somerset County Council or other body on a particular issue. If the motion is carried, the action required will usually involve no more than a letter being prepared and sent to the intended recipient.

However, as in the case of the recent Motion on ‘Legal Hights’, the answer to the above question would clearly be ‘no’.

In such circumstances, detailed analysis of the wording of the Motion will be required to identify what will be needed if the Motion – when it comes before Full Council – is carried.

Such analysis will include:-

- What additional resource would be required to ensure the Motion (if approved) could be implemented?
- What needs to be done to identify the level of resource necessary both in financial and staff terms?
- Are any approvals needed to provide these resources?
- Will this require reports to be submitted through Scrutiny and the Executive?  
If a Supplementary Estimate is required, Full Council approval will be required too.

If such analysis is required, the Democratic Services Manager will arrange for the attached pro-forma to be completed and this will accompany the relevant Motion onto the agenda of the Full Council meeting so all Members are aware that further investigation will be required before the Motion – even if it is carried – can be implemented.

# Motions to Council – Assessment Proforma

(To be used in circumstances where it appears the wording of a proposed Motion will commit the Council to providing further financial or staffing resources which cannot be met from existing budgets)

## Brief Details of the Motion -

### Motion

### Recommending that:-

- 1- The decision for the taxpayer's to invest in a hotel venture be delayed until a consultation has taken place with the hoteliers, Airbnb and room providers as well as Taunton Deane taxpayers;
- 2- Should the Council decide to invest and operate a hotel business, the authority should ensure that the Business Plan is solid and not based on assumptions;
- 3- The option of not to pay the franchise fee and have our own distinct name should be on the table, saving taxpayers millions of pounds over the period;
- 4- Future investment strategy should be open, transparent and open to public scrutiny; and
- 5- The decision should only be taken after the new Council is established, as Taunton Deane should not commit a successor organisation to such a financial commitment.

### Questions to be addressed

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b><i>What additional resource would be required to ensure the Motion (if approved) could be implemented?</i></b></li></ul> |
|---|

Answer – Taking each recommendation in the Motion in turn:
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1 – The Hotel project is being proposed as a commercial investment for the Council – one which will bring revenue benefits, therefore given that it is a commercial decision that is required it is the view of both the portfolio holder and lead officers that public consultation regarding this scheme is not appropriate
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2 – No new resources are required given that a feasibility study has already been completed and these have been subject to robust review by officers. The Council has used an established expert in the market to draw up the feasibility study and officers have also met with a range of hotel operators and franchise holders as part of a robust procurement process and all are of a view that there is a market for a mid-range hotel in Taunton. In addition it is the nature of schemes such as these
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which require a view over the medium and long term outlook that certain assumptions have to be made. There is no certainty with regard to certain key metrics (such as the performance of the economy) which can provide the business case for the hotel with any cast iron guarantees on future financial performance.

3 – The Council is not an expert in the marketing and management of hotels hence it is felt that this specialist work needs to be done by companies with the appropriate experience. For example the chosen brand is likely to bring brand awareness and customer loyalty to the venture. In addition the chosen operator will bring the operating expertise and employment of the staff for the hotel. This expertise would not be available if the Council chose to run the hotel directly itself. The operating model proposed ie franchise and operating arrangements is now the common model used by other local authorities who wish to invest in hotels for commercial gain.

4 – A project is ongoing to develop a detailed strategy for commercial investment decision making, however given the commercial nature of some decisions which are designed to generate income for the Authority, confidentiality in decision making needs to be observed. Public reporting of investment decisions can be reflected in regular reports to members in line with the new requirements under the CIPFA Prudential Code and other government regulations.

5 – At the time of writing this response, and in the absence of Parliamentary approval for the creation of the new Council, the current view is that it is within the remit of TDBC to make any decision on the hotel project without reference to the Shadow Council. However confirmation is currently being sought on this from MHCLG and a verbal update on this will be provided at the Full Council meeting on 10 April.

***What needs to be done to identify the level of resource necessary both in financial and staff terms?***

Answer – Taking each recommendation of the motion in turn:

1 – It is not known what the cost of any public consultation on the hotel project would be given that the scope and size of the suggested consultation is not defined. Clearly consultation with potential direct competitors with a Council-owned hotel would be of limited value in terms of the objectivity of their responses.

2 – No new resources are required given that a robust feasibility study and procurement process has already been undertaken

3 – See the response above. The Council would not have the required expertise to run and manage a hotel on its own and hence the proposed franchise model is recommended.

4 – This is already in progress so no new resources for an investment strategy are required. If the Council were to agree to public consultation (which is not

recommended) for individual investment decisions then the size and scope of the consultation would need to be defined.

5 – See response above

- ***Are any approvals needed to provide these resources?***

Answer – taking each recommendation of the motion in turn

1 – Any public consultation could be funded through the Growth budget but no current allocation exists and hence, if approved, consultation could be funded through a virement or new allocation of new homes bonus monies.

2 – No new resource is required given that the in depth feasibility study has already taken place, see responses above

3 – See the response above

4 – No new approval is required for an investment strategy – work is already ongoing and will be considered by Members in due course

5 – See response above

- ***Will this require reports to be submitted through Scrutiny and the Executive? If a Supplementary Estimate is required, Full Council approval will be required too.***

Answer – taking each recommendation of the motion in turn:

1 – If the Council were to agree to public consultation on the Hotel project then it is anticipated that the results would be shared with Councillors through both Scrutiny and Executive meetings.

2 – Data from the feasibility study should be regarded as commercially confidential and should only be shared with members in confidential session via “pink” papers. It is also important to note that the feasibility study is only part of the investment decision, other factors such as the feedback from the procurement process, need to be considered alongside.

3 – See response above.

4 – Yes the investment strategy will be shared with Members through both Scrutiny and Executive meetings

5 – See the response above. At the moment it is not known what scrutiny arrangements will be in place for the shadow council.

**Likely timescale involved – N/A**

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Full Council – 10 April 2018

### Acquisition of land near Nerrols Farm, Taunton as a Country Park

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Roger Habgood

**Report Author: Nick Bryant, Planning Policy Manager (to be presented by Councillor Norman Cavill – West Monkton Councillor and Project Champion)**

#### **1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 The establishment of a country park near Nerrols Farm has been an aspiration of the Council for some time having been included as part of the adopted Core Strategy in 2012. The proposed site is currently owned by the Crown Estate and leased to a local farmer.
- 1.2 West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Councils have recently produced a joint Neighbourhood plan which includes an aspiration to oversee the establishment and management of the Country Park. This plan will go to referendum shortly.
- 1.3 The establishment of a country park forms an important component of the Council's Garden Town status and adopted Green Infrastructure Strategy. The finished project would consist of a Community woodland/Country Park which could be utilised as an asset for new community forest school being established as part of the wider Monkton Heathfield development. The location of the park is important in the continuing development of Monkton Heathfield as it provides links east to west to the development currently being developed at Nerrols Farm and the allocated development site to the west of Greenway.
- 1.4 Once built the Western Relief Road and re-alignment of the A3259 will provide much safer crossing points and allow easier pedestrian links north and south. A Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) link could follow along the southern boundary of the site. This could also make provision for a cycle lane.
- 1.5 Members of the Council's Community Scrutiny Committee voted to support the purchase of the land and development of the Country Park in October 2017. A planning application (08/17/0044) was made by Taunton Deane Borough Council and approved for the change of use of the land from agricultural to recreational uses on 11 January 2018.
- 1.6 Since this meeting officers, the Project Champion, and our retained consultant have been working with the Valuation Office Agency, other stakeholders and the Crown to take forward proposals, including negotiating a purchase price for the land. The Parish Councils of West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine have indicated a willingness to

assume maintenance responsibility for the completed project.

- 1.7 Funding of the project would need to come from a variety of sources. The majority of the funding is likely to come from New Homes Bonus. West Monkton Parish Council have agreed in-principle to a contribution towards the project costs, the remaining cost could be met from a combination of grant funding although Taunton Deane would need to underwrite the funding gap in the event these bids were unsuccessful.
- 1.8 Subject to Full Council approval; the Council's consultant will continue to lead on project delivery with input from the Planning Policy, colleagues in Finance, Asset Management, Legal Services provided through Shape, and Leisure and Recreation. Councillor Cavill as a local member and key stakeholder has agreed to act as member champion for the project. An important aspect of the project is that local community are involved from an early stage. The community engagement will be undertaken through a 'planning for real' type approach with input from landscape and biodiversity specialists. Negotiations with the Crown will be progressed with a view to planting being carried out in 2019.

## 2 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- 2.1.1 Approve the purchase of land near Nerrols Farm (subject to the total cost of the land acquisition not exceeding the anticipated amount as outlined in confidential Appendix C).
- 2.1.2 Agree in principle to passing on responsibility for ongoing maintenance of the Country Park on completion to West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Councils.

## 3 Risk Assessment (if appropriate)

### Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
That the capital costs for the project cannot be at least in part recovered.	3	4	12
Mitigation: Retained consultants to prepare and submit for Heritage Lottery funding. Country Stewardship fund/or Viridor and any other opportunities.	1	4	4

### Risk Scoring Matrix

Likelihood	5	Almost Certain	Low (5)	Medium (10)	High (15)	Very High (20)	Very High (25)
	4	Likely	Low (4)	Medium (8)	Medium (12)	High (16)	Very High (20)



	3	Possible	Low (3)	Low (6)	Medium (9)	Medium (12)	High (15)
	2	Unlikely	Low (2)	Low (4)	Low (6)	Medium (8)	Medium (10)
	1	Rare	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)	Low (5)
			1	2	3	4	5
			Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
<b>Impact</b>							

<b>Likelihood of risk occurring</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Description (chance of occurrence)</b>
1. Very Unlikely	May occur in exceptional circumstances	< 10%
2. Slight	Is unlikely to, but could occur at some time	10 – 25%
3. Feasible	Fairly likely to occur at same time	25 – 50%
4. Likely	Likely to occur within the next 1-2 years, or occurs occasionally	50 – 75%
5. Very Likely	Regular occurrence (daily / weekly / monthly)	> 75%

## 4 Background and Full details of the Report

- 4.1 The establishment of a country park near Nerrols Farm has been an aspiration of the Council for some time having been included as part of the adopted Core Strategy in 2012 (Policy SS1). Location map of the country park and a map showing the area in the wider context are included at Appendix A. The country park forms an important part of a wider development at Monkton Heathfield. It will add a key link to the 'Green Necklace' of landscape and public open space being developed as part of the major development at Monkton Heathfield.
- 4.2 The country park will be a key component of promoting the Borough's Garden Town status and updated Green Infrastructure Strategy. It will provide important green links from the planned garden community to the east (Monkton Heathfield) and west (Nerrols) as well as a north/south route improving connections with Hestercombe House and the Quantock Hills AONB and the Taunton urban area. It will be linked via footpaths and cycleways and encourage greater use of pedestrian and cycle routes. Located in proximity to the town's water ways, and linking the town to the countryside, it will play a critical role as an ecological corridor and could also be designed to contribute to natural flood management. The project was highlighted as a priority in our new Green Infrastructure Strategy. (Please find extract in Appendix 2 of this report).
- 4.3 Members of the Council's Community Scrutiny Committee were asked to consider supporting this project in principle in October 2017. They unanimously recommended the project to be taken forward. The remainder of this report outlines what happens next and how the Council can deliver the Country Park with partners.
- 4.4 West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Councils have recently produced a joint Neighbourhood Plan which will go forward to referendum shortly, if successful the plan is likely to be adopted as part of the statutory development plan for the area. The

Neighbourhood Plan includes an aspiration to oversee the establishment and management of the Country Park.

- 4.5 A number of key stakeholders have been identified and are committed to the success of the project. These include: West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Councils who, as their role as the parish representatives, have good connections with local schools and community groups, Taunton Deane BC who have promoted the idea of a strategic country park through the Local Plan and Monkton Heathfield Development Plan. Somerset County Council who are responsible for highways and the potential Bus Rapid Transport service and the promotion of cycle and safe ways to school. Somerset Wildlife Trust have been supportive of the importance of the Country Park and GI Strategy and its potential link to wildlife and local communities. Major house builders in the area; Monkton Heathfield Consortium which includes Persimmon Homes and Redrow Homes are supportive in principle.
- 4.6 A key to the long term success of the project will be that the local community are involved from an early stage in the master planning of the design and implementation of the project. It is, therefore, proposed that the community engagement is undertaken through a 'planning for real' type approach with input from landscape and biodiversity specialists.
- 4.7 Planning for Real is a nationally recognised community planning process based on a 3D model. The process allows participants to register their views on a range of issues, to work together to identify priorities, and in partnership with local agencies to go on to develop an action plan for change. There will, also, be opportunities for school and community involvement in tree and shrub planting. The overall project will be overseen by the landscape contractor and landscape designer.
- 4.8 The finished project would consist of a community woodland/country park which could be utilised as an asset for new community forest school being established as part of the wider Monkton Heathfield development. The location of the site is important in the continuing development of the Monkton Heathfield extension as it provides links to the recent Nerrols development and the future west of Greenway development. There is a scope for close working with the Conquest Riding School who are hoping to establish a riding school on the land to the north of the Country Park.
- 4.9 The Country Park links east to west to the site currently being developed by David Wilson homes at Nerrols Farm and the allocated development site to the west of Greenway. Once built the Western Relief Road and re-alignment of the A3259 will provide much safer crossing points and allow easier pedestrian links north and south. There is also potential public transport improvements along the A3258 to provide better links between Monkton Heathfield and Taunton Town Centre. Irrespective, the southern edge of the park will provide an ideal location for a footpath and cycle routes linking the two communities across the Green Wedge providing safe routes to school as well as linking the site within the wider GI network for the area.
- 4.10 The land proposed for creation of a strategic country park is owned by the Crown Estate and leased to a local farmer. Discussions have taken place with the Crown Estate who have confirmed that they would be willing to sell to the Council subject to

agreeing terms. The Council have commissioned a land agent to negotiate the purchase of the land on behalf of the Council. The Valuation Office Agency is negotiating with the Crown to agree a price for the purchase of the land which will also include a compensation payment to the farmer for termination of his tenancy. A breakdown of anticipated project costs is included at Appendix C.

- 4.11 To release the tenancy there must be a change of land use from agriculture to amenity which will have to be prepared as part of any new agreement. A decision of conditional approval (08/17/0044) was made by Taunton Deane Borough Council in January 2018 for the change use of the land from agricultural to recreational uses. The Council has three years to implement the proposed change of use.
- 4.12 The tenant will need to be compensated for any losses incurred. The Crown will agree this with the tenant so that the land can be sold as a vacant possession. Officers are currently seeking advice from Legal and Asset Management on any legal and asset management implications of the acquisition of the land as part of the land acquisition negotiations.
- 4.13 On-going programme of maintenance will be critical to the site's success as a country park/community woodland. The aspiration is that the land is leased to the Parish Councils of West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine who have indicated a willingness to assume maintenance responsibility for the completed project. In order to ensure on-going commitment to the success of the project, it is proposed that the Council would take up ownership of the land and a lease agreement to be produced by the Council and agreed with the Parish Councils. WM&CF parish councils have agreed in principle to cover the cost of on-going maintenance and management costs.
- 4.14 Funding of the project would need to come from a variety of sources. Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Councils have agreed in principle to contribute towards the purchase of the land and its ongoing maintenance. West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Councils have agreed in-principle to a contribution towards the project from their own CIL receipts.
- 4.15 The remaining cost could be met from a combination of Homes Bonus and grant funding although Taunton Deane would need to underwrite any funding gap in the event these bids were unsuccessful. Any funding gap may, subject to agreement, be available via New Homes Bonus contributions. Other potential sources of funding include grants such as Heritage Lottery and Countryside Stewardship. A 'project enquiry form' has been submitted to Heritage Lottery. If they are happy to consider an application this could provide up to £120,000 towards land purchase costs. Grant funding from Countryside Stewardship could provide approx. £70,000 towards tree planting, fencing and gates. A one off payment of £6,800/hectare is available to cover the cost of tree planting and establishment. In case the Heritage Lottery funding proves unsuccessful other sources of grant funding include Viridor which funds local landscape and biodiversity projects up to £50-£100,000 within specific catchment areas. Somerset County Council has a small improvement schemes which provides funds of up to £10,000 towards local projects.
- 4.16 The purchase and establishment of the country park/community woodland is already well underway and a number of key stakeholders have been identified and are

committed to the success of the project. Subject to Full Council approval; the Council's consultant will continue to lead on project delivery with input from the Planning Policy, colleagues in Finance, Asset Management, legal services provided through Shape and Leisure and Recreation. Negotiations with the Crown will be progressed with a view to planting being carried out in 2019.

## **5 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities**

- 5.1 The establishment of a country park near Nerrols Farm has been an aspiration of the Council via the Local Plan since 2012 and emerged as an important component of the 'Green Necklace' as illustrated in the work undertaken on behalf of the Council by Urban Initiatives.

## **6 Finance / Resource Implications**

- 6.1 Funding may, subject to agreement, be available via New Homes Bonus contributions. West Monkton Parish Council have agreed in-principle to a contribution from their own CIL receipts. (This figure is included in Appendix C). The remaining cost could be met from a combination of grant funding although Taunton Deane would need to underwrite the funding gap in the event these bids were unsuccessful. The funding gap would need to come from New Homes Bonus contributions.
- 6.2 Potential grant funding: Heritage Lottery – grants of over £100,000 are available to non for profit charities including Local Authorities towards wildlife and landscape projects. Potential funding if application proves successful is likely to be approx. £120,000. Countryside Stewardship: A one off payment of £6,800/hectare is available to cover the cost of tree planting and establishment. This would potentially cover £70,000 towards tree planting, fencing and gates. In case the Heritage Lottery funding proves unsuccessful other sources of grant funding include Viridor which funds local landscape and biodiversity projects up to £50-£100,000 within specific catchment areas. Somerset County Council has a small improvement schemes which provides funds of up to £10,000 towards local projects.
- 6.3 Other grants – other sources of funding are available for community projects once the woodland is established via local community groups. WM&CF parish councils have agreed in principle to cover the cost of on-going maintenance and management costs. (The anticipated maintenance costs are included in Appendix C).

## **7 Legal Implications (if any)**

- 7.1 Advice is being sought from Legal Services on any legal implications of the acquisition of the land as part of the land acquisition negotiations.

## **8 Environmental Impact Implications (if any)**

- 8.1 The proposed planting and management of the land will be tailored to increase environmental benefits, such as, creating habitat for the Lesser Horseshoe Bats, resident at Hestercombe, which is likely to use the area for foraging and potentially to

create a 'leaky dam' in liaison with the EA who are keen to see water slowed as it runs-off the Quantock Hills.

## **9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications (if any)**

- 9.1 Regular assessments will be undertaken as to the safeguarding and community safety implications of the use of the land as an area of public open space. The design of the planting and pathways will consider this as one of the key criteria.

## **10 Equality and Diversity Implications (if any)**

- 10.1 The site will be promoted to the wider community via schools and the Councils websites. The surfacing and gateways where possible will be designed for all ability user access.

## **11 Social Value Implications (if any)**

- 11.1 The creation of the open space will add a key link to the 'Green Necklace' of open space being developed as part of the major development at Monkton Heathfield. It will be linked via footpaths and cycleways and open for use by local schools.

## **12 Partnership Implications (if any)**

- 12.1 West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine PCs have agreed in-principle to the managing and maintaining of the site given the importance of the site as expressed in their Neighbourhood Plan. The PCs have good links to local schools and the wider community.

## **13 Health and Wellbeing Implications (if any)**

- 13.1 The creation of the open space will add a key link to the 'Green Necklace' of open space being developed as part of the major development at Monkton Heathfield. It will be linked via footpaths and cycleways and encourage greater use of pedestrian and cycle routes linked to the Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy.

## **14 Asset Management Implications (if any)**

- 14.1 The acquisition of the land will add to the Council's asset portfolio. Asset Management colleagues will be involved in the acquisition of the site.

## **15. Consultation Implications (if any)**

- 15.1 Promotion of the site as a country park has been consulted upon through the Local Plan process. There will be further consultation opportunities for the local community and key stakeholders, potentially through a 'Planning for Real' exercise to inform the detailed design of the scheme.

## **16. Scrutiny Comments / Recommendation(s)**

- 16.1 This matter was considered in-principle by the Council's Community Scrutiny

Committee on 17 October 2017. Member supported the recommendation that:-

...the purchase of the land near to Nerrols Farm is supported subject to:

- The terms of the sale can be agreed.
- The agreed sale price can be found from within Council resources.
- That establishment costs can be, at least, partially grant funded.
- That the on-going maintenance costs are, at least, partially underwritten by the local community under the supervision of the local parish councils.
- Planning permission for the change of use has been achieved.

#### Democratic Path:

- **Scrutiny / Corporate Governance or Audit Committees / No** (delete as appropriate)
- **Cabinet/Executive –/ No** (delete as appropriate)
- **Full Council – Yes /** (delete as appropriate)

Reporting Frequency :  **Once only**    **Ad-hoc**    **Quarterly**

**Twice-yearly**    **Annually**

#### List of Appendices (delete if not applicable)

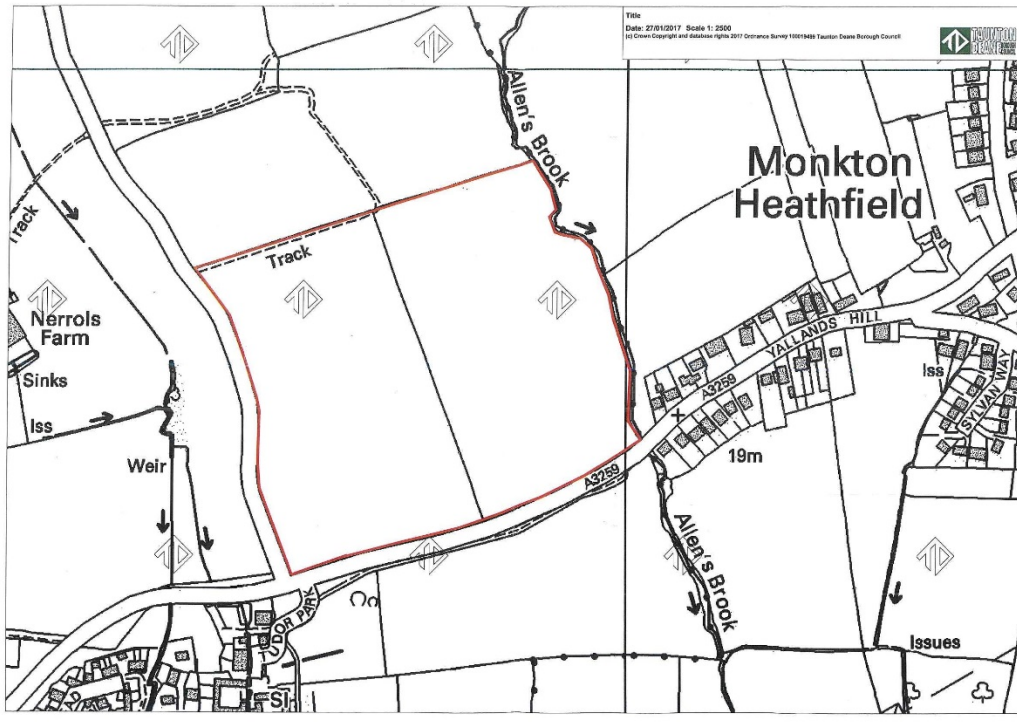
Appendix A	Map 1: Red line boundary of Country Park. Map 2: Country park in the wider context.
Appendix B	Country Park Project: Extract from GI Strategy
Appendix C	Breakdown of anticipated project costs - Confidential

#### Contact Officers

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## Appendix A

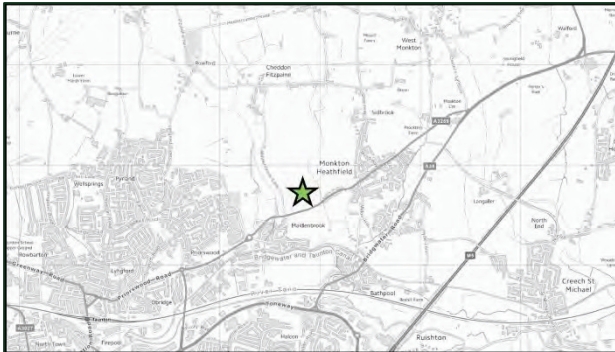


Map 1: Red line boundary of Country Park



Map 2: Country Park (circled in red) shown in the wider context

## 4. Monkton Heathfield Country Park



Looking south east from Cheddon Fitzpaine over land allocated for Monkton Heathfield Country Park.









### Project Overview

Monkton Heathfield Country Park will deliver a new strategic, informal green space to the east of the town centre within the existing Green Wedge. It will provide important green links from the planned garden community to the east (Monkton Heathfield) and west (Nerrols) as well as a north/south route improving connections with Hestercombe House and the Quantock Hills AONB and the Taunton urban area. Located in proximity to the town's water ways, and linking the town to the countryside, it will play a critical role as an ecological corridor and could also be designed to contribute to natural flood management.

### Influence of Garden Town Status

Monkton Heathfield Country Park should be a headline project, essential to the successful delivery of Taunton Garden Town. It is located in proximity to communities where health and living environment is poorer than the rest of the town, and will help reduce inequality and healthier communities, as well as a range of environmental objectives. Monkton Heathfield n Country Park is proposed adjacent to Monkton Heathfield, to serve the existing community, as well as the residents of the new urban extension. If delivered, it will help to alleviate the existing deficiency in access to a strategic recreation asset on this side of Taunton. Garden Town status should be utilised to prioritise this site for investment, from developer contributions, local businesses, and external funding sources.



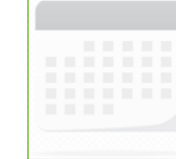
### Contribution to Themes

							
Landscape	Cultural Heritage	Biodiversity	Water Resources	Active Transport	Local Awareness	Recreation & Play	Health, Wellbeing and Equality



## Potential Challenges and Risks

- Securing the significant funding needed for this project will be a challenge, however the council has sought to deliver this for many years, and securing funding via the Garden Town status and local development should be a priority.
- With permission already granted and development underway at Monkton Heathfield/Nerrols, funding through development would be dependent on further housing in this part of Taunton.
- Identification of landowners and land acquisition, plus associated legal agreements.

Timescale			Potential Costs				
			£	£	£	£	£
Quick win (next 5 years)	<b>Medium term (5-10 years)</b>	Longer term (10-20 years)	<£10,000	£10,000 to £50,000	£50,000 to £200,000	£200,000 to £500,000	<b>£500,000</b> +

Potential Partners and Funding Streams	Community and Stakeholder Engagement Groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Somerset Wildlife Trust</li> <li>• Environment Agency</li> <li>• Private Developers</li> <li>• National Lottery</li> <li>• DCLG</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canals and Rivers Trust</li> <li>• Sustrans</li> <li>• Quantock Hills AONB</li> <li>• Taunton Ramblers Association</li> <li>• Parish Councils</li> <li>• Taunton Area Cycling Campaign</li> <li>• Somerset Wildlife Trust</li> <li>• Cycle Somerset</li> </ul>

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

Full Council – 10 April 2018

## Approval of the Annual Pay Policy Statement 2018/2019

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Richard Parrish,  
Portfolio Holder Corporate Services

Report Author: (Fiona Wills, HR and OD Manager)

### 1.1 Executive Summary/Purpose of the Report

1.2 The purpose of the report is to review and approve the Pay Policy Statement 2018/2019.

### 2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the Pay Policy statement 2018/2019 is approved for publication.

### 3. Risk Assessment (if appropriate)

#### Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
Failure to publish the Pay Policy statement on an annual basis would result in the Council breaching Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011	1	4	4

#### Risk Scoring Matrix

Likelihood	5	Almost Certain	Low (5)	Medium (10)	High (15)	Very High (20)	Very High (25)
	4	Likely	Low (4)	Medium (8)	Medium (12)	High (16)	Very High (20)
	3	Possible	Low (3)	Low (6)	Medium (9)	Medium (12)	High (15)
	2	Unlikely	Low (2)	Low (4)	Low (6)	Medium (8)	Medium (10)
	1	Rare	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)	Low (5)
			1	2	3	4	5

	Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
	<b>Impact</b>				

<b>Likelihood of risk occurring</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Description (chance of occurrence)</b>
1. Very Unlikely	May occur in exceptional circumstances	< 10%
2. Slight	Is unlikely to, but could occur at some time	10 – 25%
3. Feasible	Fairly likely to occur at same time	25 – 50%
4. Likely	Likely to occur within the next 1-2 years, or occurs occasionally	50 – 75%
5. Very Likely	Regular occurrence (daily/weekly/monthly)	> 75%

#### **4. Background and Full details of the Report**

- 4.1 Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to prepare and publish a pay policy statement for each financial year, approved by Full Council.
- 4.2 The pay policy statement describes the pay arrangements and policies that relate to the pay of the workforce which serves the Joint Management and Shared Services (JMaSS) Partnership between Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council. This statement describes in particular the arrangements for the JMaSS senior staff and its lowest paid employees.
- 4.3 The changes in the data detailed in the Pay Policy statement 18/19 reflect the 1% pay award, awarded to all employees on 1 April 2017. The ratios between senior pay and the lowest paid employee have also been updated and have reduced in comparison to the previous year's data.
- 4.4 There has been one change to the pension discretions of both Councils' which relates to the definition of an actual week's pay which is used to calculate the compensatory payment for employees being made redundant.

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

- 5.1 Each Council has a statutory duty to approve a pay policy statement on an annual basis to comply with Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011.

#### **6. Finance/Resource Implications**

- 6.1 There are no finance / resource implications.

#### **7. Legal Implications (if any)**

- 7.1 Each Council has a statutory duty to approve a pay policy statement on an annual basis to comply with Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011. Failure

to publish the statement before 31 March 2018 would result in either Council being in breach of their statutory duty. The pay policy statement has consequently been published on the website and marked subject to approval of Full Council.

**8. Environmental Impact Implications (if any)**

8.1 There are no environmental impact implications.

**9. Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications (if any)**

9.1 There are no safeguarding or community safety implications

**10. Equality and Diversity Implications (if any)**

10.1 An equality impact assessment is not required. The pay award was negotiated at a national level and applicable to all employees.

**11. Social Value Implications (if any)**

There are no social value implications

**12. Health and Wellbeing Implications (if any)**

There are no health & wellbeing implications

**13. Asset Management Implications (if any)**

There are no asset management implications

**14. Consultation Implications (if any)**

Consultation is not required as this is a statutory statement

**Democratic Path:**

- **Scrutiny/Corporate Governance or Audit Committees – No**
- **Cabinet/Executive – No**
- **Full Council – Yes**

Reporting Frequency:  Once only       Ad-hoc       Quarterly  
 Twice-yearly       Annually

**List of Appendices (delete if not applicable)**

Appendix A	Pay Policy statement 2017/18
Appendix B	
Appendix C	

**Contact Officers**

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Name		Name	
Direct Dial		Direct Dial	
Email		Email	

## Pay Policy Statement 2018/2019

### 1. Background

The Pay Policy Statement is intended to bring together sufficient information about the different elements of the local authority's pay policies to enable local taxpayers to reach an informed view about local decisions on all aspects of pay and reward for employees. It also provides the context for the more detailed financial information that is already published by local authorities under the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency and by the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011.

### 2. The Joint Management and Shared Service partnership between Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council

In November 2013 the two councils entered into an agreement by which services would be delivered by a single workforce across the two local authority areas.

In order to reduce costs and increase efficiency for the two councils the workforce is led by a single Chief Executive and team of senior staff which replaces the two separate management teams which served the two councils before the agreement was approved. The two councils share the salary costs of senior employees set out in this statement.

The transfer of staff into a reorganised single workforce was completed in 2015 and all staff, on behalf of the Partnership, are now employed by Taunton Deane Borough Council.

Elected Members, at respective Council meetings on 12 November 2013, considered and approved the details of senior salary packages for the Joint Management Team and a revised pay and grading scheme for the single workforce.

In March 2018 both Councils' gave their consent to start the legal process to create a single new council, subject to parliamentary approval.

This Pay policy Statement represents the position on the pay structures and other elements of the remuneration package for staff as at 31 March 2018.

### 3. Policy statement

The Partnership is committed to ensuring transparent, fair and equitable pay and reward arrangements that provide value for money and enable the recruitment and retention of employees with the skills and motivation to deliver high quality services for Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council and its communities. The policies that support these objectives are summarised in this document.

#### 4. **Scope**

The pay statement describes the pay arrangements that apply to the Joint Management Team (the senior employees) and the lowest paid employees.

For the purpose of this pay statement **senior employees** are defined as those staff in the top three tiers of management; the Chief Executive, three Directors, the Assistant Chief Executive and eight Assistant Directors.

The pay and grading of employees, other than senior employees, are currently set using pay structures divided into grades within which there are spinal column points setting the pay rates. Posts are allocated to a pay grade through a process of job evaluation.

The current pay and grading structure for the workforce is set out in the attached Appendix B. As agreed by the two Councils, the Taunton Deane Borough Council pay and grading structure is being used.

For the purpose of this statement **lowest paid employees** for the two councils are defined as follows:

- Those who receive a salary equivalent to Grade C on the councils' pay structure. This is because no employee of the councils is paid at a grade lower than Grade C.

The Councils are required, for the purposes of this statement, to define their 'lowest paid employees' and also to explain why they have adopted this definition.

Other than the posts set out above (senior management) and recognised apprentices, all posts within the councils have been subject to Job Evaluation to assess the value of the job content and then, subject to that value, have been placed in an agreed grade.

The Councils will therefore define their lowest paid employees as those on the minimum pay points as these (apart from apprentices) are the lowest hourly rates paid to employees of the Councils. The Councils have adopted this definition, as it can be easily understood.

It should, however, be pointed out that the pay scales of both Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council were amended by Members to commence from the current 'Living Wage' (outside of London) in December 2013 and therefore the lowest hourly rate paid to employees is the equivalent of the Living Wage.

#### 5. **Remuneration of senior employees**

As part of the annual Pay Policy Statement each Council must state:

- (a) The elements of remuneration for each senior employee

- (b) The policy for determining the remuneration of senior employees on recruitment.

The Joint Management Team are employed on fixed pay points for all posts within the top three tiers and therefore remuneration in terms of salary will be fixed on appointment.

Any other elements of remuneration, as set out in Appendix A, that are relevant at the point of recruitment are highlighted accordingly.

The Leaders will, after taking independent pay advice from South West Councils or similar, recommend the remuneration package on appointment to the above posts to Full Council prior to advertisement of any vacancy. The remuneration package will then have been subject to the approval of Full Council.

- (c) How any increases and additions to remuneration for each senior employee are made?

Annual cost of living pay awards are negotiated nationally by the Local Government Employers organisation and, where a pay award is agreed, these will be applied to the fixed pay point of the employee.

The Councils have the ability to determine certain Local Government Pension Scheme Discretions and the Discretions which have been adopted by each authority are included in the annual Pay Policy Statement. The definition of a week's pay has been updated this year in relation to compensation payments to employees being made redundant.

The post of Chief Executive is employed on the Terms and Conditions of Employment agreed by the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) for Chief Executives and all other senior employees are covered by the Terms and Conditions of Employment agreed by the JNC for Chief Officers all of which are supplemented by local terms and conditions agreed by Taunton Deane Borough Council as the employer.

- (d) The use of performance-related pay for chief officers.

The councils do not operate Performance Related Pay schemes for any of its staff.

- (e) The use of bonuses for senior employee.

The councils do not operate Bonus Schemes or Bonus Payments for any of its staff.

- (f) The approach to the payment of senior employees on their ceasing to hold office under or to be employed by the authority



Any termination payments to senior employees on ceasing office will comply with the policies current at that time, which will have been approved by the Full Council of the employing authority. No additional termination payments will be made without the approval of the Executive/Cabinet, this will include any Settlement Agreements, which may be subject to a confidentiality clause. The current joint redundancy policy and retirement policies for both Councils are included in the Pay Policy statement in the appendices.

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

- (g) The remuneration of senior employees who return to Local Authority employment.

Where the senior employee:

- (i) Was a previously employed senior employee who left with a severance payment and applies to return as a senior employee.

Executive/Cabinet approval would be required to authorise re-employment within the authority of a previously employed senior employee who had left with a severance payment and is seeking re-employment.

- (ii) Was previously employed by the same authority and applies to return as a senior employee under a contract for services.

Executive/Cabinet will be required to approve any award of a 'contract for services' to a senior employee who has previously been employed by the authority.

- (iii) Is in receipt of a Local Government Pension Scheme Pension.

If an employee receiving a pension from the Local Government Pension Scheme becomes re-employed then their pension could be affected. This will apply where the pension in payment arose for a reason that resulted in a strain cost being paid by the employer (e.g. redundancy, interests of efficiency, ill-health, early retirement with consent or flexible retirement). If their pension plus the earnings from their new job is higher than the final pay their pension was calculated on, then their pension will be affected. For every pound that their earnings plus pension exceed previous pay, then their pension will reduce by a pound. This abatement will last for as long as the person exceeds their limit (so either when the new job ends or they reduce their hours so their earnings drop down below the acceptable level).

The Chief Executive is the appointed Returning Officer for Taunton Deane whilst the Assistant Chief Executive is the appointed Returning Officer for West Somerset Council and both receive a fee for County, District and Parish Council and for Parliamentary Election duties. The fee for undertaking this role varies from year to year and is not subject to this policy since fee levels are set regionally and nationally.

## **6. Remuneration of other employees**

As explained in paragraph 5 above, the pay structure for all other employees consists of grades and incremental points set out in the attached appendices. Grades are allocated to jobs through a process of job evaluation which establishes the relative value of different jobs within the workforce. Both councils previously operated the same job evaluation scheme (the Greater London Provincial Council Scheme) and both Councils have agreed to continue to use this Scheme for the shared workforce. Salaries for all employees (including senior employees) are subject to increases agreed under national pay award settlements.

The councils' pay structures create the basis of the relationship between the pay of all employees within the scope of the Pay Policy Statement.

The maximum salary for the post of Chief Executive is approximately 6.69:1 times the maximum salary of the lowest paid employee in the workforce. The maximum salary of the Directors is 4.96:1 times the maximum salary of the lowest paid employee. The maximum salary of the Assistant Directors is 3.72:1 times the lowest paid employee.

The maximum salary for the post of Chief Executive is approximately 4.50:1 times the mean FTE salary.

## **7. Transparency and Publication of Data**

The councils will publish the Pay Policy Statement on the Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council websites alongside other information relating to transparency/open government and this can be found on:

<https://www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk/transparency>  
[http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/irj/public/council/consultations/consultation?rid=/wpcccontent/Sites/TDBC/Web%20Pages/Council/Consultations/Transparency%20Open%20Data\\_0](http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/irj/public/council/consultations/consultation?rid=/wpcccontent/Sites/TDBC/Web%20Pages/Council/Consultations/Transparency%20Open%20Data_0)

## **8. Review**

The Localism Act requires councils to prepare and publish a pay policy statement for each financial year. The next statement is due for publication before the end of April 2019.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix A Remuneration to senior staff
- Appendix B Taunton Deane Borough Council Pay and Grading Structure
- Appendix C Taunton Deane Borough Council Local Government Pension Scheme Discretions
- Appendix D Taunton Deane Borough Council & West Somerset Council Joint Redundancy Policy
- Appendix E Taunton Deane Borough Council Compensation Policy
- Appendix F West Somerset Council Severance Policy
- Appendix G Taunton Deane Borough Council Flexible Retirement Policy
- Appendix H West Somerset Council Local Government Pension Scheme Discretions

## Appendix A – Remuneration to Senior Staff

### The Level and Remuneration for each Chief Officer

Post	Statutory Role	Terms and Conditions and JE Status	Salary	Salary Progression	Bonus or Performance related pay	Other Benefits	Pension Enhancement in Year
Chief Executive	Head of Paid Service	JNC Chief Executives – Out of JE	£112,211	No	No	Payment of Professional Subscription  *Election payments – Returning Officer  Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No
Strategic Director of Operations and Deputy Chief Executive		JNC Chief Officers – Out of JE	£88,443	No	No	Payment of Professional Subscription  Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No
Strategic Director of Housing and Communities		JNC Chief Officers – Out of JE	£83,240	No	No	Payment of Professional Subscription  Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No
Strategic Director Growth and Development		JNC Chief Officers – Out of JE	£83,240	No	No	Payment of Professional Subscription  Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No

<b>Post</b>	<b>Statutory Role</b>	<b>Terms and Conditions and JE Status</b>	<b>Salary</b>	<b>Salary Progression</b>	<b>Bonus or Performance related pay</b>	<b>Other Benefits</b>	<b>Pension Enhancement in Year</b>
Assistant Chief Executive	Monitoring Officer	JNC Chief Officers – Out of JE	£66,072	No	No	Payment of Professional Subscription  *Election payments – Returning Officer  Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No
Assistant Director Strategic Finance (1)	S151 Officer	JNC Chief Officers – out of JE	£67,430	No	No	Payment of Professional Subscription  Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No
Assistant Director Housing and Community Development		JNC Chief Officers – Out of JE	£62,430	No	No	Payment of Professional Subscription  Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No
Assistant Director Corporate Services		JNC Chief Officers – Out of JE	£62,430	No	No	Payment of Professional Subscription  Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No
Assistant Director Planning and Environment		JNC Chief Officers – Out of JE	£62,430	No	No	Payment of Professional Subscription  Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No

Post	Statutory Role	Terms and Conditions and JE Status	Salary	Salary Progression	Bonus or Performance related pay	Other Benefits	Pension Enhancement in Year
Assistant Director Resources & Support		JNC Chief Officers – Out of JE	£69,683	No.	No	Payment of Professional Subscription  Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No
Assistant Director Business Development		JNC Chief Officers – Out of JE	£62,430	No	No	Payment of Professional Subscription  Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No
Assistant Director Operational Delivery		JNC Chief Officers – Out of JE	£62,430	No	No	Payment of Professional Subscription  Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No
Assistant Director Place & Energy Infrastructure		JNC Chief Officers- Out of JE	£62,430	No	No	Payment of Professional Subscription  Payments relating to LGPS Employer Contributions	No

\* Additional payments are made by Central Government to officers carrying out additional duties at elections. These payments will only be received when elections take place and vary according to the responsibility undertaken.

\*\* These thresholds relate to the publication of salary information as required under the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency (£58,200 is the minimum of the Senior Civil Service minimum pay band) and the Audit and Accounts Regulations (£50,000)

\*\*\*JNC Chief Officers – Out of JE. The job evaluation scheme is not applicable to Chief Officer posts. The salaries of Chief Officer posts are evaluated against local market data provided

by South West Councils. This data provides salary details for comparable Chief Officer posts within comparable district councils.

(1) 1. This post also provides the statutory S151 role for South Somerset District Council, 2 days per week, which is charged out at £41,800 per annum.

**Appendix B – Taunton Deane Borough Council pay and grading structure  
(Applicable from 1 April 2017)**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>SCP</b>				
<b>A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
			£16,781	£17,072	£17,419
<b>D</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
	£17,722	£18,070	£18,746	£19,430	£20,138
<b>E</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>
	£20,661	£21,268	£21,962	£22,658	£23,398
<b>F</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>
	£24,174	£24,964	£25,951	£26,822	£27,668
<b>G</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>36</b>
	£28,485	£29,323	£30,153	£30,785	£31,601
<b>H</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>41</b>
	£32,486	£33,437	£34,538	£35,444	£36,379
<b>I</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>46</b>
	£37,306	£38,237	£39,177	£40,057	£41,025
<b>J</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>51</b>
	£41,967	£42,899	£43,821	£44,763	£45,678
<b>K</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>56</b>
	£46,608	£47,533	£48,463	£49,179	£49,898
<b>L</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>61</b>
	£50,611	£51,330	£52,046	£52,762	£53,482



## **Appendix C - Written Statement on Local Government Pension Scheme Employers Discretions and Key Pensions Policy**

**Taunton Deane Borough Council**

**April 2018 to 31 March 2019**

### **LGPS (Administration) Regulations 2008**

#### **Regulation B30 (2)**

The Council will allow individual former employees leaving employment on or before 31 March 2014 the option to request early payment of benefits after on or after age 55 and before age 60 which will be considered on a case-by-case basis following the production of a business case. In these cases no additional compensation will be awarded.

#### **Regulation B30 (5)**

With regard to the early payment of benefits on or after age 55 and before age 60 made under B30 (2) above the Council retains the right to waive the actuarial reduction of benefits on exceptional compassionate grounds.

#### **Regulation B30A (3)**

The Council will allow the option to request an application for reinstatement of a suspended tier 3 ill health pension on or after age 55 and before age 60 which will be considered on a case-by-case including the production of evidential support. This applies to employees leaving service on or before 31 March 2014.

#### **Regulation B30A (5)**

With regard to an application for reinstatement of a suspended tier 3 ill health pension on or after age 55 and before age 60 made under B30A (3) above the Council retains the right to waive the actuarial reduction of benefits on exceptional compassionate grounds.

**Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 1997 (as amended) in relation to active councillor members and pre 1 April 2008 scheme leavers.**

**Regulation 31 (2)**

The Council will allow a post 31 March 1998/pre 1 April 2008 leaver or from a councillor member the option to request early payment of benefits after on or after age 55 and before age 60 which will be considered on a case-by-case basis following the production of a business case. In these cases no additional compensation will be awarded.

**Regulation 31 (5)**

With regard to the early payment of benefits made in accordance with Regulation 31 (2) the Council retains the right to waive the actuarial reduction of benefits on exceptional compassionate grounds.

**Regulation 31 (7A)**

The Council will allow councillor optants out and pre 1 April 2008 employee optants out the option to request payment of benefits at normal retirement date and these will be considered on a case-by-case basis following the production of a business case.

**The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013**

**Regulation 100 (6)**

It is not Council policy to extend the 12-month limit on transfer of previous pension rights into the LGPS.

**Regulation 9 (1) and 9 (3)**

It is Council policy to allow employee contribution rates to be determined as changes occur during the financial year.

**Regulation 16(2)(e) and 16(4)(d) Funding of Additional Pension**

It is not the policy of the Council to fund additional pension and the Council will not enter into a shared cost additional pension contributions arrangement.

**Regulation 30(6) Flexible Retirement**

The Council will allow benefits to be paid to a member of staff if they reduce their hours/grade (known as flexible retirement) and this is set out in the Council's Retirement Policy. Each case will be decided individually after the consideration of a detailed business case and only applies to those aged 55 and over.

### **Regulation 30(8)**

With regard to flexible retirement and requests from staff aged 55 or over for retirement the Council retains the right to waive the actuarial reduction of benefits on exceptional compassionate grounds.

### **Regulation 31 Award of Additional Pension**

It is not the policy of the Council to award Employer APC for active member leaving on redundancy/efficiency other than by allowing employees leaving on grounds of redundancy/efficiency to use compensation payments to fund additional pensions.

### **The Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) Discretionary Compensation Regulations 2006**

As set out in the Redundancy Policy the Council do not limit redundancy payments to the statutory maximum weekly pay threshold and instead use the actual weekly pay of the employee. Actual weekly pay does not include payment of pension contributions.

The Council does not offer a minimum payment with regard to redundancy. Benefits are calculated using actual weekly pay and the statutory number of weeks as calculated against continuous local government service (and service covered by the Modification Order).

The Council provides up to 15 weeks compensation, in addition to any redundancy payment as set out in both the Compensation Policy.

Where additional compensation is paid the employee has the option to augment pension benefits by using all of the additional compensation unless specific criteria are met.

## **Appendix D – Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council Redundancy Policy**



**Implementation date of policy** 1 April 2016

**Review date** April 2017

### **Redundancy and Redeployment Policy**

#### **Introduction**

This policy covers all redundancy situations that may arise within the One Team structures of Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council (the Councils).

The Councils recognise a responsibility to safeguard the job security and prospects of their employees as far as possible. They also recognise that they must adapt to change and that this process of combining and transforming services will inevitably affect the structure and size of the workforce.

#### **Scope**

The policy applies to the employees of One Team.

#### **Aims**

The aim of this policy is to set out a clear and fair process for handling redundancies. In doing so, it ensures employees, managers and UNISON are clear of the procedure that is being followed through any redundancy process.

As far as possible, the Councils will seek to avoid or minimise the need for compulsory redundancies, this policy sets out the ways in which the Councils will do this which now includes pay protection.

## **Redundancy Procedure**

### **Consultation**

Where the possibility of redundancies is identified the Councils will inform and consult with the relevant trade union representatives as early as possible and before any formal decisions have been made. As part of the consultation the Council will provide the following information:

- the reasons for the proposed redundancies;
- the numbers and descriptions of employees it proposes to make redundant;
- the total number of employees of those descriptions employed at the establishment in question;
- the proposed method of selecting those who may be dismissed;
- the proposed method of carrying out the dismissals, including the period over which the dismissals are to take effect;
- the proposed method of calculating any redundancy payments;
- the number of agency workers working temporarily for, and under the supervision and direction of, the employer;
- the parts of the employer's business in which the agency workers work; and
- the type of work that the agency workers carry out.

Formal consultation shall be deemed to commence on the date when these details are given in a letter to the Branch Secretaries of UNISON.

Consultation timescales will depend upon the scale of potential redundancies and will be as follows:

- A minimum of 30 days before the first dismissal takes effect, where up to 99 employees are to be made redundant over a period of 90 days or less; or
- A minimum of 45 days before the first dismissal takes effect, where more than 100 employees are to be made redundant over a period of 90 days or less

Any consultation responses received in time will be included in any committee reports to be considered by the appropriate Committee.

### **Measures to avoid or minimise compulsory redundancies**

The Councils will, in consultation with the appropriate trade union representatives explore any options to avoid or minimise the need for compulsory redundancies. Alternatives may include (not in order of priority):

- Reductions through natural staff turnover (ie not automatically replacing employees who leave);
- Seeking volunteers for redundancy;
- Redeployment, including retraining where appropriate;
- Stopping or reducing overtime other than contractual or emergency overtime;
- Restrictions on permanent and/or external recruitment;
- Termination of casual or agency worker arrangements;
- Flexible retirements/voluntary reduction in hours.

## **Employees 'at risk' of redundancy**

### **Notification of 'at risk' status**

As soon as practicable after the unions have been informed of the potential for redundancies, any individuals affected will be informed that they are 'at risk' of redundancy and that consultation has commenced. An individual will be identified as being 'at risk' of redundancy if their current post does not exist in a new structure or there will be a reduction in the number of the same post in a new structure. This will be confirmed in writing with an estimate of any redundancy payment and if applicable, pension payment due.

Throughout the consultation period, further meetings (usually mid consultation and at the end of the consultation period) will be arranged with individuals 'at risk' of redundancy to discuss any concerns, redeployment opportunities, any selection processes etc. Records of any discussions will be kept on the employee's personal file.

### **Rights of employees 'at risk'**

Employees 'at risk' of redundancy have certain rights. The Councils will make every effort to redeploy the individuals within the Councils services.

Employees are entitled to reasonable paid time off to look for alternative employment. This may include time off to attend interviews or attend relevant training courses. A reasonable amount of time is considered to be up to two days per week (pro rata for part-time employees). Such time off must be arranged in advance with the line manager.

A central register of employees 'at risk' of redundancy will be held in HR and those employees put 'at risk' will be informed by HR of all relevant vacancies arising within the Councils. Efforts will be made to redeploy employees within the Councils to retain skills, knowledge and experience and reasonable training will be provided if necessary.

The Councils will make every effort to facilitate employees search for new employment, either through in-house support or, on occasions, outplacement specialists. Support may include; advice on writing application forms or preparing CVs, interview tips, coaching etc.

### **Selection for redundancy**

Once a proposal for a restructure or reduction in headcount is approved and where compulsory redundancies are unavoidable, the ring fence arrangements and process of selection for redundancy will be agreed with UNISON. It may include some or all of the following criteria:

- Attendance records (other than absences covered by the Equality Act 2010);
- Disciplinary records ('live' warnings only);
- Skills and experience;
- Past performance records;
- A selection interview.

If a function or service is to be discontinued all employees directly related to the provision of that function will automatically be selected for redundancy.

If there is to be a reduction in the number of posts but the job descriptions remain largely unchanged, (i.e. duties are more than 80% the same). Selection will be based on agreed criteria and made by a selection panel that comprises of a higher level of management, at least one member of Corporate Management Team (CMT) and a representative from HR.

If a restructure involves the creation of new roles, selection for redundancy will be dependant on success at interview for those new roles. A new role is one where the duties are more than 20% different. A ring fence of employees that can apply for the new posts will be agreed with UNISON and will be based on job type, grade and/or salary levels. The appointment panel should consist of managers from a higher level of management, at least one member of CMT and a representative from HR.

This appointment process does not apply to posts named as Scheduled Posts on the constitution, (i.e. Chief Executive, Strategic Directors and Assistant Directors). As these appointments require an Appointments Committee, comprising of at least one member of each of the Councils Executive/Cabinet.

The employee/s selected for redundancy will receive written notification of the reasons for their selection as well as their proper contractual notice in accordance with their contract of employment or statutory notice whichever is greater.

**NB:** The cost of redundancy is not a factor that will be taken into account when selection for redundancy is made.

### **Calculation of redundancy payments**

Employees will be notified personally about their redundancy entitlements as soon as possible after they have been notified that they are 'at risk' of redundancy, including the compensation/severance payment in writing and details of any pension due where applicable.

The qualifying service in respect of redundancy payments is two years continuous local government service (in accordance with the Redundancy Payments (Local Government) Modification Order. Reckonable service is limited to the last 20 years before redundancy.

Statutory redundancy payments are made according to the following scale:

- (a) one and a half week's pay\* for each year of employment during which the employee was aged 41 and over;
- (b) one week's pay\* for each year of employment during which the employee was aged 22 to 40 inclusive;
- (c) half a week's pay\* for each year of employment in which the employee was aged 21 and under.

\* A week's pay is based on contractual pay and does not include occasional overtime or additional payments.

Appendix one includes a table with the number of statutory weeks entitlement according to age and continuous service.

If prior to the expiry of the employee's notice of dismissal an individual receives an offer of employment with a related employer (in accordance with the Redundancy Payments Continuity of Employment in Local Government Modification Order 1999) to start immediately or within four weeks of the end of the previous employment, a redundancy payment cannot be made by the Council.

### **Compensation/severance payments**

The Councils operate a discretionary enhanced redundancy payment scheme under the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) Regulations 2006, as compensation for the loss of employment on redundancy grounds. Details of the Council's schemes are available from the HR representatives.

Employees will be entitled to the discretionary compensation/severance payments in accordance with the existing policy.

Redundancy and compensation/severance payments will be made to employees within 4 weeks of the date of leaving employment.

### **Local Government Pension Scheme Payments**

Under the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) regulations, if an employee's employment ceases due to redundancy or efficiency, or the employment is terminated by mutual consent on grounds of business efficiency, and the employee is age 55 or over, and they have at least 2 years' service, the member is entitled to and must take their pension benefits immediately without any actuarial reduction.

When a member leaves their employment with between 3 months' and 2 years' membership in total, they can choose between:

- A refund of contributions
- Deferred benefits
- An immediate pension (provided they have reached their normal retirement age)
- A transfer out of their accrued pension rights

### **Redeployment Procedure**

Wherever possible employees will be redeployed to avoid compulsory redundancy.

The Councils reserve the right in agreement with UNISON to apply a ring fence to new roles that are created as a result of any proposed restructures and offer them in the first instance to those employees at a similar job type grade/salary level within the existing structure and who have the relevant skills and experience that match the job description or person specification.



Where there is only one individual matched with the new position they will be slotted in.

Where there is more than one employee that matches the role or a group of employees to more than one role, a selection procedure panel will take place that involves a formal interview and other recruitment selection procedures.

All other vacancies arising within the Council where a suitable ring fence is not identified will be offered to employees 'at risk' of redundancy in the first instance. Such vacancies will be sent initially to the HR Team who will check them against the 'at risk' register for any suitable candidates. Employees will be matched according to the essential criteria on the person specification, salary levels and preferred hours of work. Consideration must also be given to any reasonable appropriate training that will enable them to perform the duties of the role.

Any employees that meet the essential criteria will be made an offer of redeployment. Where more than one employee is matched to a vacancy a selection process will apply.

Any offer of redeployment will be made in writing and will include reference to a trial period, any training available, terms and conditions and protection arrangements if applicable.

Any employees that are redeployed into a new role will be given a 4 week trial period. This period may be extended by mutual agreement.

If the trial period is successful the employee will be sent written confirmation of any changes to terms and conditions. If the trial period is deemed unsuccessful by the manager, contractual notice will be reduced by the length of the trial period.

If an offer of redeployment is made by the Councils and the employee decides during the trial period that they wish to reject the offer, they must advise HR in writing within the trial period.

An employee who believes that a job offer is not suitable alternative employment may claim a redundancy payment. However, this will only be paid where the Councils agree that the job is unsuitable. The decision will be made by a Member of CMT, taking account of any changes to terms and conditions and the level of seniority.

### **Pay Protection**

Pay protection will be available where employment on less favourable terms is offered to an employee as an alternative to redundancy. An employee's basic pay will be protected for up to two years if the reduction in their basic pay does exceed 17.5%.

If, by accepting alternative employment, the reduction in an employee's basic pay exceeds 17.5%, pay protection is subject to the HR & OD Manager and the relevant Director being satisfied that there is some tangible benefit to be gained by the

Council, for example, in circumstances where pay protection would be less costly than an employee's redundancy.

During the pay protection period, an employee's basic pay is protected on a 'mark time' basis. 'Mark time' means that during the period of protection, an employee's basic pay is frozen and that any increments and annual pay awards applicable to their previous job are not paid to the employee.

## **Appeals**

If an employee is aggrieved about their selection for redundancy they have the right of appeal. The appeal must be received in writing by HR within 10 working days of the decision being made. Refer to Council Appeal Procedure.

If the selection for redundancy was made by the Chief Executive the employee will have the right of appeal to be heard by an Appeal Committee comprising of at least one member of each of the Councils' Executive or Cabinet.

If the selection for redundancy was made by a Member of JMT other than the Executive, the employee will have a right of appeal to be heard by the Chief Executive.

All decisions made by the appeal panel are final.

**Appendix one – Table to show entitlement to statutory weeks’ redundancy based on age and continuous service**

		Years Service																		
		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Age	18																			
	19																			
	20	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0															
	21	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5														
	22	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0													
	23	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0												
	24	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0											
	25	2.0	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0										
	26	2.0	3.0	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.5	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0									
	27	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	5.5	6.0	6.5	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0								
	28	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	6.5	7.0	7.5	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0							
	29	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	7.5	8.0	8.5	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0						
	30	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	8.5	9.0	9.5	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0					
	31	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	9.5	10.0	10.5	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0				
	32	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	10.5	11.0	11.5	12.0	12.0	12.0	12.0			
	33	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	11.0	11.5	12.0	12.5	13.0	13.0	13.0	13.0		
	34	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	11.0	12.0	12.5	13.0	13.5	14.0	14.0	14.0	14.0	
	35	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	11.0	12.0	13.0	13.5	14.0	14.5	15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0
	36	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	11.0	12.0	13.0	14.0	14.5	15.0	15.5	16.0	16.0	16.0
	37	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	11.0	12.0	13.0	14.0	15.0	15.5	16.0	16.5	17.0	17.0
	38	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	11.0	12.0	13.0	14.0	15.0	16.0	16.5	17.0	17.5	18.0
39	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	11.0	12.0	13.0	14.0	15.0	16.0	17.0	17.5	18.0	18.5	
40	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	11.0	12.0	13.0	14.0	15.0	16.0	17.0	18.0	18.5	19.0	
41	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	11.0	12.0	13.0	14.0	15.0	16.0	17.0	18.0	19.0	19.5	
42	2.5	3.5	4.5	5.5	6.5	7.5	8.5	9.5	10.5	11.5	12.5	13.5	14.5	15.5	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	
43	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	11.0	12.0	13.0	14.0	15.0	16.0	17.0	18.0	19.0	20.0	21.0	

		Years Service																		
		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Age	44	3.0	4.5	5.5	6.5	7.5	8.5	9.5	10.5	11.5	12.5	13.5	14.5	15.5	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	21.5
	45	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0	10.0	11.0	12.0	13.0	14.0	15.0	16.0	17.0	18.0	19.0	20.0	21.0	22.0
	46	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	8.5	9.5	10.5	11.5	12.5	13.5	14.5	15.5	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	21.5	22.5
	47	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.0	11.0	12.0	13.0	14.0	15.0	16.0	17.0	18.0	19.0	20.0	21.0	22.0	23.0
	48	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	11.5	12.5	13.5	14.5	15.5	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	21.5	22.5	23.5
	49	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.0	14.0	15.0	16.0	17.0	18.0	19.0	20.0	21.0	22.0	23.0	24.0
	50	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5	14.5	15.5	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	21.5	22.5	23.5	24.5
	51	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5	15.0	16.0	17.0	18.0	19.0	20.0	21.0	22.0	23.0	24.0	25.0
	52	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5	15.0	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	21.5	22.5	23.5	24.5	25.5
	53	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5	15.0	16.5	18.0	19.0	20.0	21.0	22.0	23.0	24.0	25.0	26.0
	54	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5	15.0	16.5	18.0	19.5	20.5	21.5	22.5	23.5	24.5	25.5	26.5
	55	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5	15.0	16.5	18.0	19.5	21.0	22.0	23.0	24.0	25.0	26.0	27.0
	56	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5	15.0	16.5	18.0	19.5	21.0	22.5	23.5	24.5	25.5	26.5	27.5
	57	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5	15.0	16.5	18.0	19.5	21.0	22.5	24.0	25.0	26.0	27.0	28.0
	58	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5	15.0	16.5	18.0	19.5	21.0	22.5	24.0	25.5	26.5	27.5	28.5
	59	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5	15.0	16.5	18.0	19.5	21.0	22.5	24.0	25.5	27.0	28.0	29.0
	60	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5	15.0	16.5	18.0	19.5	21.0	22.5	24.0	25.5	27.0	28.5	29.5
	61	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5	15.0	16.5	18.0	19.5	21.0	22.5	24.0	25.5	27.0	28.5	30.0
	62	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5	15.0	16.5	18.0	19.5	21.0	22.5	24.0	25.5	27.0	28.5	30.0
	63	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5	15.0	16.5	18.0	19.5	21.0	22.5	24.0	25.5	27.0	28.5	30.0
	64	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5	15.0	16.5	18.0	19.5	21.0	22.5	24.0	25.5	27.0	28.5	30.0

Appendix E - Taunton Deane Borough Council - Compensation Policy

<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <p>4.</p> <p>5.</p> <p>6.</p>	<p>The following policy on Compensation Payments applies to redundancies and early retirements on the grounds of efficiency of the service, which take effect <b>after 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016</b>.</p> <p>The calculation of redundancy payments is on the basis of actual salary, excluding pension contributions.</p> <p>The Council exercises discretion under the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) Regulations 2006, to make compensatory payments to employees being made redundant based on a multiplier of <b>one and a half times</b> the number of weeks an employee would be entitled to under the statutory redundancy formula, inclusive of any statutory redundancy payment, up to a maximum of 45 weeks' pay.</p> <p>The Council requires that the full cost of any redundancies is recovered within a period not exceeding five years or by the normal retirement age, whichever is sooner.</p> <p>Employees who are eligible to be paid a compensation payment on being made redundant, and who are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme, are given the option of converting their compensation payment (excluding the statutory redundancy payment) into augmented pensionable service. <u>Augmentation is not an option where the compensation payment (excluding the statutory redundancy payment) purchases more pensionable service than the maximum allowable at age 65.</u></p> <p>No compensation payments are made to employees who are allowed to retire early on the grounds of interests of efficiency of the service, irrespective of whether a voluntary request has been made by the employee or instigated by management.</p>
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## Appendix F - West Somerset Council - Severance Policy

1.	<p>The Council operates a discretionary enhanced redundancy payment scheme as compensation for loss of employment on redundancy grounds. The details of the Scheme are for information and may be amended from time to time at the discretion of the Council and after consultation with the Union. Please note the severance payments scheme is not legally binding.</p>
2.	<p>Pay a 'lump sum' payment using the statutory redundancy tables and applying a multiplier of <b>one and a half to the statutory redundancy figure</b> based on actual week's pay up to a maximum of 45 weeks. In addition give the employee the option to convert the cash sum in excess of any statutory redundancy payment into a period of membership in the Local Government Pension Scheme. If taken as a cash lump sum the first £30k is tax-free.</p>
3.	<p>Redundancy compensation will only be paid to staff with two or more years of service.</p>
4.	<p>For the purposes of these calculations, a week's pay is defined as the employee's actual weekly pay, which is averaged over a twelve week period for employees whose earnings for basic hours (excluding overtime) varies from week to week. An actual week's pay does not include pension contributions. The maximum number of year's continuous service that can be counted for statutory redundancy payments is twenty years.</p>
5.	<p>The expression 'early retirement in the interests of the efficiency of the service' is difficult to define but the application of this scheme can be justified because: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) it facilitates/encourages internal restructuring</li><li>(b) it allows for the retirement of an employee who is unable to match up to the changed requirements of his/her job</li><li>(c) The Local Government (Early Termination of Employment)(Discretionary Payments) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006 allow local authorities to use their discretion in the interests of the efficient exercise of that authority's functions.</li></ul>
6.	<p>The scheme is voluntary and it must be clearly understood that it is not meant to cover cases where action should be taken to dismiss an employee on grounds of discipline, ill health, and lack of qualifications or capability. Application of the scheme does not imply that an employee is or has become inefficient.</p>
7.	<p>If you retire in the interests of efficiency, you will be entitled to a lump-sum payment calculated using your actual week's pay and equating to the equivalent of the statutory number of weeks payable for redundancy, however you will not be entitled to receive a redundancy payment from the Council. It is not possible to augment your Pension if you retire in the interests of the efficiency of the service.</p>
8.	<p>Employees aged fifty-five years or over who are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme will receive payment of early pension retirement benefits.</p>

## **Appendix G – Taunton Deane Borough Council Flexible Retirement Policy**

### **Taunton Deane Borough Council**

#### **Full or Partial Flexible Retirement Policy**

1. Employees aged 55 (aged 50 up to 31 March 2010) who are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme are able to request payment of early retirement benefits whilst remaining in the Council's employment on reduced hours or a lower grade.
2. This right does not apply to employees who are in receipt of a redundancy payment and early pension benefits or who have taken early retirement in the interests of the efficiency of the service.
3. As a guide, a business case for flexible retirement where any reduction is minimal (e.g. less than 20% either in terms of reduced hours or lower grade) may be difficult to objectively justify.
4. Requests for flexible working may be instigated by employees who meet the criteria set out in 1. above at anytime but will only be able to make one request in any 12 month period.
5. An employee should, in the first instance, approach their line manager with a request for reduced hours, more flexible working patterns by putting their request in writing.
6. The line manager will notify the HR Advisory Team and a meeting will be arranged within 21 days to discuss the request from the employee.
7. At this point the HR Advisory Team will request an estimate of early retirement benefits from the Peninsula Pensions which will be provided to the employee and be used to complete the Flexible Retirement Approval Request Form.
8. The meeting between the employee, line manager and a member of the HR Advisory Team will discuss the request and business case and will only be referred for approval if it is operationally viable.
9. If the request is referred for approval this will be considered by the relevant Assistant Director and the HR & OD Manager.
10. It should be noted that employees who are retiring in this way before their normal retirement age will suffer an actuarial reduction in their benefits to reflect early payment. In exceptional compassionate circumstances the Council has the right to waive this actuarial reduction.

11. If the request is not referred for approval this will be confirmed to the employee in writing to the employee within 14 days of the meeting. The employee would have the right of appeal against this decision which should be made in writing to the Retained HR Manager within 10 days of receipt of the reason for refusal of the request or refusal to waive the actuarial reduction on compassionate grounds where the request is approved.
12. Appeals will be heard by a Strategic Director advised by the HR and OD Manager.

## Retirement in the Interest of Efficiency Pay – Ready Reckoner

Age	Complete Year's Service																			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
18		1																		
19		1	1.5																	
20		1	1.5	2																
21		1	1.5	2	2.5															
22		1	1.5	2	2.5	3														
23		1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4													
24		2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5												
25		2	3	3.5	4	4.5	5	5.5	6											
26		2	3	4	4.5	5	5.5	6	6.5	7										
27		2	3	4	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8									
28		2	3	4	5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	8.5	9								
29		2	3	4	5	6	7	7.5	8	8.5	9	9.5	10							
30		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	8.5	9	9.5	10	10.5	11						
31		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	9.5	10	10.5	11	11.5	12					
32		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	10.5	11	11.5	12	12.5	13				
33		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	11.5	12	12.5	13	13.5	14			
34		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	12.5	13	13.5	14	14.5	15		
35		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	13.5	14	14.5	15	15.5	16	
36		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	14.5	15	15.5	16	16.5	17
37		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	15.5	16	16.5	17	17.5
38		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	16.5	17	17.5	18
39		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	17.5	18	18.5
40		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	18.5	19
41		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	19.5
42		2.5	3.5	4.5	5.5	6.5	7.5	8.5	9.5	10.5	11.5	12.5	13.5	14.5	15.5	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5
43		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
44		3	4.5	5.5	6.5	7.5	8.5	9.5	10.5	11.5	12.5	13.5	14.5	15.5	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	21.5
45		3	4.5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
46		3	4.5	6	7.5	8.5	9.5	10.5	11.5	12.5	13.5	14.5	15.5	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	21.5	22.5
47		3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
48		3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	11.5	12.5	13.5	14.5	15.5	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	21.5	22.5	23.5
49		3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
50		3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	14.5	15.5	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	21.5	22.5	23.5	24.5
51		3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
52		3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	21.5	22.5	23.5	24.5	25.5
53		3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
54		3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	19.5	20.5	21.5	22.5	23.5	24.5	25.5	26.5
55		3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	19.5	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
56		3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	19.5	21	22.5	23.5	24.5	25.5	26.5	27.5
57		3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	19.5	21	22.5	24	25	26	27	28
58		3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	19.5	21	22.5	24	25.5	26.5	27.5	28.5
59		3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	19.5	21	22.5	24	25.5	27	28	29
60		3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	19.5	21	22.5	24	25.5	27	28.5	29.5
61 plus		3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	19.5	21	22.5	24	25.5	27	28.5	30



## **APPENDIX H**

### **WRITTEN STATEMENT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME EMPLOYERS DISCRETIONS AND KEY PENSIONS POLICY**

#### **WEST SOMERSET COUNCIL**

**April 2017 to 31 March 2018**

#### **LGPS (Administration) Regulations 2008**

##### **Regulation B30 (2)**

The Council will allow individual former employees leaving employment on or before 31.03.14 the option to request early payment of benefits after on or after age 55 and before age 60 which will be considered on a case-by-case basis following the production of a business case. In these cases no additional compensation will be awarded.

##### **Regulation B30 (5)**

With regard to the early payment of benefits on or after age 55 and before age 60 made under B30 (2) above the Council retains the right to waive the actuarial reduction of benefits on exceptional compassionate grounds.

##### **Regulation B30A (3)**

The Council will allow the option to request an application for reinstatement of a suspended tier 3 ill health pension on or after age 55 and before age 60 which will be considered on a case-by-case including the production of evidential support. This applies to employees leaving service on or before 31 March 2014.

##### **Regulation B30A (5)**

With regard to an application for reinstatement of a suspended tier 3 ill health pension on or after age 55 and before age 60 made under B30A (3) above the Council retains the right to waive the actuarial reduction of benefits on exceptional compassionate grounds.

#### **Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 1997 (as amended) in relation to active councillor members and pre 1.4.08 scheme leavers.**

##### **Regulation 31 (2)**

The Council will allow a post 31/3/98/pre 1/4/08 leaver the option to request early payment of benefits after on or after age 55 and before age 60 which will be considered on a case-by-case basis following the production of a business case. In these cases no additional compensation will be awarded.

### **Regulation 31 (5)**

With regard to the early payment of benefits made in accordance with Regulation 31 (2) the Council retains the right to waive the actuarial reduction of benefits on exceptional compassionate grounds.

### **Regulation 31 (7A)**

The Council will allow pre 1/4/08 employee optants out the option to request payment of benefits at normal retirement date and these will be considered on a case-by-case basis following the production of a business case.

## **The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013**

### **Regulation 100 (6)**

It is not Council policy to extend the 12-month limit on transfer of previous pension rights into the LGPS.

### **Regulation 9 (1) and 9 (3)**

It is Council policy to allow employee contribution rates to be determined as changes occur during the financial year.

### **Regulation 16(2)(e) and 16(4)(d) Funding of Additional Pension**

It is not the policy of the Council to fund additional pension and will not enter into a shared cost additional pension contributions arrangement..

### **Regulation 30(6) Flexible Retirement**

The Council will allow benefits to be paid to a member of staff if they reduce their hours/grade (known as flexible retirement) and this is set out in the Council's Retirement Policy. Each case will be decided individually after the consideration of a detailed business case and only applies to those aged 55 and over.

### **Regulation 30(8)**

With regard to flexible retirement and requests from staff aged 55 or over for retirement the Council retains the right to waive the actuarial reduction of benefits on exceptional compassionate grounds.

### **Regulation 31 Award of Additional Pension**

It is not the policy of the Council to award Employer APC for active member leaving on redundancy/efficiency other than by allowing employees leaving on grounds of redundancy/efficiency to use compensation payments to fund additional pensions..

## **The Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) Discretionary Compensation Regulations 2006**

As set out in the Redundancy Policy the Council do not limit redundancy payments to the statutory maximum weekly pay threshold and instead use actual weekly pay of the employee. Actual week pay of an employee does not include pension contributions.

The Council does not offer a minimum payment with regard to redundancy. Benefits are calculated using actual weekly pay and the statutory number of weeks as calculated against continuous local government service (and service covered by the Modification Order).

The Council provides up to 15 weeks compensation, in addition to any redundancy payment as set out in both the Redundancy and Retirement Policies.

Where additional compensation is paid the employee has the option to augment pension benefits by using all of the additional compensation.

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Full Council – 10 April 2018

### Comprehensive Compulsory Purchase of Third Party Land and Interests at Firepool, Taunton

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Mark Edwards

Report author: Tom Gillham Assistant Director, Asset Development Projects (Interim)

#### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Member's support is sought to enable Officers and our legal representatives (Ashfords working together with the Shape Partnership) to proceed with the compulsory acquisition of remaining 3<sup>rd</sup> party land and interests that are required to enable delivery of the next phases of the Firepool Development and the comprehensive mixed use scheme approved by committee.
- 1.2 In December 2014 Council approved in principle the acquisition of land and interests, by agreement, alongside preparations for the making of a future Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO), subject to a future planning approval.
- 1.3 Officers and agents (Bruton Knowles) acting on behalf of the Council have successfully negotiated and acquired through agreements the majority of land and interests required to deliver a comprehensive scheme, however some land remains in third party ownership, primarily situated between Old Cattle Market and Northern Inner Distributor Road (NIDR).
- 1.4 The CPO proposals in this report and confidential appendices are consistent with the recent resolution to grant outline planning consent for Firepool (14 March 2018). Acquisition of remaining interests are a priority and precursor to development aligned with Taunton Garden Town programme and contributes to a thriving and sustainable Town Centre.
- 1.5 A location plan is attached to this report showing areas of the Firepool master-plan that are to be developed (confidential Appendix A - edged in red), that reflects the proposals for a comprehensive compulsory purchase order. The third party land is hatched in green on the plan and currently under negotiations.
- 1.6 Discussions are currently underway with agents and owners of affected interests, and we are in communication with occupiers. However, if we are unable to agree acquisition by agreement then the Council will need to utilise its CPO powers. Members are, therefore, being requested to consider and authorise the compulsory purchase of the land and interests to enable the comprehensive development proceed.

## **2. Recommendations**

Council are recommended to:

- i. Authorise officers to proceed with the final stages required to make a Compulsory Purchase Order for the acquisition of all relevant property interests required to facilitate the implementation of the proposed comprehensive Firepool development, which we are unable to acquire by agreement, comprising the land edged in red (confidential Appendix A).
- ii. Delegate to Director of Growth and Development in consultation with Portfolio Holder and Council Leader, under legal advice (from Ashfords and Shape Partnership) to:
  - a. Make a CPO and to progress through the appropriate procedures to secure the confirmation of the CPO once made;
  - b. Negotiate with parties affected by the CPO with a view to acquiring their interests by agreement;
  - c. Make any necessary steps and applications in relation to the stopping up or diversion of highways under powers contained in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as relevant to the comprehensive Firepool Compulsory Purchase Order;
  - d. Ensure the Equalities Impact Assessment and any relevant action plan are completed, identify any potentially adverse effects of CPO and clarify mitigation through an appropriate plan of action to protect any persons involved.

## **3. Risk Assessment**

- 3.1 The Council and its development partner have taken expert independent legal and asset valuation advice (MRICS) in deciding the best way to proceed to ensure Council members support a viable and deliverable Masterplan.
- 3.2 There are some risks involved because of the nature of the market and the ongoing negotiations with remaining occupiers of the site.
- 3.3 A working copy of risk matrix is contained within confidential Appendix D. The assessment shows that identified risks can be mitigated to acceptable levels. It is considered that proceeding with a CPO will realise wider economic and regeneration benefits for Taunton from the development proposals, significantly outweighs the assessed level of residual risk, following mitigation.

## **4. Background**

- 4.1 Following Council resolution 9 December 2014 (confidential Appendix J), positive negotiations over the last few years have led to the successful acquisition on north-side of the majority of land required, however a couple of remaining landowners have declined the best value offers made to date.

- 4.2 Communications channels remain open between remaining third parties their agents and our representatives so hopefully matters will be resolved amicably in the near future, although CPO will proceed regardless, to ensure all relevant interests can be appropriately acquired or extinguished.
- 4.3 Members will be aware that the Firepool site is a prime riverside regeneration opportunity in Taunton, adjacent to the Railway Station and conveniently located in relation to other parts of the Town Centre. The Council is the principal land owner of the Firepool site and in its capacity as promotor of local economic growth it supports the delivery of revised Masterplan produced by St Modwen.
- 4.4 Previous land acquired by the Council on the South side of the River Tone, forms part of the comprehensive Firepool site. Planning was previously attained and land developed in part for Viridor offices and 49 riverside residential units by Acorn, with recent proposals for new hotel. The comprehensive CPO ensures that the Council remains in control of all Firepool land yet to be developed for the uses approved by committee.

## **5. Links to Corporate Aims, Priorities and Key issues**

- 5.1 The CPO enables development aligned with the following key themes in the Council's Corporate Strategy:
- **Key Theme 1: People:** facilitating employment opportunities in the construction and ongoing operation of the comprehensive mix of business, leisure, retail, residential and commercial development;
  - **Key Theme 2: Business and Enterprise:** enhancing the quantity and variety within the Town Centre. Firepool Development will act as an important catalyst, attracting visitors, business and investment in the wider Taunton area.
  - **Key Theme 4: An Efficient and Modern Council:** Council development partnership with St Modwen and other key parties will be commercially viable and sustainable, enabling comprehensive investment across Firepool area and making important improvements both to the general appearance of site and prosperity of the immediate area and surrounding town centre.
- 5.2 The Proposals will help to achieve many of the Council's corporate aims, providing a quality sustainable growth and development, vibrant economic development and social, cultural and leisure environment
- 5.3 The comprehensive development of the Firepool Site will bring this currently vacant and relatively redundant brownfield site back in to full economic and social use, improving its environmental appearance and significantly enhancing one of the key gateway locations to the town centre from areas to the north (including the Railway station) and along Priory Bridge Road.
- 5.4 The scheme now proposed will enable the creation of approximately 1700 new jobs in numerous businesses of different types and sectors. The location

of the site offers a unique opportunity to create jobs in a sustainable, town centre location, drawing advantages from the enhanced transport and infrastructure in that location. The mixed use approach proposed will create a solid, sustainable foundation on the site to support the economic growth agenda for the Taunton and wider area that is shared by the Council and key delivery partners.

- 5.5 The acquisition of remaining 3<sup>rd</sup> party land and associated stopping up will facilitate the carrying out of development, redevelopment or improvement in relation to the land to be acquired.
- 5.6 The development is likely to contribute to the achievement of the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well being of the area in the following ways:
- Economic: The scheme will enable the creation of approximately 1,700 new jobs in numerous businesses of different types and sectors.
  - Social: The majority of the site is currently derelict and the Masterplan design seeks to encourage safe access and areas for public use on the site.
  - Environmental: The new scheme will significantly improve the current physical environment. New buildings and public realm will be constructed to relevant standards. Planned infrastructure work will mitigate the risk of flooding and support the wider flood prevention strategy.

## **6. Planning Permission**

- 6.1 At its meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2018 the Planning Committee resolved to grant outline planning permission for the Firepool site in accordance with St. Modwen's Masterplan . In summary, that scheme contains the following components (see below), as stated in the introduction to the Planning Committee report.
- 6.2 Outline planning application with some matters reserved, except for access for the NIDR only, for the redevelopment of the former cattle market site to provide up to 3500sqm of convenience retail development (Class A1), up to 6000sqm of non-food development (A1), up to 4000sqm of office (B1) or hotel (C1), up to 3900sqm of assembly/leisure (D2) and non-residential institutions (D1) (of which no more than 1500sqm shall be D1) , up to 2600sqm of food and drink establishments (A3/A4/A5), and up to 200 residential units (C3) with redevelopment of the former Priory Bridge Road car park and former 84-94 Priory Bridge Road to provide up to 2964sqm of office (B1) and 5525sqm of office (B1) or hotel (C1) uses and a further 1300sqm of A3/A4/B1 (office) D2 uses with car parking, landscaping, public realm, access, (in detail for the NIDR connection) highways, infrastructure works and relevant demolition at Firepool, Priory Bridge Road, Taunton (resubmission of 38/15/0475).

## **7. Land and Interests to be Assembled**

- 7.1 The land to be included within the compulsory purchase as illustrated by plan edged in red (Confidential Appendix A) and comprises the plots described in the schedule of land referencing that will accompany the comprehensive CPO (draft CPO documents are shown in confidential Appendices F, G & H).

- 7.2 All the development land required for the Firepool scheme will be included in the comprehensive Firepool CPO, in order to minimise the risk of gaining control of occupiers' interests and any third (3<sup>rd</sup>) party rights.

## **8. Finance / Resource Implication**

- 8.1 Finance confirm that funding for the Firepool Land Assembly and CPO project should proceed on the basis that the acquisition value estimated independently by Valuation Surveyors and CPO experts are supported by the underlying value of the future asset, receipts generated from expected land sales and development.
- 8.2 Sufficient budget has already been allocated and accounted for within the Council's existing capital programme as approved as part of the Budget setting process which took place at full Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018. Finance for essential Firepool Land Assembly and associated CPO activities has been identified as a key priority within the Town Centre Growth Budget funded by New Homes Bonus.
- 8.3 Due to the sensitive commercial nature of negotiations land valuations for the remaining 3<sup>rd</sup> party land have not been specifically stated within this report.

## **9. Legal Implications**

- 9.1 Unless the land is included in the CPO the Council will not be able to show its ability to assemble the whole site to achieve the regeneration objectives. Any compulsory purchase of land in pursuit of the delivery of the Firepool Scheme would proceed in accordance with the provisions of the Acquisition of Land Act 1981. This requires the Council to set out details of its reasons for making a CPO and a Schedule of the interests required, which is compiled following land referencing.
- 9.2 The Council will take all necessary steps to make a Compulsory Purchase Order as per the above by affixing the seal of the Council. Thereafter it will take all necessary steps to secure the confirmation of the CPO and the vesting of the relevant interests in the Council. These steps include the following:
- a) Legal advisors will support Officers in finalising the draft Statement of Reasons, the draft form of the CPO, the draft Order Schedule and the draft Order Plan before the Council makes the CPO.
  - b) Prepare the necessary statutory certificates to be submitted to the Secretary of State with the CPO.
  - c) Prepare and serve and/or publish such statutory notices as are required following the making of the Order.
  - d) Dealing appropriately with any potential objections, either by:
    - i. securing a withdrawal through a compromise agreement; or



- ii. preparing for a public inquiry to secure a confirmed Order with any potential modifications consider necessary or as directed by the Secretary of State.
  - e) Should a confirmed CPO be obtained, serving the relevant notices and/or execute general vesting declarations to provide for the vesting of acquired interests in the Council.
- 9.3 The process allows full opportunity for objectors to set out their grounds for opposition, including making representations to an independent Inspector at a public inquiry who will report to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government with whom a final decision as to whether the CPO should be confirmed rests.
- 9.4 The Council will need to satisfy the Secretary of State that the scheme warrants the use of statutory powers, having taken into account the views of objectors.
- 9.5 In the event of the Order being confirmed the Council would be able to acquire the land compulsorily, and any disputes in relation to compensation could be referred to the Lands Tribunal
- 9.6 If compensation matters are referred to the Upper Tribunal, then Officers and CPO advisors will be directed to take all necessary steps.
- 9.7 **Compulsory Purchase Powers and Procedure**
- 9.7.1 Section 226(1), Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) enables the Council (on being authorised by the Secretary of State) to acquire by compulsory purchase any land needed to facilitate the carrying out of the development, redevelopment or improvement on or in relation to land. The Council must also consider that the specified development, redevelopment or improvement is likely to contribute to the achievement of the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well being of the area. In deciding whether to make a CPO using planning powers, the Council would be required to demonstrate that there is sufficient justification for acquiring the land compulsorily and that there is a compelling case for CPO. The procedural requirements of the Acquisition of Land Act 1981 will then apply to the compulsory acquisition.
- 9.7.2 The Compulsory Purchase Order is a composite document containing a number of elements as follows.
- **The Order.** This sets out the name and date of the CPO and the statutory basis for its preparation, which in this case will be the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Confidential Appendix B shows a copy of a Draft Order for Firepool Comprehensive Site – to be finalised)
  - **Schedule.** This will comprise the map and list of known interests. This will be a more detailed plan similar to the illustrative summary version shown in Confidential Appendix A that will clearly indicate each specific interest as listed in draft schedules and land references (Appendices F, G & H – to be finalised)

- **Statement of Reasons.** This is a formal statement of the Council's reasons for seeking powers to make the acquisitions listed in the Schedule. The draft Statement for Firepool Comprehensive CPO is attached as Appendix C.

## **9.8 Human Rights Act 1998 implications**

- 9.8.1 The Act effectively incorporates the European Convention of Human Rights into UK law and requires all public authorities to have regard to the rights contained within the Convention. When making the decision, Members must therefore have regard to the Convention. The rights that are of particular significance are those contained in Article 8 (right to home life) and Article 1 of Protocol 1 (peaceful enjoyment of possessions)
- 9.8.2 Article 8 provides that there should be no interference with the existence of the right except in accordance with the law and, as necessary in a democratic society, in the interest of the economic well-being of the country, protection of health and protection of the rights and freedoms of others. Article 1 of the 1st Protocol provides that no-one shall be deprived of their possessions except in the public interest and subject to the conditions provided for by law although it is qualified to the effect that it should not in any way impair the right of a state to enforce such laws as it deems necessary to control the uses of property in accordance with the general interest.
- 9.8.3 In determining the level of permissible interference with enjoyment, the courts have held that any interference must achieve a fair balance between the general interest of the community and the protection of the rights of individuals. There must be reasonable proportionality between the means employed and the aim pursued. The availability of an effective remedy and compensation to affected persons is relevant in assessing whether a fair balance has been struck.
- 9.8.4 In deciding whether to proceed with the recommendations, the Council and its Officers delegated to take forward recommendations (stated above in section 2 i & ii) needs to consider the extent to which the decision may impact upon the Human Rights of the landowners and residents and to balance these against the overall benefits to the community which the redevelopment would bring. Officers will consult with Members and need satisfied them that any interference with the rights under Article 8 and Article 1 of Protocol 1 is justified in all the circumstances and that a fair balance would be struck in the present case between the protection of the rights of individuals and the public interest.

## **9. Environmental Implications**

- 9.1 Environmental implications have been addressed through the planning process approved by statutory bodies such as the Environment Agency.

## **11. Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications**

- 11.1 None identified or related directly to this report. Any potential issues arising will be dealt with through the completion of an Equalities Impact Assessment

and or statutory planning processes.

## **12. Equality Impact Assessment and Diversity Implications**

- 12.1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a tool that helps us thoroughly assess the impact of major policy decisions in terms of the people it may affect: using consultation and survey data (see confidential Appendix D - draft EIA survey form attached); also any other relevant information that is available.
- 12.2 Findings of the EIA survey to be undertaken will be translated into an CPO Equality Action Plan monitored and resources identified, if appropriate.
- 12.3 A detailed Equalities Impact Assessment must be finalised and complete prior to the making of the CPO, to ensure that any potential impacts are clearly understood and mitigated.
- 12.4 If information from local Firepool CPO survey of residents, businesses employees, customers and service users demonstrates that there may be particular impacts on those with “protected characteristics”, then officers will prepare a further report to inform members and reassure them that appropriate action is being taken to mitigate any individual’s specific situation.

## **13. Social Value Implications**

- 13.1 Social value is being taken account for as part of wider planning matters.
- 13.2 We can expect that further opportunities to add social value will be identified within future procurement of the mixed development, buildings and operations that will create both new jobs and training opportunities for local people.

## **14. Partnership Implications**

- 14.1 The Council works closely in partnership with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) as key Funding partner. The Council procured St. Modwen as Development Partner to secure private sector investment and development expertise. Regular meetings with St Modwen and specialist advisors explore and evaluate opportunities for timely acquisition of Firepool land and interests.
- 14.2 Officers and advisors work closely with St Modwen to ensure a coordinated approach to negotiations and acquisition of third party land as set out in the approved masterplan. St Modwen have been entirely supportive of the acquisition and CPO process led by officers, lawyers and appointed agents.

## **15. Health and Wellbeing Implications**

- 15.1 No specific implications identified in this report, however this proposal will create high quality environment and employment opportunities will likely have a positive impact the general health and wellbeing of the local community at Firepool.

## **16. Asset Management Implications**

16.1 A comprehensive CPO will enable the Council to gain control of the whole Firepool site that will be beneficial in terms of strategic development and estate management. Bruton Knowles are appointed through the Council's Asset Management Framework to provide specialist advice on Firepool CPO, independent valuations (MRICS) on acquisitions also estate management matters ensuring compliance and best value is attained for the Council.

16.2 A successful CPO will enable our development partner St Modwen accelerate proposed Firepool delivery programme that will creating value and future income for the Council, therefore it is essential that remaining land acquired to facilitate the delivery of a comprehensive scheme. St Modwen marketing strategy promotes a mixed use scheme and creates exciting opportunities for a variety of new occupiers, expanding businesses and maximises potential for inward investment into Firepool and Taunton.

## 17. Summary of next steps

17.1 The decision to support the proposals, both Council as landowner and as a promoter of economic development, was initially approved in principle by Council in December 2014 (confidential Appendix J), subject to planning approval. CPO is a key to the next steps in achieving the master-plan recently approved by planning committee March 2018, subject to s106 and reserved matters.

17.2 The next steps and indicative timeline for comprehensive Firepool CPO are outlined in confidential Appendix I.

### Democratic Path:

- **Full Council** – 10<sup>th</sup> April 2018

**Reporting Frequency : Once only**

### List of **Confidential Appendices** (attached):

Ref:	<b>Strictly Confidential</b> Information - due to commercial sensitivity
Appendix A	Illustrative Plan indicating proposed comprehensive Firepool CPO (red-line)
Appendix B	Compulsory Purchase Order (Draft) for the comprehensive Firepool CPO
Appendix C	Statement of Reasons (Draft) for the comprehensive Firepool CPO
Appendix D	Firepool CPO Equalities Impact Assessment: Draft Survey Form
Appendix E	Risk Matrix (Working copy) - Comprehensive Firepool CPO
Appendix F	Comprehensive Firepool CPO Land Reference - Table 1 (Draft)
Appendix G	Comprehensive Firepool CPO Land Reference - Table 2 (Draft)
Appendix H	Comprehensive Firepool CPO Special Category Land - Table 3 (Draft)
Appendix I	Comprehensive Firepool CPO Indicative Time-line (Working Copy)
Appendix J	Council Resolution 9 Dec 2014 (supported Firepool CPO in principle)

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# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Full Council – 10 April 2018

### Development of an Hotel at Firepool, Taunton

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Mark Edwards

Report Author: Tom Gillham, Assistant Director - Asset Development Projects (Interim)

#### 1 Executive Summary and Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This paper introduces a proposal for Council investment in the development of a new high quality mid-market hotel at Firepool. The proposals are consistent with the outline planning consent (14 March 2018) for Firepool and were supported in principle by Members of Scrutiny (22 March 2018).
  - 1.2 The proposal aligns well with the vision for Taunton as a Garden Town, contributes to a thriving and sustainable Town Centre and generates a healthy commercial return to the Council.
  - 1.3 The proposal is the result of an initial feasibility, marketing and procurement exercise that has yielded strong interest from potential occupiers and operators of the hotel. A business case for Council investment in the development and ongoing ownership of the hotel has subsequently been developed, taking account of key risks (financial and non-financial). Confidential appendices provide further details for members' scrutiny.
  - 1.4 The above steps – including selection of hotel brand, operator and construction project management team, has been subject to the necessary Council approvals and consents and formal exchange of contract. Council approval of the proposal is now needed to enable the project to move forward to delivery of the hotel development programme.
  - 1.5 Confidential appendices attached to this report provide further information on indicative project timeline for development (illustrated by Appendix A), the financial evaluation and business case (Appendix B), the procurement process (summarised in Appendix C) that identifies our preferred brand and operator, risks and mitigation that include proposals to form a special purpose vehicle to lease the asset. The favoured location based on feasibility studies provides an illustration only of site and is not considered to be commercial sensitive, as the final building and layout are subject to detailed design.
  - 1.6 The views of Corporate Scrutiny Committee have been considered, in the final version being presented to Executive (5 April 2018) and Members are reminded that the development is subject to Full Council approval (10 April 2018) and contract, therefore many appendices are commercially sensitive in order to protect the Council interests.
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- 1.7 The proposal supports the Corporate Strategy of the Council, in particular themes of people, business and enterprise and an efficient and modern council.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 Full Council is recommended to approve the following:-

- (i) Council investment in the development and ownership of a hotel at Firepool, based on the detailed information contained in confidential appendices;
- (ii) For a supplementary estimate to the Council's Capital Programme (stated in commercially confidential financial Appendix B) for the planning, design and engineering, construction and fit out of the hotel, to be funded as per confidential appendix within this report;
- (iii) To enable the hotel project to progress within programme timescales indicated and approved budget, that the relevant delegated authorities are provided to the Director of Growth and s151 Officer, in consultation with Portfolio Holder and Leader of Council to:-
  - a) appoint specialist and professional services to support Officers and hotel project team complete the planning, design and engineering of a new mid-market hotel on a suitable site identified at Firepool (on the south-side of the Tone river);
  - b) finalise legal agreements with preferred brand and operator,
  - c) to create a Council owned Special Purpose Vehicle, to lease the asset and manage commercial arrangements of the new hotel (on behalf of the Council);
  - d) Procurement and appointment of a main building and fit-out contractor to complete the hotel building to specification and standards within the budget approved.

## **3. Risk Assessment**

- 3.1 A working copy of risk matrix is contained within confidential appendix D. The assessment shows that identified risks can be mitigated to acceptable levels.
- 3.2 It is considered that the business case, together with wider economic and regeneration benefits of the proposal, significantly outweigh the identified risks.

## **4. Background and Full details of the Report**

- 4.1 Taunton's prime regeneration site of Firepool includes an area to the south of the River Tone, opposite Somerset County Cricket Ground, that already comprises of the Viridor Head Office and Acorn's development of luxury riverside apartments and townhouses. The new hotel development is proposed be located in an identified commercial zone with frontage on Priory Bridge Road, providing adequate room for remaining office space development and surface level car parking (appendix E illustrates the favoured location).
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- 4.2 The majority of the identified site is relatively flat, clear and ready for development.
- 4.3 Subject to specific requirements such as reserved matters, Council approval of the business case and exchange of contracts with the hotel brand and management operator, appointment of professional services advisors and a construction company, preparatory work on the site is anticipated to start next year (2019). An indicative timeline for development is shown in the confidential appendix A.
- 4.4 Market testing and specialist advice also confirms high trading confidence in the Taunton area as a visitor and business destination. A well-recognised brand of hotel will improve the range and quality of mid-market accommodation in the town centre, encourage more businesses and visitors into the heart of the town and boost the wider daytime and evening economy.

## 5. Links to Corporate Aims, Priorities and Key issues

- 5.1 The proposal aligns well with the following key themes in the Council's Corporate Strategy:-

- **Key Theme 1: People:** facilitating employment and training opportunities in the construction and ongoing operation of the new hotel, jobs for around 100 people.  
The Council's preferred hotel management operator indicated that with the type of mid-market hotel being proposed with up to 120 rooms, a restaurant and small conference facilities it would be expected to employ around 40-50 (full-time equivalents). In reality this may mean a team of around 70-75 people altogether, as the service operation will likely involve shift-working and part-time staff. The building of the hotel could provide an additional 30-50 jobs including the creation of local training opportunities over the duration of the design and construction period.
- **Key Theme 2: Business and Enterprise:** enhancing the quantity and variety of accommodation in the Town Centre; attracting visitors and business, encouraging growth and potential investment. The hotel will also act as an important catalyst, attracting visitors, business and investment in the wider Town Centre.
- **Key Theme 4: An Efficient and Modern Council:** generating a healthy return on investment, supporting financial sustainability of the Council and improving the appearance and prosperity of the area.

## 6. Finance / Resource Implications

- 6.1 The Project Cost estimates have been provided by cost management professionals and advisors who have experience of successfully delivering similar hotel schemes.
- 6.2 The Business Case (see confidential appendix B) shows a satisfactory level of return on investment. It is based on an established trading model of the Council developing and retaining the asset (the Hotel) and leasing the Hotel building to a newly created Special Purpose Vehicle (a trading company), which the Council will own. The Council
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will nominate directors to the company to manage the SPV's operations, contracts, and bank accounts.

- 6.3 The new Hotel business, through the SPV, will be managed by a professional operating company, to ensure Hotel brand compliance, maximising efficiencies and returns for the Council and limiting potential liabilities. Hotel employees will also be engaged through the operating company.
- 6.4 Construction cost management will be a major element of the scheme. Processes will be put into place to assess cost on an on-going basis throughout the design process and to address any cost overrun risks through both design and the form of contract management.
- 6.5 The business case to support recommendations of a multi-million investment has been developed by the Council's finance team, informed and verified by hotel specialists and professionals, including our Treasury Management advisors, Arlingclose. The estimated capital cost of the project is proposed to be financed by external borrowing through the Public Works Loan Board. The confidential financial appendix shows the impact on the Council's prudential indicators.
- 6.6 The revenue implications of this scheme indicate an expected positive contribution to the Council's revenue budget.

## **7. Legal Implications**

- 7.1 Key decisions and approvals of the Executive and Full Council will enable the commencement of necessary legal work to deliver the hotel project. This will involve delegation to the Directors of Growth and Finance (s151) to take all necessary steps to implement the decision of the Council and as appropriate as part of that to sign all necessary contracts; and to engage with solicitors working alongside external legal advisors where appropriate, to ensure delivery of the project and compliance with all relevant legislation.

## **8. Environmental Impact Implications**

- 8.1 Environmental implications will be addressed through the planning process approved by statutory bodies such as the Environment Agency.

## **9. Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications**

- 9.1 None related directly to this report. Any potential issues arising will be dealt with through the statutory planning and building control, including a health and safety site management plan.

## **10. Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 10.1 This report focuses on proposals to maximise the benefit of a developing a new asset and formation of a new company. Employment opportunities will arise in the construction and management of the new Council owned asset.
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- 10.2 Any equality and diversity implications of the development are being addressed through future consultation of detailed design process, compliant with planning and building regulations.

## **11 Social Value Implications**

- 11.1 Social value is taken fully into account as part of wider discussions. We expect that further opportunities to add social value will be identified within future procurement of the building elements of this project, also future operations, management and supplies.
- 11.2 Initial indications are that around 100 new jobs and training opportunities could be created through our investment and the development of a new mid-market hotel in Firepool, Taunton.

## **12 Partnership Implications**

- 12.1 Officer and specialist advisors of the Hotel Project team are working with our development partner St Modwen on best value mechanisms for Council delivery of this project, compliant within the terms of our Development Agreement.
- 12.2 We are consulting with our preferred hotel operator and brand on the appointment of specialist technical team. We will work together on a detailed design and specification for a high quality build within budget parameters, resulting in an efficient construction and management operation, attaining best value from the Council investment.

## **13 Health and Wellbeing Implications**

- 13.1 No specific implications identified in this report, however this proposal will create new local employment opportunities and as such is considered likely to have a positive influence on the general health and wellbeing of the local community.

## **14 Asset Management Implications**

- 14.1 The proposed investment is assessed as attaining best value for the Council, supported by the findings of independent Feasibility Studies undertaken by Horwath LPP specialist in hotel sector, commercial valuations by Thomas Lister Ltd (MRICS) and construction cost estimates from AECOM. A detailed review of the existing supply of hotels within Taunton provide positive income projections thereby supporting proposals to develop a new type of hotel in this preferred location.
- 14.2 The hotel as a commercial venture adds value to the capital Land and Building investments of the Council and provides a positive contribution to the TDBC General Fund. The Council as landowner has opportunity to develop and retain income from our new asset. The preferred model is for the Council to create a new **Special Purpose Vehicle** (SPV) to trade enabling surpluses generated to be returned to the Council (see confidential appendix F).
- 14.3 Legal advice on the creation of a wholly owned Special Purpose Vehicle and trading
-

company will lease from the Council a new build asset and contract with brand and operator to ensure franchise standards met and employ a General Manager and hotel team to manage day-to-day operations.

- 14.4 A new hotel with suitable franchise and management agreements can provide an attractive investment for Council, who could secure economic, regeneration and create an attractive income generating investment which could finance and repay any funding or borrowing for the scheme.

## **15 Consultation Implications**

- 15.1 St Modwen comprehensive outline parameters application refreshes previous historic planning proposals that included a potential new hotel on the site identified on the south side of river opposite the County Cricket Ground.
- 15.2 Informal consultation with local planning officers confirms that the development of a hotel is acceptable in principle on this site. Further detailed design work will be carried out following Council approval. The positive planning committee decision should enable a detailed proposal for new hotel be assessed as a reserved matter.
- 15.3 Any decision to support the proposals is one for the Council as landowner and as a promoter of economic development.

## **16 Scrutiny Comments**

- 16.1 The Corporate Scrutiny Committee considered this report at their meeting on 22 March 2018 and resolved to support the proposals.
- 16.2 Members requested further clarification about governance arrangements of the hotel operation and wanted to know how members would be updated on the financial performance. In addition Members asked for reassurance about the market testing and feasibility that had been carried to assess and inform the viability of the proposed hotel.
- 16.3 Officers have taken on board these comments and will ensure matters are taken account of as the project progresses and confirmed independent feasibility supported proposals.

### **Democratic Path:**

- **Scrutiny** – 22 March 2018
- **Executive** – 5 April 2018
- **Full Council** – 10 April 2018

**Reporting Frequency:**  **Once only**    **Ad-hoc**    **Quarterly**  
 **Twice-yearly**    **Annually**

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### List of non-confidential appendix:

Reference	Description of content
Appendix E	Location Plan – for illustrative purposes (detailed design to be undertaken)

### List of Confidential Appendices:

Reference	Strictly Confidential Information - due to commercial sensitivity
Appendix A	Indicative Timeline of Activities and Draft Hotel Development Programme
Appendix B	Financial Business Case for Investment
Appendix C	Summary of Procurement Journey
Appendix D	Firepool Hotel - Risk Matrix
Appendix F	Creation of new Special Purpose Vehicle

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# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Council Meeting – 10 April 2018

### Part I

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

## Councillor John Williams

### Financial Monitoring – 2017/2018 as at 31 December 2017

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee considered a report at its meeting on 22 March 2018 which provided an update on the projected outturn financial position of the Council for the financial year 2017/2018 (as at 31 December 2017).

Monitoring the budget is an important part of the Council's performance management framework.

The current revenue forecast outturn for the financial year 2017/2018 was reported as follows:-

- The General Fund (GF) Revenue Outturn was forecasting a gross underspend of £318,000 (2.14% of Net Revenue Budget) before proposed transfers of £30,000 for Tonedale Mill urgent repairs and £288,000 to the Transformation Reserve.
- The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is forecasting an underspend of £334,000 before a proposed transfer of £144,000 to the Transformation Reserve.

The current capital forecast position for 2017/2018 is as follows:-

- The GF capital account is forecasting spend of £4,477,000 against a budget of £33,032,000 with £28,494,000 forecast to be spent in future years;
- The HRA capital account is forecasting spend of £12,658,000 against a budget of £20,029,000 with £7,371,000 forecast to be spent in future years.

The GF Reserves forecast balance as at 31 March 2018 is projected to be £2,278,000. The balance remains above the recommended minimum reserves level approved in the Council's Budget Strategy (£1,700,000).

The HRA Reserves forecast balance as at 31 March 2018 is £2,824,000, which is above the recommended minimum level (£1,800,000) set within the Council's Budget

Strategy and HRA Business Plan.

Following careful consideration, the Corporate Scrutiny Committee supported proposals to transfer parts of the GF Revenue and HRA underspends to the Transformation Reserve.

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

- (a) £288,000 of the General Fund underspend be transferred to the Transformation Reserve; and
- (b) £144,000 of the Housing Revenue Account underspend be also transferred to the Transformation Reserve.

# **Council Meeting – 10 April 2018**

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

### **1. Formation of a Single Council**

- 1.1 On 22 March 2018, The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government, told Taunton Deane Borough and West Somerset Councils of his decision to approve the creation of a new District Council covering their areas. The Minister's decision will be subject to Parliamentary approval.
- 1.2 On 19 March 2018 both Councils voted to give their consent to the start of the legal process, while their respective Executive and Cabinet agreed the name of the new authority – Somerset West and Taunton, the number of Councillors and to request a boundary review.
- 1.3 We welcome the Secretary of State's announcement that he is approving the proposal for a single new Council. This has been an understandably long process and the final decision gives us the ability to look forward with far more clarity and unity.
- 1.4 This new Council will make sure we can continue to deliver our services in a way that is sustainable into the future. We know that our residents value those services highly. It will also allow us to focus on boosting our economy, supporting the delivery of Hinkley Point C new Nuclear Power Station and fully embracing the opportunity afforded by Garden Town status awarded to Taunton.
- 1.5 We must also make the most of the great natural assets that exist – Exmoor National Park, the coastline, Quantock and Blackdown Hills and the Somerset Levels.

### **2. Firepool, Taunton**

- 2.1 On 14 March 2018, the Council's Planning Committee approved the transformation of the Firepool Site. Firepool is an integral part of the wider economic regeneration plans for Taunton with the potential to create in excess of 1,700 jobs as well as providing office, hotel and residential accommodation and supporting waterfront leisure and retail outlets. The recent planning consent follows many months of detailed consultations between lead developer, St Modwen, and relevant statutory consultees.
- 2.2 I know how much people want to see this largely derelict site developed. It is key to our overall Garden Town strategy that puts the River Tone back at the heart of the town and, most importantly, will provide new jobs and facilities for our residents. It will also cement our place as a regional centre with excellent links to London and beyond. Taunton is one of the fastest growing towns in the region, the only Garden Town in the South West and has the advantage of

excellent road and rail connections, top quality schools and further education, first class medical facilities, great urban open spaces and superb countryside and coast on its doorstep. We need to be competitive and provide high quality facilities to attract continued inward investment and satisfy the needs of its growing population and the mix of uses proposed achieves just that.

### **3. Staplegrove**

- 3.1 A £7,200,000 bid for Government funding to help unlock a new Garden Community development in Staplegrove, Taunton, and deliver vital infrastructure – a road, more affordable housing and enabling a new primary school – has been successful.
- 3.2 The money will help towards the early delivery of the £8,000,000 “spine road” to connect the A358 Staplegrove Road and Kingston Road, more affordable housing and enable the delivery of a much needed new primary school.
- 3.3 The funding is particularly important in terms of affordable housing, raising numbers from 15% of the total to approximately 25%. The road – and other infrastructure – is key to developing two sites at Staplegrove that received outline planning consent late last year. It is great that we have been successful in securing this hugely important money for our Garden Town development. It will ensure that we can deliver tangible solutions to the concerns raised by so many in the community.
- 3.4 The Council resolved to grant outline consent for up to 915 homes, a primary school, employment land, local centre and open space on land at Staplegrove (east). The application was submitted by PM Asset Management Limited. A similar application submitted by Ptarmigan Staplegrove Limited was for up to 713 homes, employment land, green infrastructure, landscaping, play area and sustainable urban drainage systems at Staplegrove (west).
- 3.4 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government announced that the investment for schemes nationwide “will fund key local infrastructure projects including new roads, cycle paths, flood defences and land remediation work, all essential ahead of building the homes. Without this financial support these projects would struggle to go ahead or take years for work to begin, delaying the homes communities need. Together with the Government’s Industrial Strategy, it will provide high-quality infrastructure to support economic growth.

### **4. Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF)**

- 4.1 Somerset County Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council and Sedgemoor District Council submitted a joint expression of interest (EOI) to the Government to access the Housing Infrastructure Fund Forward Fund.
- 4.2 This EOI, submitted in September 2017, was the first stage in a competitive bidding process to access critical infrastructure funding to unlock key housing sites in the Hinkley Housing Zone and Taunton Garden Town. The funding request totalled £83,000,000 and covered key infrastructure projects for flood



defence, new schools, highway and public transport improvements and new pedestrian and cycle links.

- 4.3 The Government announcement on 21 March 2018 for the first stage resulted in a shortlist of 45 upper tier, unitary and combined authorities including Somerset. These authorities will now be working with the Government officials to develop a detailed bid, before final funding decisions are made, which is anticipated to be in autumn 2018.
- 4.4 Taunton Deane will be working closely with Somerset County Council and Sedgemoor District Council on the next stage of the competitive bidding.

## **5. The Deane House**

- 5.1 Phase 1 works are progressing well and staff will be moving back into refurbished space on the first floor at the end of May/beginning of June, with the new Reception operational in early to mid-June.
- 5.2 The Police area is due to be completed at the beginning of October 2018, ready for them to fit out and move in.
- 5.3 Phase 2 works will start in June through to the end of September and Phase 3 works are planned for October through to mid-February 2019. At this point all works will be complete.

Councillor John Williams

# **Council Meeting – 10 April 2018**

## **Report of Councillor Terry Beale – Housing Services**

### **1. Deane Housing Development**

The Housing Enabling and Development Team continue to work hard to deliver a range of affordable housing, including new Council housing, in summary:-

#### **North Taunton**

- 1.1 A second public consultation was held on the 14 February 2018 which was well attended by the local residents. The event gave local people the opportunity to view and comment on the consultation project, as well as giving them an understanding of timescales, dates of future meetings and the decision process. The next consultation event is scheduled for 8 June 2018.
- 1.2 Plans for the scheme are progressing well. The work streams associated with this project are extremely complex and work continues to progress the scheme to a stage of submitting a planning submission later this year. It is our intention to organise a Members Briefing in due course.

#### **Weavers Arms, Wellington - 26 new homes**

- 1.3 There have been some delays on site due to a variety of reasons and handover is now anticipated in June although options for a phased handover are being explored with the contractor.

#### **12 Moorland Close, Taunton**

- 1.4 Three x 1 bed homes and a Community Centre are due to complete this month and a planning application is under consideration for a further four x1 bed homes.

#### **Laxton Road, Taunton**

- 1.5 Eight x 1 bed flats - Contractor procurement underway with an aim to start on site in late 2018 subject to contractor availability.

#### **Completions**

- 1.6 We have set ourselves a target of 200 affordable homes each year and over the past three years we have achieved an average of over 230 per year. However, this year has proved very challenging for a variety of reasons including material shortages a lack of labour and adverse weather conditions. In addition some schemes have suffered delays not of our making and will not complete this financial year.
- 1.7 We anticipate reaching around 100 homes this year but hope to increase that in the next period.

## **Parmin Close, Taunton**

- 1.8 66 units extra care and 12 learning disabilities being built by Livery (formerly known as Knightstone) are due to complete April/May 2018.

### **Future site opportunities**

- 1.9 There is a range of work ongoing to progress the next development opportunities and further updates will be provided once the work has progressed.

## **2. Deane Housing Repairs and Maintenance**

- 2.1 This period has been very challenging however the teams have still managed a 90% first visit fix in 2017/2018, made savings in the budget, exceeded all Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and almost halved the void turnaround time whilst keeping our customer satisfaction indicator at 99% and reducing complaints down to single figures for the year.
- 2.2 This is a big improvement from where we were in the past and it is also evident that the staff now have an amazing work ethic and team spirit.
- 2.3 The teams are using the DRS (repairs scheduling system) as it should be used for the first time since implementation, with zero manual scheduled jobs for some weeks now, correct data against operatives in the system and 25% of the workforce either multi skilled or working towards it.
- 2.4 It will be exciting to see what improvements to the service this brings over the next financial year, especially since we have achieved our KPIs to date through hard work and motivating staff and in spite of our systems.
- 2.5 We are not printing job tickets anymore, we are down to 5% jobs remaining open in OC per month and our call waiting times are down to less than a minute on average from several minutes this time last year. The repairs line are now regularly answering almost all calls daily (a 21% failure rate to a 2% failure rate) and the outstanding job queue is down from 700 to < 20 daily and staying at that figure consistently.

## **3. Welfare Reform**

- 3.1 It has been agreed to amend our existing Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) Policy to take account of the following changes.

- 3.2 A review of the policy to include:-

- A review of the Risk Assessment - following a recent audit review we determined some of the overall impacts were gauged too high and an outcome from the audit review was to review this appropriately;
- Recognising the support within the DHP Policy for customers receiving the Housing Element of Universal Credit;
- An update of funding from Central Government for 2018/2019;
- Changes to the application process to allow for longer awards where appropriate, ability to review a claim and to allow for telephone applications.

- This will allow speedier and more reactive responses for our customers;
- A review of our decision making processes - we have aligned these to our speed of processing targets currently used for New Claims for a more consistent approach; and
  - An overview of summary spending for 2016/2017 and a current update review from 1 April 2017 to 28 February 2018.

3.3 DHPs offer claimants of Housing Benefit (HB) and Universal Credit (UC), further financial assistance where the Local Authority considers that help with housing costs is needed.

3.4 The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) provides us with a specified DHP allocation that varies each year as it is partly based on our previous DHP spending. We must return any unspent funding to the DWP. During the financial year, we can only award DHPs up to a cash limit of two and a half times this annual grant.

3.5 Any spending we make above the allocation and up to the legal limit has to be funded by the Council from our budget (and so in turn from our Council Tax payers). DHPs are not payments of benefit, and we have discretion in how we manage this funding.

3.6 Following on from recent Government changes the freephone contact numbers have proved to be extremely successful as one would expect and resulted in more request for assistance being made to DWP.

## **4. Deane Helpline**

4.1 It has been a busy couple of months or so for Deane Helpline (DH). The adverse weather which affected us all tested resources and resourcing, however the team successfully made it through by making some sensible decisions around standing people down who were further away and relying on people closer.

4.2 When Taunton Deane and West Somerset switched their telephones over to DH this created extra demand on the staffing resources. However Taunton Deane and West Somerset were not the only organisation to do so and indeed all of our corporate contract clients followed suit which caused an unprecedented demand upon our service.

4.3 During the course of the four days we saw approximately 6,000 calls taken by our staff who performed excellently under extremely difficult circumstances. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the staff for an excellent response to a very difficult situation.

4.4 I was particularly proud and pleased to see that the Emergency Response Team maintained the excellent service to our customers again in very trying conditions and well done to all concerned.

4.5 As in most cases there are positive learning points to be gleaned from adversity and one such point for the DH Team was the management of calls coming into DH.

When all the telephone lines were busy it was noticed that the line was becoming engaged at saturation rather than 'stacking' the calls.

- 4.6 This has now been rectified with the introduction of a new stacking system, which has been working extremely well at other peak times such as weekends and early evenings.
- 4.7 Since February we have welcomed 77 new customers into the DH service and have seen 63 leave for various reasons (most commonly either their passing or moving into residential care), which still sees the customer base growing by 14 customers overall for what has been a very difficult winter period.
- 4.8 Finally, the replacement programme of older generation lifelines continues to go well and the new lifeline which is digital ready for when BT switch off the analogue telephony is working well and provides a much better speech quality.

## 5. Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Service

### Performance

- 5.1 Satisfaction with the service remains high. At the end of Quarter 4 89% (target 85% of tenants who reported ASB in year to date rated the help and advice received as good or excellent.

### Casework

#### 5.2 ASB cases recorded between 03/09/17 – 03/04/18 (12 months)

39 new cases were opened during the period, slight reduction in noise, harassment and physical violence complaints. Although noise remains one of the main concerns residents report:-

Alcohol	5
Domestic Abuse	1
Drugs misuse/Dealing	6
Garden Nuisance	2
Harrasment	8
Noise	8
Other Crime	3
Pets	1
Physical violence	3
Vehicles	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>

- 5.3 There have been a number of high profile cases which have been reported and dealt with. These include a number of possession orders being sought for drugs

and continued ASB, a Closure Order granted and tenancy terminated and a superb result in a multi-agency response which safeguarded a vulnerable tenant and laid to the removal of several undesirable people from the locale.

- 5.4 Further cases dealt with involved a serious assault, additional safeguarding needs and mental health issues. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Paul and the team for continuing to work tirelessly and for the superb multi-agency work that has been done to deliver help and support to our vulnerable tenants.

## **6. And finally.....**

- 6.1 Two items of importance and dates for your diaries.
- 6.2 Firstly the Consultation on the draft Strategic Housing Framework for Somerset, setting out a vision, priorities and ambitions for housing across the County is currently underway with a closing date of 30 April 2018.
- 6.3 The Framework focusses on systems and leadership, bringing together housing, communities, social care, health, and town and country planning. Documents can be accessed here and please take part <http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/housing-and-community/housing-strategy/>.
- 6.4 A date for your diary - 6 June 2018 - the location - Coopers Associated County Ground (home of Somerset County Cricket Club) -The Affordable Housing Open Day.
- 6.5 This is an event at which anyone who has a need or is interested in housing can talk to Professional Housing Providers and other professionals who can provide information relating to housing provision. It is a one-stop-shop where advice from solicitors, housing providers, mortgage providers, Revenues and Housing Benefit support, Homefinder Somerset, Housing Options and much more.

Councillor Terry Beale

## **Council Meeting – 10 April 2018**

### **Report of Councillor Patrick Berry – Environmental Services and Climate Change**

#### **1. Environmental Health**

- 1.1 Food Safety – Charges for Rescore visits under the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, advisory visits and Safer Food Better Business packs were introduced from 1 January 2018. There has been a largely positive response from local businesses.
- 1.2 Food Hygiene Inspections are continuing at pace in order to complete the inspection programme and submit our annual report to the Food Standards Agency. Figures to show how many inspections have been completed across the district will be available shortly after the end of the financial year.
- 1.3 Both Taunton Deane and West Somerset Council are involved in a private water supply sampling accreditation pilot scheme organised by the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI). This will involve working in partnership with our Local Authority partners across Somerset and the South West region along with the DWI and Scientific Services to ensure that we carry out our sampling of supplies in accordance with the latest guidance.
- 1.4 Noise investigations are continuing at a number of commercial and domestic premises across the district.
- 1.5 As the events season begins, the team are busy analysing event management plans and attending Safety Advisory Groups (SAGs) in order to provide feedback to event organisers on their plans for the events this year. So far SAGs have been held for concerts in Vivary Park, Minehead Seafront and a debrief for Taunton Carnival. Other large events planned for this year include concerts at the Racecourse, Watchet Live and Fake Festivals.
- 1.6 Food Safety Officers are leading on a feasibility study in partnership with the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the University of Birmingham. The aim of the study is to show how technology can assist local food business with the registration of their business. This is a legal requirement under the Food Safety Act 1990 and currently food operators complete a paper or online form. The aim of this study is to gain much more detailed information upfront at the registration stage to inform the Council of the scope, nature and likely risk of the business. For example information on types of food handled, equipment and numbers of staff are requested. The study will run until the end of April when a full report will be made available to the FSA.

#### **2. Licensing**

- 2.1 Work to review the licensing policies for alcohol and entertainment; and gambling, is underway.

- 2.2 The Licensing Team has been working with HM Revenues and Customs on their consultation around proposals to incorporate tax checks in licensing application processes. Their proposals would see taxi drivers, scrap metal and street trading licence holders having to demonstrate that they are properly registered to pay tax in order to have their licences renewed.
- 2.3 The Licensing Team is about to commence a complete revamp of the knowledge test for taxi drivers. In its current form, drivers must demonstrate that they understand taxi driver rules and wider legal responsibilities they would have, should they be granted a licence. Officers are planning to keep aspects of the current format but introduce several other elements, including parts focussed on local geography, numeracy, child sex exploitation and exercising judgment in certain scenarios.
- 2.4 There are also plans afoot to introduce a new requirement for applicants applying to become a taxi driver. Taunton Deane plans to introduce a nationally recognised practical taxi driving test before they can receive a licence. The test has been in place and worked well at West Somerset Council for many years.

### **3. Street Sweeping and Toilet Cleaning**

- 3.1 Street cleansing continues to be well managed and the standard of road sweeping and litter collection remains good. Regular inspections, both pre planned ones and surprise ones continue to be held with occasional hot spots targeted for more in depth cleansing.
- 3.2 Fly tipping continues to be a priority for the Council and the surveillance cameras are regularly installed to try and capture evidence of fly tippers. We have not yet developed actionable evidence that would allow a criminal prosecution but this is our intention. We have approached several businesses in the town centre to challenge the level of care they are showing in managing their waste to the rear of their premises and have referred repeat problem businesses to the Environmental Health department who have also contacted the businesses and provided advice.
- 3.3 The waste and litter associated with rough sleeping and homelessness remains a problem as it is in all towns. We have taken action to create a multi agency group including Taunton Association for the Homeless, Open Door, Rethink, the Council and the Police to meet weekly in an attempt to tackle these issues and the collection and temporary storage of abandoned property and the clearance of waste has formed part of our approach to dealing with the situation.
- 3.4 We have applied to join the 2018 Chewing Gum Action Group Campaign. This campaign provides publicity material and posters for a national campaign to persuade people not to dispose of their chewing gum in an anti-social way but to use a bin and not the pavement!!

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

- 4.1 SWP rose to the occasion during the recent snow events. They were unable to do their normal collections for a couple of days. The harsh and unsafe conditions in



early March disrupted up to 80,000 kerbside collections across Somerset and closed Recycling Centres. Operatives pulled out all the stops to clear sites, catch up and return services to normal as rapidly as possible in the following week. We would like to thank the crews for their efforts.

- 4.2 SWP and the contractor Kier are focusing their attention on critical areas of their service. Although 99.91% of the 20 million kerbside collections in a year are successful, the balance is getting extra effort to correct reported issues and ensure that items such as assisted collections are delivered efficiently.
- 4.3 SWP are also doing more analysis on what we throw away and in particular they are monitoring participation in kerbside recycling.
- 4.4 Recently the Council approved a motion to move towards becoming 'Single-Use Plastic Free'. In a similar reaction to the widespread move against plastic, SWP will soon be launching a 'Pledge Against Preventable Plastic'. The campaign will encourage local people to take simple steps to help reduce single-use plastic in their everyday lives. To show the way, SWP is going single-use plastic free at its Monmouth House office.
- 4.5 Finally but not least, following the resignation of Councillor Steven Ross, Councillor Gwil Wren has been invited to join the SWP Board and has accepted.

## **5. Cemetery and Crematorium**

- 5.1 This financial year has seen a small increase in the adult cremation figures. The service has carried out 2,042 cremations in 2017/2018, whereas the figure for 2016/2017 was 2,006. Figures for burial and grave sales have gone up by 12% for full graves from the previous year, cremation sales have gone up by 4%. Other burial statistics remain reasonably static.
- 5.2 There have been times when we have reached our normal working capacity. It would be possible to work longer hours and weekends and thereby increase capacity by 30%, should the need arise.
- 5.3 New signage is being erected throughout the crematorium site. Previously the signs were in a variety of styles and some not so easy to read. The new signage on site is now uniform and clearer to read with more information panels for the public.
- 5.4 Waiting Room Project: Preliminary works have started on the project to enlarge the waiting room. Initial meetings have been held with the Conservation Officer and landscaping and preparation works for the temporary waiting room have started.
- 5.5 This year has seen a number of trees in the ageing cemetery tree stock felled due to poor weather and some becoming unsafe. The avenue of Catalpa trees leading up the main drive to the chapel will be removed and replaced with large white Birch which has a more compact crown and a striking white bark for winter colour. While felling the catalpa trees, it was discovered that many of the mature specimens had rot in the trunk.

- 5.6 A larger specimen tree which stands outside the main gate of the cemetery between the vehicle and pedestrian gate will also be removed due to safety concerns.
- 5.7 Our strategy of ensuring that our tree planting regime delivers more trees than we are having to remove will ensure our site continues to have a good, well managed and safe treescape.
- 5.8 Our recently approved projects are progressing well:-
- Wellington new grave spaces: Project complete, ground being rested until start of summer where it will be numbered and formally laid out to a plan.
  - St Mary's new grave spaces: Also completed as above.
  - Wooden board walk: 90% complete, remaining work is installation of edging for wheel chairs and some landscaping.
  - Children's area: 50% of landscaping completed, hindered by poor weather. Monuments ordered and will arrive in June 2018. Remaining work comprises paths to be laid and completed. Final landscaping works to be completed.
  - Cremation walkway: The area is being prepared by removal of the hedging and poor tree stock. Next step: Create levels, lay paths and execute landscape work. These works are in an area of high footfall, adjacent to the chapel and are thus weather dependent.

Councillor Patrick Berry

# **Council Meeting – 10 April 2018**

## **Report of Councillor Mark Edwards - Deputy Leader and Business Development, Asset Management and Communications -**

### **Section 1 – Communications**

- 1.1 Since the last report, Taunton Deane experienced two major snow events – the most severe being Storm Emma in early March.
- 1.2 Communications used social media extensively from Thursday when the offices were closed until life began to return to normal early the following week.
- 1.3 The team was able to keep in close touch with others within the Council dealing with the event, including the Open Spaces Team, Civil Contingencies and the Deane Helpline.
- 1.4 We also worked closely with partners, particularly Somerset County Council, so that messages about issues such as roads and schools closures could be disseminated as widely as possible through social media. Sharing content was largely appreciated by the public.
- 1.5 We are also able to pick up urgent queries coming in via the Council's Facebook page and make the Deane Helpline staff aware of any issues. Followers on social media picked up significantly.
- 1.6 This also highlighted the sound partnership working that is now well established with other public sector communications teams.
- 1.7 Communications continues to respond to an increasing number of media queries coming in from local, regional and national sources. The ability to respond quickly and accurately within very tight deadlines is vitally important.

### **Section 2: Business Development**

#### **Productivity Strategy**

- 2.1 The Heart of the South West (HotSW) Area Productivity Strategy was adopted by the Joint Committee on Friday, 23 March 2018. The next step will be to create a SMART action plan to deliver the strategy aims. This will be reported back to the Joint Committee at regular meetings.
- 2.2 As a reminder, the Productivity Strategy is a response to the Government's Industrial Strategy and lays out how at a strategic level what we intend to target. The strategy is a collaboration between all local authorities across

Devon and Somerset in conjunction with the Local Enterprise Partnership, Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks and the Clinical Commissioning Groups.

### **Taunton Deane Business Awards**

- 2.3 This year`s Taunton Deane Business Awards is now closed for entries. The Council is one of the key sponsors and this shows a commitment to supporting and celebrating excellence in our business community. The website address is on this leaflet.
- 2.4 The shortlisting and judging is now in progress. I look forwards to the awards ceremony at the Somerset County Cricket Club on Thursday, 28 June 2018 to celebrate the positive success stories with our community.



TDBA 2018.pdf

### **Heathrow Business Summit**

- 2.5 The Somerset Chamber hosted the South West Heathrow Summit on 16 March 2018 at the County Ground. This was an opportunity for local businesses to meet the tier one contractors who are buying services to deliver forthcoming projects at Heathrow. Heathrow wish to extend their supply chain more widely into Taunton and Somerset. They also shared details around their awards to help small and medium enterprises develop and encouraged businesses in our area to apply.

### **Growth Communications and Marketing – Business Envoy Programme**

- 2.6 Coast Communications work for the Council's Inward Investment Programme began in earnest in October 2017. Year One saw the creation of a comprehensive communications strategy, key messaging and a new website for the Inward Investment Programme. The focus of Year One was to develop an overarching identity and campaign for Taunton that could be built on and given more focus in work in Year Two. The new Garden Town status provided the opportunity to build that fresh identity.
- 2.7 One aspect of Taunton Deane's requirements was support for a nascent Business Envoy Programme. Given the range of activity required by the Council in the tender, it was agreed to make Year Two the focus for this business development. With the branding and identity elements completed in Year One, Taunton's Business Envoy Programme will now become the focus for targeted activity.
- 2.8 Coast are undertaking a round of contact and meetings with agreed stakeholders in the next few weeks (including a separate Agents Focus Group). We want to understand the types of networking and events and where key influencers are already active and promotional activities they would be happy to undertake or for the Council to link up with. Additionally, we

would like to gather intelligence on how they think the Council could best support their existing activities and what collateral they might require as well as capture any insights they might have into what activities they think it would benefit the Council to develop. To support this, a questionnaire has been created to ensure parity of information. This data will be used to create an evidence-based report and underpin our recommendations for a distinctive campaign that will support envoys, promote Taunton and provide supporting materials and create content.

## **Section 3: Events, Place, Retail Marketing and Visitor Centre**

### **Events**

- 3.1 The event programme for 2018 continues to fill up with an impressive collection of events. An annual calendar has been produced (which is attached).



Visit Taunton 2018  
Calendar.pdf

- 3.2 This calendar is being promoted within our poster 'rotunda' units, the new Visit Taunton Guide and the back page of the "What's On Somerset Annual Guide" both of which will be distributed throughout the region. The Marketing and Visitor Centre Team continue to liaise with many event organisers and will promote these through the destination website, social media and the Visitor Centre.

### **Place and Retail Marketing**

- 3.3 Discussions continue to take place with town centre businesses and the Taunton Chamber of Commerce on common issues of concern and interest. The Marketing and Place Manager now sits on the new Town Centre 'Rough-Sleepers' One Team and has been liaising between businesses, property owners and members of the public on issues related to this.
- 3.4 Taunton, Wellington and Wiveliscombe continue to be promoted through open Wi-Fi, the destination website and social media platforms  
Destination website ([www.visitsomerset.co.uk/taunton](http://www.visitsomerset.co.uk/taunton)) –  
36,466 unique users in February to March period  
Visit Taunton has - Facebook: 9,560 likes  
Instagram: 1,600 followers  
Twitter: 6,850 followers  
Visit Wellington – Facebook: 1,100 likes  
Visit Wivey – Facebook: 730 likes

New literature produced:

The Deano (providing ideas for the Easter holidays)

- 3.5 The new Visit Taunton guide for 2018 was launched at the Museum of Somerset during English Tourism Week by the Mayor of Taunton Deane. 20,000 copies have initially been printed and the bulk of these will be distributed via Take One Media to key locations within driving distance of Taunton and via the Visitor Centre Team.

### **Visitor Centre**

- 3.6 The Visitor Centre Team continue to actively support all marketing activities. This includes providing content for all digital platforms in addition to the day-to-day job of welcoming many visitors to the office.
- 3.7 Throughput in to the Market House office continues to remain healthy as do bookings for the promotional banner, pennants and rotunda poster units. The Visitor Centre Box Office is experiencing record ticket sales enhanced by the major "Party in the Park" weekend event in July.

## **Section 4: Growth Strategy and Specific Projects**

### **Coal Orchard Redevelopment, Taunton**

- 4.1 We have recently signed off RIBA Phase 3 of this project and will be submitting the detailed matters planning application in the next few days.
- 4.2 Our marketing partner is now working on attracting commercial lettings with branded brochures having been produced targeting that market and PR in specialist press. We are completing the engagement of local specialists for the residential market. We will also begin the process of contracting with a build partner in the next few months.
- 4.3 We are progressing the Brewhouse Theatre element of this redevelopment scoping out further detail on timescales and funding approach. I would expect to share details of timescales and budgets with Members in early summer. The Team have been working with the Taunton Theatre Association to establish more detailed design briefs which will enable us to engage advisors for the next phases of this work. This is similar to the process we followed on the Coal Orchard.

## **Section 5: Asset Management Service Update – to end of March 2018**

- 5.1 The Asset Manager left the Council as planned in February 2018 following gradual handover to his interim replacement. The new Interim Asset Manager, following approval, recruited to and appointed a new Senior Estates Surveyor who started in mid-February, and a new Lead Surveyor to manage the Estates Team, who will be starting on 4 April 2018.

- 5.2 Unfortunately the Asset Compliance Manager lost an Asset Surveyor (Stock Condition Surveying work in the main). HR are considering opportunities to fill this permanent post taking into account Transformation and, if necessary, and no suitable internal resource a temporary contractor may be considered. The Asset Data Team will also lose their Asset Compliance Technician who is moving on. Again options to resource this post will be considered in a similar way.

Some of the key project work completed during this period includes:-

### **Asset Management System (Open Assets by Capita)**

- 5.3 Following an initial User Group Meeting held in mid-January to agree action points/next steps to move the project forward significant progress has been made:-

- A background Review including reviewing current dwelling list;
- A consultant has been appointed with specialist experience with Open Assets to support the project delivery;
- The budget reviewed;
- Discussions and actions with various internal project team members including ICT and Capital including procurement / contract approach;
- Discussions with Capita;
- ICT;
- Indicative high level Programme / Timeline;
- Review of Resources; and
- Review of Risks.

### **Leisure Procurement – Facilities Lease Heads of Terms**

- 5.4 Asset Management has been working with Leisure Procurement and input into the Leisure Procurement tender process from a property asset perspective, attending site visits to the properties and tender preparation meetings, plus working up general draft Lease Heads of Terms for inclusion in the documents made available to bidders via OJEU. These Heads of Terms are general across all properties at this stage of the tender process.

### **The Deane House Accommodation Project**

- 5.5 Whilst the Accommodation Project has been managed by the Accommodation Team, Asset Management have provided input to the agreement for lease with the Police for The Deane House, and the Accommodation Team have confirmed that this was signed and should be completed on 28 March 2018. The Design and Build contract has also been signed by the Council and is due to complete following completion of the agreement to lease after the 28 March 2018.
- 5.6 The Accommodation Team have appointed Lambert Smith Hampton to market part of the Ground Floor, and the whole of the second floor of The Deane House. The Asset Management Estates Surveyors will be providing

any support if required. Heads of Terms have been shared with a few interested parties in March.

### **Flook House**

5.7 The new Senior Estates Surveyor is working successfully to regularise the accommodation agreements in place at Flook House.

### **Annual Asset Valuation**

5.8 Wilks Head Eve have been engaged to conduct the Annual Asset Valuation work and work is well underway with draft valuations already received to date (Valuation date 31 March 2018).

### **Blackdown Business Park, Wellington**

5.9 Another new tenant takes up occupation at Blackdown Business Park on 29 March 2018.

Councillor Mark Edwards.



# Council Meeting – 10 April 2018

## Report of Councillor Roger Habgood – Planning Policy and Transportation

### 1. Planning Policy

- 1.1 Plan Review: Work continues on compiling the evidence base to inform a future review of local planning documents for Taunton Deane. This is particularly important as the Government places an increased emphasis on ensuring plans are reviewed every five years.
- 1.2 Several key studies have been completed or are in the advanced stages of publication. These include the Green Infrastructure Strategy published last month and a new joint Retail, Leisure and Employment Study. We will shortly go out to tender on a new Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. It is anticipated that a new updated Local Development Scheme (project plan for the production of the local plan) will be presented to Members in late spring or early summer
- 1.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) consultation began on Monday, 5 March 2018 and will close on Thursday, 10 May 2018. The 28 page document covers a wide range of planning issues. The document sets out the Government's first major overhaul to the National Planning Policy Framework in six years
- 1.4 The key changes can be summarised as follows:-

#### **Greater responsibility**

Local authorities will have a new housing delivery test focused on driving up the numbers of homes actually delivered in their area, rather than numbers planned for. Developers will also be held to account for delivering the commitments, including affordable housing and the infrastructure needed to support communities.

#### **Maximising the use of land**

More freedom will be given to local authorities to make the most of existing brownfield land to build homes that maximise density. Redundant land will be encouraged such as under utilised retail or industrial space for homes, with more flexibilities given to extend upwards on existing blocks of flats and houses as well as shops and offices. This will mean we can build the homes the country needs while maintaining strong protection for the Green Belt.

#### **Maintaining strong protections for the environment**

Ensuring developments result in a net gain to the environment where possible and increases the protection given to ancient woodland so they are not lost for future generations.

#### **Ensuring the right homes are built**

Delivering more affordable homes that meet the housing needs of everyone wherever they are in their life, including sites dedicated for first time buyers, build to rent homes with family friendly tenancies, guaranteed affordable homes for key workers and adapted homes for older people.

### **Higher quality and design**

Introducing new quality standards so well designed new homes are built in places people are proud to live in and live next door to.

### **More transparent planning process**

Local authorities will be encouraged to work together and continue to close the gap between planning permissions granted and homes built. A new standardised approach to assessing housing need will be introduced with new measures to make the system of developer contributions clearer, simpler and more robust, so developers understand what is expected of them and will be in no doubt that Councils will hold them to their commitments.

The Councils response to the Consultation is currently being drafted

## **2. Garden Town Strategy and Plan**

- 2.1 Members will recall that the Policy Team has been co-ordinating the work on a Garden Town Plan for Taunton. This document will set a long-term vision for the town and guiding principles to inform planning and much of the Council's future activity in Taunton. A successful visioning event with key stakeholders was held at Taunton Rugby Club at the end of March 2018, the findings of which will be shared with Members in due course and prior to the document going out to wider public consultation.
- 2.2 The Plan will identify the key activities, priorities and proposals for Taunton in a living, dynamic action plan. As previously stated our intent is to host the plan on a web platform providing up to the minute information on projects, progress towards delivery, etc.
- 2.3 Much of the background work to inform the Garden Town Plan is common to the Local Plan. As part of this work Atkins were commissioned to prepare a River Tone Strategy. Members will recall that Atkins prepared the award-winning Bath Waterspace Strategy, which was shared in autumn of last year. There will be opportunities for Members to engage with this important project in the months to come.
- 2.4 Green Infrastructure: Following the Members' Briefing regarding the Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy held in October 2017, the strategy has now been signed off. Work has been commissioned to take forward and develop more detailed project plans for each of the Strategy's priority projects. The first of the priority project plans will be

taken through Full Council very soon to deliver the Green Country Park.

### **3. Nexus 25**

3.1 The formal consultation on the Local Development Order (LDO) for the Strategic Employment Site took place in July / August 2017. The responses and comments were reported to the Community Scrutiny Committee and subsequently Full Council approved the LDO.

3.2 This development will deliver significant employment opportunities for Taunton Deane in line with Council Policy meeting the aspirations of our community.

3.2 The final making of the LDO was dependent on planning permission for the M5 Junction 25 Improvement Scheme being in place. That permission has been granted and the LDO is now made.

### **4. Junction 25 (J25) Upgrade – Somerset County Council (SCC) Highways Authority**

4.1 The proposed upgrade involves full signalisation and widening of the carriageway at J25, including widening the eastern exit from the junction, improving pedestrian and cycling facilities and updating signage.

4.2 This scheme aims to improve journey times, ease congestion, improve Park and Ride journey time reliability and create a more attractive gateway from the M5 to Taunton, Yeovil and the A303. The improvements will also unlock access into the proposed strategic employment site at J25.

4.3 SCC as the Highways Authority has now approved the J25 upgrade

### **5. Highways England Consultation - Taunton to Southfields Dualling Scheme**

5.1 Highways England (HE) has consulted on their revised proposals to dual the A358. The previous consultation on a single route was not received well in our community.

5.2 Following concerted efforts by Parish, Borough and County representatives working with our MP, discussions were held with appropriate Ministers and the rethink took place.

5.3 Many Councillors at Parish, Borough and County engaged with this further HE consultation.

5.4 The Council's formal response has been made to HE as has the

County Highways Authority response. HE's Public Consultation ended on 27 February 2018.

- 5.5 HE are now analysing the feedback and will then make a decision on the choice of the preferred route. As the scheme is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under the Planning Act 2008 HE are required to make an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to gain authorisation to construct the scheme.
- 5.6 It is our understanding that HE are committed to another round of consultation on their preferred route before the DCO is submitted. That said the form of this consultation and the consultees are not explicit.
- 5.7 Taunton Deane has requested further involvement as have many of the Parish Councils. The Council continues to push for its voice and the voices of Parish Councils and residents to be heard.
- 5.8 Once the DCO has been made the Planning Inspectorate will then hold a public examination before making a recommendation to the Secretary of State who will decide whether or not the scheme will be built.

## **6. Taunton Urban Realm**

- 6.1 This scheme is being developed and taken forward with County colleagues at the Highways Authority. It is of concern that Implementation dates have yet to be confirmed.
- 6.2 The Council is dependent on County Council confirmation of the necessary traffic orders, traffic light amendments and signage being in place. Discussions are continuing with County colleagues and WSP to finalise the scheme details and to take the scheme forward.

## **7. Car park Pay on Foot (PoF) and Variable Message Signage**

- 7.1 The contracts have now been let to the VMS sign manufacturer and to the PoF supplier. Members are aware that a delay was encountered as the PoF Civil elements of the project had to be retendered.
- 7.2 Elements of the civil ground works will commence shortly. The completion date for the project remains as planned for June 2018.
- 7.3 The refresh of the Taunton Parking Strategy has been agreed by Council along with the Designation of Car Parks into Short and Long Stay together with the revised Pricing Strategy.

## **8. Neighbourhood Plans**

- 8.1 Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone and the Trull and Staplehay Neighbourhood plans are made.
- 8.2 Following the completed examination of the West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Development Plan, the report was agreed and accepted. The planned date for the referendum is the end of April 2018.
- 8.3 The Council continues to support the Creech St. Michael and Ruishton and Thornfalcon Neighbourhood Plans.
- 8.4 The plan area for Oake Parish Council has been designated. The Parish Council is continuing with its work of the plan.
- 8.5 Wiveliscombe and Wellington have both had their Neighbourhood Plan areas designated. Both councils have their plans under review.

## **9. Major Planning**

### **Staplegrove**

- 9.1 The successful Council bid for funding the £7,200,000 spine road provides a superior outcome for the community. Our officers are in discussion with the developers and agents and the funders to take this development forward.

### **Firepool, Taunton**

- 9.2 Firepool has been granted outline planning permission. Officers are now working with the requisite stakeholders to realise this important scheme.

### **Comeytrove**

- 9.3 Discussions with the developer consortium continue. It is expected to see this application before a Planning Committee in the near future.

## **10. Heritage at Risk**

### **Tonedale Mill, Wellington**

- 10.1 Works to protect the nationally important Tonedale Mill are continuing.
- 10.2 The Council's Heritage at Risk Project Manager Dr Joanne O'Hara continues to make significant progress with colleagues from the Council and from Historic England with landowners and other stakeholders.

## **11. A different approach to unlawful encampments?**

- 11.1 As outlined in her report by my colleague Executive Councillor Jane Warmington, relevant partner organisations from across Somerset came together last month to consider illegal encampments and lack of transit facilities in Somerset.

Councillor Mrs Warmington covers the issue extensively. I therefore defer to her report, suffice to say that Borough and County authorities have roles to play in site provision.

Councillor Roger Habgood

# **Council Meeting – 10 April 2018**

## **Report of Councillor Mrs Vivienne Stock-Williams - Sports, Parks and Leisure**

*Good sports, parks and leisure facilities improve the health and wellbeing of our local communities.*

### **1. Community Leisure**

#### **Play and Recreation**

1.1 The following works have been ordered using both the Council's replacement play equipment budget and/or Section 106 Agreement funding:-

- Comeytrove Park – delivery is awaited of a log cabin climber;
- Cotford St Luke Recreation Ground Play Area - construction of additional play equipment, as chosen by the school children, is underway.
- Howard Road, Wellington – play equipment for the under 5's has been ordered.
- Hudson Way – the concrete base works for a new skate facility have been successfully completed. The supplier of the equipment expects to be on site to start construction works during the week commencing 19 April 2018.
- Oaken Green, Rockwell Green – the Vortex roundabout has been installed. A Kindergarten pod swing has been ordered to add to the play facility.
- Victoria Park, Taunton – an application for planning permission has been submitted for a 7.5 m tower slide (resembling Burnham-on-Sea lighthouse) and baseball backstop fence.
- Wellington Park – paths works have been ordered and should be completed before the first Summer Bandstand concert takes place.
- Westford Grange – supply and installation of a multi-play unit and improvement works to the play surfacing have been ordered.

#### **Summer Sunday Bandstand Concerts**

1.2 The 2018 Summer Sunday Bandstand Concerts have been arranged, with a full take up of all the available dates. The first concert in Vivary Park will be given by Steel the Band on 6 May 2018.

#### **Carols around the Bandstand**

1.3 Arrangements have been put in place for this year's Carols around the

Bandstand, which will take place in Vivary Park on Monday, 17 December 2018.

### **Capital grant scheme for Voluntary Village Halls, Sports Clubs and Allotments and the Parish Play Area Grant Scheme**

- 1.4 Interest has been shown in both schemes for which applications close on 30 June 2018.

#### **Cuckoo Meadow – Minehead**

- 1.5 Work is continuing with the project, which is well used by two youth groups. Paths are to be constructed within the play area.

### **Section 106 Funding for Play, Sport, Allotments and Community Halls**

- 1.6 Work continues monitoring housing developments for payment trigger points, and assisting communities and organisations with their on-going projects. Works have recently started at both Bishops Hull Recreation Ground Sports Pavilion and Creech St Michael Village Hall storage extension and internal improvement works. Both projects are being supported with Section 106 Agreement funding from within the applicable parishes.

#### **Victoria Park, Taunton**

- 1.7 Requests have been made by Taunton Muskets Baseball Club for a field space on which to play and by a local volleyball team for a pitch. Victoria Park has been identified as having suitable spaces for both sports and, along with the American Football Goal Posts which have already been installed, would see the Park become Taunton Deane's alternative sports park.
- 1.8 Discussions have been held with the Victoria Park Action Group who have a co-ordinating role within the park. As mentioned earlier planning permission for the baseball backstop fence, which would be funded by Section 106 Agreement contributions, is currently being sought.

## **2. GLL (Taunton Deane)**

### **Community Sport and Health**

#### **Swimathon**

- 2.1 Wellington Sports Centre, Taunton Pool and Blackbrook Leisure Centre and Spa are supporting Cancer Research by hosting a Swimathon over the weekend of 27-29 April 2018.

#### **Walk Well in Taunton Deane**

- 2.2 The Spring Walk Programme has now been launched, which includes a new walk in Monkton Heathfield exploring the new footpaths that have been put in place following the building of the new housing development.

### **GLL National Awards Ceremony**



- 2.3 Walk Leaders **Joy Boaden** and **Jenny Dilley**, who are both key volunteers for Walk Well in Taunton Deane, were nominated for the GLL Nick Francis Community Award for their hard work and dedication to the Health Walk programme in Taunton Deane over many years. I should like to congratulate them both on securing a prestigious place at the National Finals, which were held on 9 February 2018 in London.

## **Facilities**

### **Wellsprings Leisure Centre, Taunton**

- 2.4 **World Cancer Day** (Sunday, 4 February 2018) saw over 30 participants 'HIIT' (High Intensity Interval Training) cancer at Wellsprings Leisure Centre, battling their way through 30 minutes of GRIT Strength and Cardio. Through everybody's huge efforts GLL managed to raise £130 on the day.
- 2.5 **Hestercombe Humdinger and Hurtle** was held at Wellsprings Leisure Centre for the third time on Sunday, 11 February 2018. Wellsprings Ladies Running Group also took part in this popular event.
- 2.6 **Wellsprings Heart Support Group** all wore red at their class on 15 February 2018 and raised £163.36 for the British Heart Foundation.

### **Blackbrook Leisure Centre and Spa, Taunton**

- 2.7 Blackbrook Leisure Centre and Spa also held a HIIT class to support World Cancer Day, where staff and customers raised £160.

### **Vivary Golf and High Ropes, Taunton**

- 2.8 Vivary has had a torrid start to the year, with excessive rain and snow forcing closures. The majority of staff have been relocated to other Taunton centres to help cover vacant shifts.

## **3. Parks and Open Spaces**

### **Adverse Weather**

- 3.1 The recent snow and subsequent flooding has kept Deane DLO staff very busy, with our teams out gritting our bridges, Sheltered Housing sites, schools and Council Offices. Taunton Deane staff have also been helping Somerset County Council Highways with gritting and snow clearance, and dealing with the damage caused by flooding in our parks.

### **Grass Cutting**

- 3.2 The growing season is due any time now, so the Open Spaces Team is gearing up ready to start grass cutting in the next two weeks. This does, however, depend on the weather.
- 3.3 The DLO workshop has been operating at full speed to get our ride on mowers and small tools serviced in preparation for outside work beginning

and new equipment has been arriving to replace worn out gear. The opportunity has been taken to replace some of our oldest ride on mowers with more advanced and versatile versions, which will allow us to do more with less.

### **Vivary Park, Taunton**

- 3.4 The park is coming out of its winter dormancy period with the new Station Café due to open shortly.
- 3.5 Work to de-silt the lake has begun. The central island has been cleared ready for the operation to clear the channels and that stage of the project will commence as soon as the Environment Agency issue our licence. We hope to have the work, which will vastly improve the water quality and appearance of the lake, completed by the end of May.
- 3.6 It is anticipated that de-silting the lake and its feeder streams will transport the flow of water from upstream to the Tone faster and thus reduce the build-up. This project will not stop flooding, but it should reduce the number of times it becomes extensive. We look forward to seeing the popular Model Boat Club back in operation this summer.
- 3.7 An Easter Egg Hunt is taking place in Vivary Park this year on Easter Sunday and we are hoping for a dry afternoon.

### **Wellington Park**

- 3.8 We are also about to begin the process of resurfacing the outer paths in Wellington Park, which have become unsafe. The unstable substratum will be replaced and the paths surfaced with grey aggregate mixed with tarmac. This grey appearance is compatible with the original landscape design for our heritage status park. It is hoped to have this work completed before the park becomes busy through the summer.

### **Green Flag Judging**

- 3.9 Green Flag judging is taking place in early April 2018. We very much hope that Vivary Park, Victoria Park and French Weir Recreation Ground in Taunton retain their Green Flags, that Wellington Park will again receive a Green Flag and Green Flag Heritage Award, and Swains Lane Nature Reserve in Wellington will again receive a Community Green Flag.
- 3.10 These Awards are a recognition of how hard our staff and volunteers work to maintain our parks and open spaces to such a high standard, and how it really is a long-term commitment. It is an honour to fly these flags in recognition of their dedication.

## **4. Property**

### **Blackbrook Pavilion Site, Taunton**

- 4.1 The recent gymnasium refurbishment is now complete and two external tennis courts have been re-coated.

### **Leisure Facilities**

- 4.2 Condition surveys are currently being carried out at all Taunton Deane's leisure facilities.

### **Station Road Pool, Taunton**

- 4.3 Hand rails and safety rails to the entrance steps have been installed.
- 4.4 External render repairs and decoration works are planned for the summer.

### **Wellington Sports Centre**

- 4.5 External render repairs and decoration works are planned for the middle of the year.
- 4.6 Plant room and filter refurbishment for the swimming pool will be taking place shortly.

### **Wellsprings Leisure Centre, Taunton**

- 4.7 Uneven paving slabs in the top area of the car park will be removed and tarmac infill laid. Additional car park repairs are scheduled for later this year to rectify sunken areas.

### **Wilton Lands, Taunton**

- 4.8 An order has been placed for work to be carried out this spring to renovate the well-used bridge at Wilton Lands. A temporary scaffolding bridge will be erected alongside so that replacement seasoned oak balustrades and decking can be installed.

## **5. Leisure Provider Procurement**

- 5.1 We have recently finalised the procurement timetable which will ultimately lead to the appointment of an operator to run the Council's Leisure Facilities. The first step of this formal process was to advertise the opportunity through OJEU (the Official Journal of the European Union) on 23 March 2018.
- 5.2 This advert will in effect begin the formal selection process, during which time interested companies will be invited to provide enough information so that a decision can be made on which companies should move forward to the next stage. Some of the responses required are 'pass/fail', requiring companies to pass certain fundamental elements to evidence their ability to deliver a contract of this size (if ultimately selected).

- 5.3 Work in recent weeks has predominantly been to draft documents which are required for this stage – these documents include the draft contract, Heads of Terms, Services Specification and Selection Questionnaire. We are helped in this regard by our legal advisors and leisure consultants.
- 5.4 We are also in the process of developing an electronic data room. In the data room, we will place all the information that bidders will need to develop their second stage submissions – such as, usage and income figures, utility suppliers and recent utility usage, equipment registers, conditions relating to any grant aid, current opening hours and prices. When complete, it is anticipated the data room may contain 50 or more documents.
- 5.5 A ‘Bidder’s Open Day’ will take place in April 2018 to allow bidders to visit facilities, to clarify any issues and to ask questions.
- 5.6 By 4 May 2018, the responses to stage 1 will be returned and the task will begin of analysing the returns and deciding which companies to take forward to the next stage. It is our expectation that approximately five companies will be selected to progress. There are then further stages, on which Councillors will be updated as we progress.

Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams

# **Council Meeting – 10 April 2018**

## **Report of Councillor Richard Parrish – Corporate Resources**

### **1. Corporate Services**

- 1.1 The key priority is around maintaining staff engagement, communications and morale through the consultation exercise and particularly as we commence the first phase of the restructure.

### **2. Corporate Performance**

- 2.1 GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) - The Compliance Action Plan continues to be developed and implemented with an update report being taken to the Corporate Governance Committee on 26 March 2018. Our software providers have been contacted to identify what changes they are making to enable GDPR compliance.
- 2.2 Officers are undertaking communications by e-mail with all staff and Members to raise awareness and to explain that training will be organised and arranged for April/May.
- 2.3 Work continues to compile an updated Information Asset Register which Members will appreciate is an extensive task. On completion, a full report will be forthcoming.
- 2.4 Corporate Risk Management; during this significant period of change the risk register is under constant review and updating.

### **3. Customer Services**

- 3.1 March has been a very busy period resulting from increased enquiries relating to service disruptions caused by bad weather and the seasonal enquiries about Council Tax bills, but officers have still maintained a high level of service.
- 3.2 The service is investigating ways to extend the service and take on new functions (for example, assisting with ICT helpdesk calls). This is in the early stages and any change will be reported on in a subsequent report.
- 3.3 We are working with the Accommodation Programme to plan the new Deane House reception layout and working arrangements in advance of the completion of the refurbishment works.

### **4. Facilities Management**

- 4.1 Facilities Management (FM) continues to work and plan with the

Accommodation Team to prepare for the moves associated with the next phase of The Deane House refurbishment.

- 4.2 Effective evacuation protocols are essential to a safe working environment. To this end the FM Team continue to evaluate and implement updated procedures.

## **5. ICT/Technology**

- 5.1 Currently additional temporary resource is being recruited to replace agency staff who have left and to support delivery of the Transformation technology projects.

- 5.2 Projects currently in progress include:-

- PSN compliance;
- New Mobile Data Management platform rollout;
- 8x8 telephone system deployment – largely complete;
- Year-end support;
- Follow-me printing rollout – largely complete;
- Allpay system implementation – payments are now being received and the new phone payments element of this is scheduled to go-live during the week commencing 26 March 2018.

## **6. Members Case Management**

- 6.1 This service is now fully launched and live across both Taunton Deane and West Somerset Councils. This is working well and dealing with Member enquiries. It is hoped that Members will make full use of this innovative service.

## **7. Resources and Support Services**

### **HR and Organisational Development**

- 7.1 Transformation – Over 150 individual meetings with staff have been held to support them through the recruitment process and discuss their queries.
- 7.2 Payroll – We have completed our first full year in managing a payroll service and are now preparing for the year end collating pensionable pay figures for Peninsula Pensions and the issuing of the P11D information.
- 7.3 Gender pay gap – We have a legal requirement to report on the gender pay gap and work is underway to calculate the figures for 2017/2018. Statutory information will be displayed on our website in due course. We are now in the process of producing a report which will be presented to Members on completion. If required, an action plan to address any anomalies will follow.
- 7.4 Training – Important emphasis continues to be given to staff welfare and to

this end the team has attended training on harassment in the workplace and an Employer Disability Confident conference.

## **8. Procurement Team**

- 8.1 The Procurement Team continue to provide support across a wide range of projects and business usual activity.
- 8.2 Michael O'Halloran is working on a number of key strategic projects including North Taunton Master Planning, refurbishment of Woolaway Homes (Oak), the Laxton Road development, Firepool development, Lisieux Way and the new Leisure Contract. In respect of the Leisure contract the procurement design is complete and the Contract Notice is expected to be issued on 23 March 2018.
- 8.3 David Carpenter is concluding initial design work in respect of the procurement of professional services that may be required for the Brewhouse Theatre Project.
- 8.4 Contracts recently awarded include:-  
Professional Services – Minehead Seafront Improvements; and  
Professional Services – Firepool Hotel.
- 8.5 The Team continue to support South Somerset District Council on several projects as well as providing general procurement advice.
- 8.6 Work is underway to develop a range of updated procurement template documents. The aim being to facilitate a greater degree of self service and general procurement skills/understanding amongst staff.
- 8.7 Work is underway to develop bespoke procurement reports within the E5 system. Tenders that have either been recently issued or are currently being evaluated include:-
- Licensed Asbestos Removal;
  - Surveys and Asbestos Related Professional Services;
  - Market Operator – Castle Green; and
  - HGV Vehicle – Property Services.

## **9. Finance**

- 9.1 The budget setting process has been completed and several reports have been presented to Scrutiny and Executive on the budget position. This has also included an update to the medium term financial plan including updated forecasts of future funding and any potential budgetary gap. The Council's capital spending plans have also been presented to Members for consideration.
- 9.2 We have also started early preparation for completing the Council's Final

Accounts to make sure that we are ready for our external auditors and the statutory deadlines for approval and publication. Guidance has recently been issued to all budget holders and business support staff and several training sessions have also taken place.

9.3 Alongside our ongoing financial activities we have continued to support a number of potential capital projects particularly those with a commercial and regeneration aspect including:-

- Firepool Hotel;
- Coal Orchard;
- The Collar Factory; and
- Taunton Station Regeneration.

9.4 This work includes producing new and updating existing Business Cases for these capital projects to determine that they are affordable and meet investment criteria.

9.5 The Finance Team also continue to support the business transformation process and to support the preparation and delivery of financial processes for a new single Council.

## **10. Revenues and Benefits**

10.1 The Team has carried out annual billing with Council Tax and Business Rates bills being received by customers during the week of 12 March 2018. We have advised customers of their entitlement to Council Tax Support under our new banded income scheme 2018/2019. The number of customers contacting us does not appear to be significantly more than in previous years and while some have queried reductions in the help we give them towards their Council Tax bills. In general customers appear to accept the revised scheme.

10.2 At the time of writing the Revenues Team look set to meet the annual target to collect 97.8% of Council Tax owed for 2017/2018 by 31 March 2018. The combined average speed in working out new Housing Benefit claims and changes in circumstances remains at less than 8 days.

10.3 We will have utilised most of the funding provided by the Department for Work and Pensions for Discretionary Housing Payments by year end, as well as spending all the funds available by providing awards under our Discretionary Reduction in Council Tax liability policy for those residents who are in most need of extra financial help.

Councillor Richard Parrish



# Council Meeting – 10 April 2018

## Report of Councillor Mrs Jane Warmington - Community Leadership

*THINK DIFFERENTLY, DO DIFFERENTLY ~ The strategic vision for Taunton Deane's most disadvantaged areas is that residents lives will improve significantly and that these priority areas will look better, feel safer and in the future place a more proportionate demand on public services. These services are already being delivered differently in our disadvantaged urban areas through co-ordinated, frontline, problem-solving, multiagency one teams providing early help working closely together in the area they serve. Rural parishes with more scattered communities are being helped to access services through community centres and local village agents who identify, signpost and support isolated residents to get the help they need. Urban priority areas need excellent education and health facilities within them if we are to build independence, resilience and raise aspirations in individuals, families and communities, to sustain improvements and reduce the need and costs of interventions in the future.*

### 1. Somerset One Team Toolkit

- 1.1 A toolkit is now available for One Teams, their constituent partners and others who may be considering this way of working. It is very comprehensive and cross references background material to draw upon and provides a number of templates which One Teams can personalise and use.
- 1.2 It begins by explaining the concept, the local context (deprivation and demand), governance, Terms of Reference and confidentiality agreements, information sharing agreements, threshold guidance for referrals and risk assessments, agenda and minutes templates, records and retention, self-evaluation and outcomes, Team Around the School principles and lots of useful links.
- 1.3 It is a comprehensive, well researched aid to setting up and running a One Team and the reasons for why behind this. It allows for variations between different areas and values the all-important bottom up approach.
- 1.4 The Safer Somerset Partnership which provides strategic County-wide oversight has agreed the toolkit and given it their approval.
- 1.5 The toolkit has been pulled together by the Somerset Co-ordinator with help from the various One Team co-ordinators and their administrative support.

### 2. A Different Approach to Unlawful Encampments?

- 2.2 Relevant partner organisations from across Somerset including Local Authorities were brought together last month by the Police with representatives from the Gypsy and Traveller communities to consider illegal encampments and lack of transit facilities in Somerset to accommodate those passing through.
- 2.3 Issues were raised which continue to cause concern but two other areas have adopted a different approach for dealing with these, one Local Authority led and the other Gypsy and Traveller community led.

- 2.4 **Pop-up transit stops** - South Gloucestershire Council strive to balance the interests of local people and the travelling population in the management of unauthorised encampments. In recognition that there is no provision for emergency stopping places or transit accommodation and that eviction can result in other unauthorised encampments in less suitable locations, every unauthorised encampment is considered in relation to its individual circumstances.
- 2.5 While the encampment is in place:-
- Appropriate facilities are arranged to ensure welfare needs are met and minimise its impact in the area (for example bin bags, a skip and loos);
  - In practice after an initial assessment, negotiations begin immediately to limit the length of stay although the majority of encampments on Council land remain in place for less than a week;
  - The Council will liaise between Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community;
  - The camp will be visited daily and issues and incidents raised by the public will be investigated and resolved where possible; and
  - Decide if a tolerated period of occupation is necessary and, where appropriate, advise and liaise with all key partner agencies.
- 2.6 South Gloucestershire Council has not been able to identify any suitable locations for transit sites a difficulty experienced in many other areas.
- 2.7 **Negotiated stopping** - Following illegal encampments on part of an old industrial estate in Leeds, City Council Chief Housing Officer was tasked to lead a review with a view to initiating negotiated stopping.
- 2.7 The desirable criteria for the Local Authority were:-
- That the land was a 'defensible space' any encampment therefore would be restricted in size;
  - That there was some 'buy-in' to the project among local business owners, the Police and elected Members; and
  - The location was safe for the families and that they were prepared to stay there.
- 2.8 The pilot went ahead and the Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange (Leeds GATE established 2004) assisted with drawing up and the signing of agreements between heads of families and the Local Authority. The agreement was to last for three months.
- 2.9 As their part of this agreement the City Council would provide rubbish disposal and portaloos for each family. Leeds GATE assisted with communication between local settled communities and the families and an article on the pilot appeared in the Yorkshire Evening Post and in blogs on the Leeds GATE website.
- 2.10 The Chief Housing Officer was determined that the camp would not remain beyond the agreed period. Support was gathered among relevant elected Members, local

businesses and neighbourhood Policing teams for the camp to move to another location and a successful move took place where it remained for a similar length of time.

2.11 Several other negotiated stopping sites were agreed although progress on two long term sites took three more years during which the Council remained open minded and continued searching (the long term sites have three year temporary planning permissions).

2.12 Key learning from this was:-

- Even on sites which the Council were unwilling to negotiate stopping, basic services of rubbish collection and loo facilities were provided;
- Strong communication between the Council and a number of key individuals on the camp;
- Setbacks and political will presented obstacles to maintaining momentum and progress was slow;
- The Council were willing and able to invest money into a potential site for negotiated stopping using savings made by avoiding legal and clean-up costs associated with the conventional approach to unauthorised encampments ;
- The Gypsy and Traveller community led the negotiations and discussions throughout with Leeds GATE facilitating; and
- The success of negotiated stopping agreements has been seen as positive.

2.13 Many Gypsies and Travellers live on a permanent site somewhere (often privately owned) but still like to travel. Whilst Local Authorities continue to struggle to find suitable transit sites (which are often not popular), it may be that the South Gloucestershire model of a tolerated occupation and cautious welcome for a short stay (under a week) providing basic facilities (loos, skip, bin-bags, etc) is a practical alternative to expensive antisocial enforcement - a temporary solution for a temporary need.

2.14 The outcome of the meeting last month was that Elected Members were asked to take the lead on this across upper and lower tiers of local government in Somerset together and consider a strategy to manage temporary stopping.

### **3. Update on Preventing Radicalisation in Partnership (Prevent)**

3.1 - The national risk is considered severe (raised to critical twice in 2016/2017);  
- The biggest threats are lone actors (inspired by extremists);  
- In the South West there has been a rise in right wing extremists (XRW) and some left wing extremists with a focus on animal cruelty/ environment;  
- We are seeing an increase in actions from those from this country (home grown) as it is now more difficult to leave the country to fight for a cause;  
- Although petty criminals can be radicalised/ influenced/ brainwashed, there is no one profile of a potential terrorist; AND  
- Likelihood is a lone actor, low tech, influenced but not instructed or trained.

3.2 - Prevent Duty (Section 26 Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015) places a moral duty on specified authorities to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism;

- This includes Health, Education, Local Authorities, Police, Probation, Prisons (not the Military but they are also receiving training);
- Training includes awareness (real life examples) and referral pathways; and
- Training at Taunton Deane concentrated on examples of XRW, spotting the signs and the referral pathway (delivered well by Scott Weetch).

- 3.3
- The referral pathway is built on proportionality, safeguarding and a quiet, consensual approach;
  - A referral is followed by checks/ information gathering and this may result in a low key visit from a Prevent Officer and other services may be called upon, for example Mental Health (MH) support;
  - Five percent of referrals resulted in convening a multi-agency Channel Panel which resulted in other support being put in place (MH) but then no further action;
  - Schools are the largest referring agency (about a fifth of referrals were under 18s);
  - Other referees given in examples included a GP, hospital, and airport security staff. Also listed were community, higher education, local Police, Social Services and others; and
  - Most referrals concerned adult males and vulnerability was an issue.
- 3.4
- Police and Crime Panel Elected Members were asked to be supportive of the proactive but consensual, proportional approach Prevent takes because it has received some bad press although this is gradually changing. Members are encouraged in particular to be on-line aware; support community cohesion; and promote/ encourage/ enable English lessons.

## **4. Resettled Refugees**

- 4.1
- Taunton Deane Welcomes Refugees (TDWR) has welcomed the first Syrian refugee family to Wellington who are delighted with their accommodation and starting to settle in. A new family is due to arrive in Taunton, so another circle of volunteers are very busy preparing the house and getting everything ready. This will be the sixth family to be resettled in Taunton (including one family who have relocated from Bridgwater). Taunton also has one couple and two individual refugees now settled in the town.
- 4.2
- TDWR is a dedicated group of volunteers and a small team of volunteers supports a family for several months after they first arrive. If you would like to be an active volunteer the Portfolio Holder will put you in touch because we are expecting another family later in the year. To be an active volunteer means that you can offer an amount of time each week (two hours or more) for about a year helping a family resettle after the traumas of escaping the war in Syria.

## **5. Rough Sleepers One Team**

- 5.1
- A One Team model of working has been established in Taunton with a specific focus on rough sleepers and street anti-social behaviour.
- 5.2
- Taunton Deane Borough Council is now chairing weekly meetings with partners including the Police, Taunton Association for the Homeless (TAH), Open Door, Somerset County Council, other support agencies and local businesses to ensure

that appropriate and necessary steps are being taken with every individual rough sleeper prioritising those who are causing anti-social behaviour.

- 5.3 It is hoped the multi-agency approach will work both proactively and reactively to minimize, as far as possible, the causes of rough sleeping, begging and anti-social behaviour and the associated problems they create.
- 5.4 The partners will always take a supportive approach first, however, if someone refuses to engage and acts in a threatening or anti-social way, the agencies will take appropriate action through the legislation available.
- 5.5 The laws and powers open to the Council and Police for addressing rough sleeping and anti-social behaviour are in practice fairly limited and often difficult to apply. However, the community concerns are recognised both in terms of ensuring the welfare of rough sleepers and their plight and about the image of the town.
- 5.6 The various partners have a range of services in place which have traditionally been effective but changing circumstances including complex mental health issues and serious problems with addiction mean that a different approach is needed.
- 5.7 The One Team method is identifying and addressing issues of real concern and developing a more joined-up service for each rough sleeper to help them break the cycle of homelessness and addiction.
- 5.8 It will also mean the Council and Police are able to take action as a last resort in the knowledge that help and support has been offered and refused.
- 5.9 Experience indicates that those who beg on the streets are not actually homeless but housed and already receiving support and only begging to maintain a drug habit. Please drop in to the Taunton Visitor Centre and give to Open Door instead and support the local facilities they provide to help anyone who is homeless or rough sleeping in the town. Thank you.

Councillor Jane Warmington

## Taunton Deane Borough Council

At a meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council held at Oake Manor Golf Club, Oake, Taunton on 10 April 2018 at 6.30 p.m.

Present      The Mayor (Councillor Prior-Sankey)  
                  The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Mrs Herbert)  
                  Councillors Mrs Adkins, M Adkins, Aldridge, Beale, Berry,  
                  Mrs Blatchford, Booth, Bowrah, Cavill, Coles, Coombes, Davies,  
                  D Durdan, Edwards, Farbahi, Gage, Gaines, Govier, Mrs Gunner,  
                  Habgood, Hall, Henley, C Hill, Mrs Hill, Horsley, James, R Lees,  
                  Mrs Lees, Ms Lisgo, Mansell, Martin-Scott, Morrell, Nicholls, Parrish,  
                  Mrs Reed, Ryan, Mrs Smith, Mrs Smith-Roberts, Mrs Stock-Williams,  
                  Townsend, Watson, Ms Webber, Wedderkopp, Williams and Wren

Mrs A Elder – Chairman of the Standards Advisory Committee

### 1. **Welcome**

The Mayor welcomed Councillor David Mansell to his first meeting of Full Council following his recent success at the recent Wiveliscombe and West Deane Ward by-election.

### 2. **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council held on 22 February 2018, copies having been sent to each Member, were signed by the Mayor.

### 3. **Apologies**

Councillors Ms K Durdan, Mrs Floyd, Hunt, Stone, Sully, Mrs Tucker and Mrs Warmington.

### 4. **Communications**

- (i) The Mayor thanked all those Members who had pledged sponsorship to the recent Swimathon. In the region of £500 had been collected which was an excellent result.

The Mayor also thanked those Members who had supported the Taunton Deane Male Voice Choir concert last weekend.

- (ii) The Deputy Mayor made reference to her Celebration Party which was scheduled to take place on Friday, 4 May 2018 (the night after the Annual Council meeting) and hoped as many Councillors as possible would purchase tickets.

The Deputy Mayor also mentioned that she had been persuaded to participate in the 50:50 Cycle Ride on 6 May 2018 where she would be sharing a tandem with Councillor Habgood. Sponsorship from Members would again be welcomed.

- (iii) Councillor Mrs Hill expressed concern that agenda papers, including

confidential information, had been sent to her in an envelope that had become unsealed during transit. The envelope had also been stamped 'confidential' which, in her view, was an open invitation for someone not entitled to view the 'pink papers' to do just that! She understood that other Councillors had also received their papers in this condition.

She hoped the necessary action would be taken to ensure a similar situation would not arise in the future.

- (iv) Councillor Williams stated that he was in receipt of a copy the minutes of Taunton Bowling Club's recent Annual General Meeting which referred to the appointment of Councillor Bob Bowrah to the Club as Taunton Deane's representative on this 'outside body'.

It had been almost ten years since a Councillor had undertaken this role and the minutes recorded that Councillor Bowrah had been a 'valuable asset' to the club and that the link between the two organisations was working well. Councillor Williams felt that this was very commendable.

## 5. Declaration of Interests

Councillors Coles, Govier and Prior-Sankey declared personal interests as Members of Somerset County Council. Councillors Bowrah, Cavill, Coombes, Govier, Henley, James, Nicholls, Mrs Reed, Mrs Stock-Williams, Townsend and Watson all declared personal interests as Members of Town or Parish Councils.

## 6. Public Question Time

Alan Debenham asked the following questions:-

- (i) Taunton Deane residents were already dismayed at the takeover of our Further Education College and Police Station by Bridgwater and how their wishes had been ignored in relation to outlandish urban sprawl housing developments being forced through. And now the merger with West Somerset Council!

How on earth was it right for the new merged District Council to be named "Somerset West and Taunton" rather than the obvious "Taunton Deane and West Somerset"?

- (ii) Our so-called 'housing crisis' locally was recognised as more one of inadequate supply of affordable, secured tenancy, properly maintained, good quality properties to rent than it was regarding the purchase of new costly houses.

The Chancellor's recent Spring Statement had talked of £44 billion to be invested in local social and affordable housing provision and an implied potential for Councils, not only to borrow sufficient funds to build directly but also for these homes to be 100% Council owned. Where did the Council now stand regarding these latest Government funding proposals, especially in terms of new Council homes planned and to be

completed in the present year and beyond?

And, if the Council had insufficient land within its current ownership to embark on such a potential big uplift in new Council housing, should the housing crisis be considered severe enough to warrant compulsory purchase of land at a price which took building site costs and profits out of making present new houses so unaffordable?

In response, Councillor Williams stated that there had been no takeover of the College. Bridgwater College had sought partners with the real aspiration of a university being established in Taunton. Works to The Deane House were currently being undertaken to accommodate the Police from its current premises at Shuttern. This would ensure a significant Police presence in the town into the future.

As to the name of the proposed new Council, the current name would be reviewed if Members wanted this.

Regarding Mr Debenham's second question, Councillor Beale confirmed that the implications of the Government's Spring Statement were still being considered, particularly the funding opportunities. He agreed that more affordable housing was required in Taunton Deane but conceded that there was an issue over land availability to provide such housing. Nevertheless, all aspects were being looked at including working in partnership with our local housing associations.

7. **The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the Taunton and Somerset Branch of The Samaritans**

The Mayor introduced Mr Geoff Rickson to the meeting.

Mr Rickson explained that The Samaritans had been formed by Reverend Chad Varah in London during 1953 when he became aware that there were often three suicides a day in the city. He identified a real need to provide those contemplating suicide 'somewhere to turn to and someone to talk to'.

Despite its founder and the name of the organisation which the Daily Mirror provided, The Samaritans were not a religious body. They talked to anyone.

The Taunton Branch was established in April 1968. It was one of a network of 201 branches and there were currently over 18,000 volunteers. That meant there was always someone available on the end of the telephone actively listening to those who had made contact. All calls were treated on a confidential basis and no-one was judged from what was said. There were in the region of 5,000,000 contacts made every year.

The Samaritans in Taunton were based in a property in Wood Street which was open for people to 'drop in' between 9 am and 9 pm even though the telephones were answered 24 hours a day. The branch had 80 trained volunteers and a number of support volunteers. Between 60 and 80 calls per day were received from around the country.

Mr Rickson went on to explain that the Taunton Samaritans had to raise



£30,000 each year to run the office. Much of this amount was raised by way of donations.

Outreach work was also important and talks were regularly given to local schools and community based organisations. The Taunton Branch also provided a service called 'Step by Step' where specially trained staff went into schools, colleges and universities to provide support following the death of a student or teacher/lecturer.

Each branch of the Samaritans was subject to an 'OFSTED' type inspection every three years and Taunton had recently been categorised as outstanding.

Mr Rickson concluded by stating that he was proud and privileged to be part of the Samaritans and hoped that it pleased the Council that Taunton had a flourishing and successful branch which was 50 years old.

On behalf of the Council, the Mayor thanked Mr Rickson for his very interesting and informative presentation.

8. **Motion - Consulting with Hoteliers, room providers, Airbnb and the public to ensure business and public support for tens of millions of Pounds for a proposed hotel investment at Firepool, Taunton with public funds**

Proposed by Councillor Habib Farbahi, seconded by Councillor Jefferson Horsley.

"The idea of an international hotel brand coming to Taunton was really interesting and exciting to us all. We were all for commercial investment and a healthy return on our capital. In fact we had been vocal in the last nine years, calling for more commerciality on a win-win basis, especially now that we were at the mercy of the financially challenged authority of West Somerset. As custodians of public funds, we had to ensure there were no risks attached to the Business Case.

Some Members witnessed at the Corporate Scrutiny Committee meeting on 22 March 2018 that no consultation with local businesses had occurred to assess the impact such a development might have on them, some of whose Business Rates would go directly to pay towards a proposal that could potentially push them out of the market.

No evidence was produced as to how many established hotels and other related hospitality facilities were currently in the market within a five-mile radius of the proposed development, to indicate current capacity in this market.

If you did not know your market how did you go about investing in it?

According to Visit England figures for 2017, the reported occupancy for the South West was 69%. This was much lower than reported to us on the night. Furthermore officers confirmed that the bedroom demand has been steady in the last year and was going to be so in the next year.....but according to a PwC key finding...

*'While the full impact of the UK vote to leave the EU will not be known for some time, economic growth is expected to slow. A weak pound should provide a boost to inbound leisure travel, but security concerns, tight corporate travel budgets, above average supply growth (especially in London) and consumer and corporate uncertainty will create an unfavourable backdrop. The industry is also tackling on going disruption via the Sharing Economy. We retain a cautious outlook'.*

Officers could not confirm whether more supply into the Taunton market would help or just dilute the market share of the current operators.

No one was aware of the number of Airbnb beds and the impact on this market. Furthermore the new Hotel Mercure in Bridgwater would take the majority of the Hinkley Point business, who currently stayed in Taunton. This would apply to other corporate clients with business in Bridgwater.

There was no idea as to how many white-collar jobs had been created in Taunton Deane in the last five years, so that we could justify demand.

In the related restaurant sector we had, over the last 24 months witnessed extra seats locally and the additional supply had put pressure on the operators, which had resulted in unsustainable outlets. None of the officers or the Portfolio Holder were aware of this despite national discussion and known closures within a number of chains. We had learned only this week Prezzo was going to close its Taunton restaurant.

At present there were financial pressures on hotels and the hospitality industry from minimum/living wage increases, Business Rate increases, utility and insurance cost increases and general cost inflation, an additional supply into this market might depress average rates for all hotels.

Interest rates on loans are due to be raised in May - the days of "cheap money" is rapidly disappearing. How would this affect the potential Business Plan?

There was no clear Business Case to justify the use of public money, as the risk and the return had not been properly assessed. There was a real risk that millions of Pounds of public money and a long term debt carried by Council Tax and Business Rate payers would merely facilitate an external operator to make money with no investment and no risk.

We are being asked to pay tens of millions of Pounds to build a hotel so that they could put their brand name on it for a disproportionately large fee.

It was therefore recommended that:-

- (1) The decision for the taxpayer's to invest in a hotel venture be delayed until a consultation had taken place with the hoteliers, Airbnb and room providers as well as Taunton Deane taxpayers;
- (2) Should the Council decide to invest and operate a hotel business, the authority should ensure that the Business Plan was solid and not

based on assumptions;

- (3) The option of not to pay the franchise fee and have our own distinct name should be on the table, saving taxpayers millions of Pounds over the period;
- (4) Future investment strategy should be open, transparent and open to public scrutiny; and
- (5) The decision should only be taken after the new Council was established, as Taunton Deane should not commit a successor organisation to such a financial commitment.”

The motion was put and was lost.

## **9. Acquisition of land near Nerrols Farm, Taunton as a Country Park**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the proposed establishment of a Country Park near Nerrols Farm, Taunton.

Such a park had been an aspiration of the Council for some time having been included as part of the adopted Core Strategy in 2012. The proposed site was currently owned by the Crown Estate and leased to a local farmer.

West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Councils had recently produced a joint Neighbourhood Plan which included an intention to oversee the establishment and management of the Country Park. This plan would go to referendum shortly.

The establishment of a Country Park formed an important component of the Council's Garden Town status and adopted Green Infrastructure Strategy. The finished project would consist of a Community Woodland/Country Park which could be utilised as an asset for a new community forest school being established as part of the wider Monkton Heathfield development.

The location of the park was important in the continuing development of Monkton Heathfield as it provided links east to west to the development currently being developed at Nerrols Farm and the allocated development site to the west of Greenway.

Once built, the Western Relief Road and re-alignment of the A3259 would provide much safer crossing points and allow easier pedestrian links north and south. A Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) link could follow along the southern boundary of the site. This could also make provision for a cycle lane.

Further reported that the Community Scrutiny Committee had resolved to support the purchase of the land and development of the Country Park in October 2017. A planning application (08/17/0044) made by the Council for the change of use of the land from agricultural to recreational uses had been approved on 11 January 2018.

Since these meetings officers, the Project Champion, and our retained consultant had been working with the Valuation Office Agency, other

stakeholders and the Crown to take forward proposals, including negotiating a purchase price for the land.

Funding of the project would need to come from a variety of sources. The majority of the funding was likely to come from the New Homes Bonus and West Monkton Parish Council had agreed in principle to a contribution towards the project costs. It was hoped that the remaining cost would be met from a combination of grant funding although Taunton Deane would need to underwrite the funding gap in the event these bids were unsuccessful.

Subject to Member approval, the Council's consultant would continue to lead on project delivery with input from the Planning Policy Team, colleagues in Finance, Asset Management, Legal Services provided through Shape and Leisure and Recreation.

Councillor Cavill as a local Member and key stakeholder had agreed to act as Member Champion for the project. An important aspect was the involvement of the local community from an early stage. Such engagement would be undertaken through a 'planning for real' type approach with input from landscape and biodiversity specialists. Negotiations with the Crown would be progressed with a view to planting being carried out in 2019.

**Resolved that:-**

- (a) A supplementary estimate to the Capital Programme of £479,000 be approved for the acquisition of land near Nerrols Farm, Taunton, tree planting and other associated costs, for the purposes of the creation of a Country Park (subject to the total cost of the land acquisition not exceeding the anticipated amount as outlined in the confidential Appendix to the report). To be funded from the Garden Town Reserve less any contributions from West Monkton Parish Council and any successful grant applications; and
- (b) It be agreed in principle that responsibility for the future maintenance of the Country Park be passed on completion to the West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Councils.

#### 10. **Approval of the Annual Pay Policy Statement 2018/2019**

Considered report previously circulated, which sought approval of the Annual Pay Policy Statement for 2018/2019.

Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 required local authorities to prepare and publish a Pay Policy Statement for each financial year.

The statement described the pay arrangements and policies that related to the pay of the workforce which served the Joint Management and Shared Services Partnership between Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council.

The changes in the data detailed in the latest Pay Policy Statement were minimal. The amendments to senior pay reflected the 1% pay award, awarded to all employees on 1 April 2017.

The ratios between senior pay and the lowest paid employee had been updated and there had been one change to the pension discretions of both Councils' which related to the definition of an actual week's pay. This was used to calculate the compensatory payment for employees being made redundant.

**Resolved** that the Pay Policy Statement 2018/2019 be approved for publication.

**11. Comprehensive Compulsory Purchase of Third Party Land and Interests at Firepool, Taunton**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the proposed comprehensive compulsory purchase of third party land and interests at Firepool, Taunton.

Support from Members was sought to enable the Council's legal representatives (Ashfords working together with the Shape Partnership) to proceed with the compulsory acquisition of the remaining third party land and interests that were required to enable delivery of the next phases of the Firepool Development and the comprehensive mixed use scheme approved earlier in the year by the Council's Planning Committee.

In December 2014, Full Council had approved in principle the acquisition of land and interests, by agreement, alongside preparations for the making of a future Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO), subject to a future planning approval.

The agents, Bruton Knowles, acting on behalf of the Council had successfully negotiated and acquired through agreements the majority of land and interests required to deliver a comprehensive scheme. However some land remained in third party ownerships, primarily situated between the Old Cattle Market and the Northern Inner Distributor Road (NIDR).

The CPO proposals were consistent with the recent resolution to grant outline planning consent and acquisition of the remaining interests were a priority and precursor to development aligned with the Taunton Garden Town programme and would contribute to a thriving and sustainable town centre.

Further discussions were currently underway with agents and owners of affected interests, and the Council was in communication with occupiers. However, if we are unable to agree acquisition by agreement then the Council would need to use its CPO powers.

**Resolved** that:-

- (1) Authority be granted to proceed with the final stages required to make a Compulsory Purchase Order for the acquisition of all relevant property interests required to facilitate the implementation of the proposed comprehensive Firepool development, which were unable to be acquired by agreement, comprising the land edged in red on confidential Appendix A to the report.
- (2) Authority be delegated to the Director of Growth and Development in

consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Business Development, Asset Management, Arts and Culture, Tourism and Communications and the Leader of the Council, under legal advice (from Ashfords and Shape Partnership) to:-

- a. Make a CPO and to progress through the appropriate procedures to secure the confirmation of the CPO once made;
- b. Negotiate with parties affected by the CPO with a view to acquiring their interests by agreement;
- c. Make any necessary steps and applications in relation to the stopping up or diversion of highways under powers contained in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as relevant to the comprehensive Firepool Compulsory Purchase Order;
- d. Ensure the Equalities Impact Assessment and any relevant action plan are completed, identify any potentially adverse effects of CPO and clarify mitigation through an appropriate plan of action to protect any persons involved.

## 12. **Development of an Hotel at Firepool, Taunton**

Considered report previously circulated, which introduced a proposal for Council investment in the development of a new high quality, mid-market hotel at Firepool, Taunton.

The proposal was consistent with the outline planning consent for Firepool which had recently been approved. Subject to specific requirements such as reserved matters, Council approval of the Business Case, exchange of contracts with the hotel brand and management operator, appointment of professional services advisors and a construction company, preparatory work on the site was anticipated to start next year (2019).

The proposal aligned well with the vision for Taunton as a Garden Town, contributed to a thriving and sustainable town centre and would generate a healthy commercial return to the Council.

Market testing and specialist advice had also confirmed high trading confidence in the Taunton area as a visitor and business destination. A well-recognised brand of hotel would improve the range and quality of mid-market accommodation in the town centre, encourage more businesses and visitors into the heart of the town and boost the wider daytime and evening economy.

It was the result of an initial feasibility, marketing and procurement exercise that had yielded strong interest from potential occupiers and operators of the hotel. A Business Case for Council investment in the development and continuing ownership of the hotel had subsequently been developed, taking account of key risks (financial and non-financial).

The above steps, including selection of hotel brand, operator and construction project management team, had been subject to the necessary Council approvals and consents and formal exchange of contract. Council approval of

the proposal was now needed to enable the project to move forward to delivery of the hotel development programme.

To allow Members to discuss the contents of the Confidential Appendices A-F, it was **resolved** that the press and public be excluded from the meeting because of the likelihood that exempt information would otherwise be disclosed relating to Clause 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

The project cost estimates had been provided by cost management professionals and advisors who had experience of successfully delivering similar hotel schemes.

The Business Case showed a satisfactory level of return on investment. It was based on an established trading model of the Council developing and retaining the asset (the hotel) and leasing the building to a newly created Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) (a trading company), which the Council would own. The Council would nominate directors to the company to manage the SPV's operations, contracts and bank accounts.

The new hotel business, through the SPV, would be managed by a professional operating company, to ensure hotel brand compliance, maximising efficiencies and returns for the Council and limiting potential liabilities.

Construction cost management would be a major element of the scheme and, as such, processes would be put into place to address any cost overrun risks through both design and the form of contract management.

The Business Case had been developed by the Council's Finance Team, informed and verified by hotel specialists and professionals, including our Treasury Management advisors, Arlingclose. The estimated capital cost of the project would be financed by external borrowing through the Public Works Loan Board.

Further reported that both the Corporate Scrutiny Committee and the Executive had previously considered this matter and had resolved to support the proposal.

In accordance with Standing Order 18(2)(b), the Mayor called for a formal roll call of votes to be taken and recorded in the Minutes.

The substantive Motion, which is detailed below, was put and was carried with twenty eight Councillors in favour and twenty voting against:-

**Resolved** that:-

- (i) A Council investment in the development and ownership of a hotel at Firepool, Taunton based on the detailed information contained in the Confidential Appendices be supported;

- (ii) A supplementary estimate to the Council's Capital Programme (detailed in Confidential Appendix B) for the planning, design and engineering, construction and fit out of the hotel be supported, to be funded as set out in the report;
- (iii) To enable the hotel project to progress within the programme timescales indicated and approved budget, that the relevant delegated authorities be provided to the Director – Growth and Development and the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder and the Leader of Council to:-
- (a) Appoint specialist and professional services to support officers and the Hotel Project Team to complete the planning, design and engineering of a new mid-market hotel on a suitable site identified at Firepool, Taunton (on the south-side of the River Tone);
  - (b) Finalise legal agreements with the preferred brand and operator;
  - (c) To create a Council owned Special Purpose Vehicle, to lease the asset and manage commercial arrangements of the new hotel (on behalf of the Council); and
  - (d) Arrange the procurement and appointment of a main building and fit-out contractor to complete the hotel building to specification and standards within the budget approved.

Yes	No
Councillor M Adkins	Councillor Mrs Adkins
Councillor Beale	Councillor Aldridge
Councillor Berry	Councillor Booth
Councillor Mrs Blatchford	Councillor Coles
Councillor Bowrah	Councillor Farbahi
Councillor Brown	Councillor Gaines
Councillor Cavill	Councillor Govier
Councillor Coombes	Councillor Henley
Councillor Davies	Councillor Mrs Hill
Councillor D Durdan	Councillor Horsley
Councillor Edwards	Councillor R Lees
Councillor Gage	Councillor Mrs Lees
Councillor Mrs Gunner	Councillor Ms Lisgo
Councillor Habgood	Councillor Mansell
Councillor Hall	Councillor Morrell
Councillor Mrs Herbert	Councillor Nicholls
Councillor C Hill	Councillor Prior-Sankey
Councillor James	Councillor Mrs Smith
Councillor Martin-Scott	Councillor Wedderkopp
Councillor Parrish	Councillor Wren
Councillor Mrs Reed	



Councillor Ryan	
Councillor Mrs Smith-Roberts	
Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams	
Councillor Townsend	
Councillor Watson	
Councillor Ms Webber	
Councillor Williams	

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.

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

**Financial Monitoring – 2017/2018 as at 31 December 2017**

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee considered a report at its meeting on 22 March 2018 which provided an update on the projected outturn financial position of the Council for the financial year 2017/2018 (as at 31 December 2017).

The current revenue forecast outturn for the financial year 2017/2018 was reported as follows:-

- The General Fund (GF) Revenue Outturn was forecasting a gross underspend of £318,000 (2.14% of Net Revenue Budget) before proposed transfers of £30,000 for Tonedale Mill urgent repairs and £288,000 to the Transformation Reserve.
- The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was forecasting an underspend of £334,000 before a proposed transfer of £144,000 to the Transformation Reserve.

The current capital forecast position for 2017/2018 was as follows:-

- The GF capital account was forecasting spend of £4,477,000 against a budget of £33,032,000 with £28,494,000 forecast to be spent in future years;
- The HRA capital account was forecasting spend of £12,658,000 against a budget of £20,029,000 with £7,371,000 forecast to be spent in future years.

The GF Reserves forecast balance as at 31 March 2018 was projected to be £2,278,000 which was above the recommended minimum reserves level.

The HRA Reserves forecast balance as at 31 March 2018 was £2,824,000, which also was above the recommended minimum level.

Following careful consideration, the Corporate Scrutiny Committee had supported proposals to transfer parts of the GF Revenue and HRA

underspends to the Transformation Reserve.

An amendment proposed by Councillor Farbahi, seconded by Councillor Mrs Smith requiring some of the underspend to be used to support people in priority housing need was put to the vote and was lost.

**Resolved** that:-

(a) £258,000 of the General Fund underspend be transferred to the Transformation Reserve with the balance of £30,000 being used towards tackling the problem of homelessness by making the Streetwise Co-ordinator post full time rather than part time; and

(b) £144,000 of the Housing Revenue Account underspend be also transferred to the Transformation Reserve.

**15. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**Resolved** that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item as it included exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

**16. Proposed Acquisition of Land at Norton Fitzwarren**

Considered report previously circulated, relating to the proposed acquisition of an area of land at Norton Fitzwarren.

The Council had been working with the South West Heritage Trust (SWHT), Norton Fitzwarren Parish Council (NFPC) and Historic England (HE) to secure the site which was a Scheduled Ancient Monument, currently on the HE Risk Register.

The site had important archaeological remains which were at risk due to the legal invasive farming techniques that had occurred in the past and was likely to take place again in the near future. The Council's aim was to acquire the site and remove it from intensive farming.

Further reported that the site also formed part of the Green Infrastructure Strategy and would provide open space to the community. There would also be education opportunities taking account of the ecological and archaeological interests on the site.

The total cost of site acquisition would be in the region of the figure included within the report. The funding for the purchase would largely be met by HE (80%) with the SWHT and the NFPC each making a small contribution. It was proposed that the remainder should be funded from the Council's general reserves.

The SWHT had indicated that they would be prepared to take on a 30-year lease on the site and help to find funding for a Conservation and Management Plan with applications to the Heritage Lottery Fund, Viridor Credits and other such bodies.

The Council would need to work with HE, SWHT and NFPC to work up an agreed management plan for the site. This would mean that the continuing maintenance of the site would not be the responsibility of the Council, thereby removing any continuing impact on Taunton Deane's Revenue Budget.

**Resolved** that a supplementary estimate to the value of the sum identified in the report to the capital programme be approved for the acquisition of the land at Norton Fitzwarren, including the use of the required sum from the Council's General Reserves.

Due to the lateness of the hour, the Mayor suggested that rather than further extend the duration of the meeting, questions for the Executive Councillors in respect of their reports (details follow) could be dealt with via e-mail. This was agreed.

## 17. 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:-

- Formation of a Single Council;
- Firepool, Taunton;
- Staplegrove;
- Housing Infrastructure Funding; and
- The Deane House.

### (ii) Housing Services (Councillor Beale)

Councillor Beale submitted his report which drew attention to the following:-

- Deane Housing Development – North Taunton; Weavers Arms, Rockwell Green, Wellington; 12 Moorland Close, Taunton; Laxton Road, Taunton; Completions; Parmin Close, Taunton and Future site opportunities;
- Deane Housing Repairs and Maintenance;
- Welfare Reform – Discretionary Housing Payment;
- Deane Helpline;
- Anti-Social Behaviour Service; and
- The draft Strategic Housing Framework for Somerset and the forthcoming Affordable Housing Open Day.

### (iii) Environmental Services and Climate Change (Councillor Berry)

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

- Environmental Health (Food Safety; Food Hygiene; Private Water Supply sampling; Noise investigations; Safety Advisory Groups; and Food – New Registrations – Feasibility Study);

- Licensing (Review of Policies; Working with HM Revenues and Customs; A re-vamped knowledge test and a practical driving test for taxi drivers);
- Street Sweeping and Toilet Cleaning;
- Somerset Waste Partnership; and
- Cemeteries and Crematorium.

(iv) **Economic Development, Asset Management, Arts and Culture, Tourism and Communications (Councillor Edwards)**

The report from Councillor Edwards covered:-

- Communications;
- Business Development - Productivity Strategy; Taunton Deane Business Awards; Heathrow Business Summit; Growth Communications and Marketing – Business Envoy Programme;
- Events, Place, Retail Marketing and Visitor Centre – Events; Place and Retail Marketing; and Visitor Centre;
- Growth Strategy and Specific Projects – Coal Orchard Redevelopment, Taunton; and
- Asset Management Service Update – Asset Management System (Open Assets by Capita); Leisure Procurement – Facilities Lease Heads of Terms; The Deane House Accommodation Project; Flook House; Annual Asset Valuation; and Blackdown Business Park, Wellington.

(v) **Planning Policy and Transportation (Councillor Habgood)**

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

- Planning Policy;
- Garden Town Strategy and Plan;
- Nexus 25 – Local Development Order;
- Junction 25 Upgrade – Somerset County Council Highways Authority;
- Highways England Consultation – Taunton to Southfields Dualling Scheme;
- Taunton Urban Realm;
- Car Park Pay on Foot and Variable Message Signage;
- Neighbourhood Plans;
- Major Planning – Staplegrove; Firepool, Taunton; and Comeytrowe;
- Heritage at Risk – Tonedale Mill, Wellington; and
- A different approach to unlawful encampments?

(vi) **Sport, Parks and Leisure (Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams)**

The report from Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams` dealt with activities taking place in the following areas:-

- Community Leisure – Play and Recreation; Summer Sunday Bandstand Concerts; Carols around the Bandstand; the Council’s Capital Grant Scheme; Cuckoo Meadow, Minehead; Section 106 Funding for Play, Sport, Allotments and Community Halls; and Victoria Park, Taunton;
- GLL (Taunton Deane) – Community Sport and Health; and Facilities;
- Parks and Open Spaces – Adverse Weather; Grass Cutting; Vivary Park, Taunton; Wellington Park; and Green Flag Judging;
- Property – Blackbrook Pavilion Site, Taunton; Leisure Facilities; Station Road Pool, Taunton; Wellington Sports Centre; Wellsprings Leisure Centre, Taunton; and Wilton Lands, Taunton; and
- Leisure Provider Procurement.

(vii) **Corporate Resources (Councillor Parrish)**

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

- Corporate Services;
- Corporate Performance;
- Customer Services;
- Facilities Management;
- ICT/Technology;
- Member Case Management;
- HR and Organisational Development;
- Procurement Team;
- Finance; and
- Revenues and Benefits.

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

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

- Somerset One Team Toolkit;
- A different approach to unlawful encampments?
- Update on Preventing Radicalisation in Partnership (PREVENT);
- Resettled Refugees; and
- Rough Sleepers One Team.

(The meeting ended at 10.09 p.m.)

