

TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Taunton Deane Borough Council held in the Principal Committee Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton on 11 October 2005 at 6.30 pm.

Present: The Mayor (Councillor Lees)
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Hindley)
Councillors Mrs Allgrove, Beaven, Mrs Biscoe, Bishop, Bowrah, Mrs Bradley, N Cavill, Ms S Cavill, Clark, Croad, Davies, Denington, Floyd, Govier, Guerrier, Hall, Hayward, Henley, Mrs Marcia Hill, House, Leighton, Mrs Lewin-Harris, Lisgo, Meikle, Morrell, Mullins, Paul, Phillips, Prior-Sankey, Ms Priscott, Slattery, Mrs Smith, Stone, Stuart-Thorn, Vail, Watson, Wedderkopp, Weston, Mrs Whitmarsh, Williams and Mrs Wilson

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 19 July and 5 September 2005 copies having been sent to each Members were signed by the Mayor.

2. Apologies

Councillors Bone, Mrs Cluff, Coles, Durdan, Edwards, Garner, C Hill, Mrs Marcia Hill and Mrs Jones.

3. Lloyd Fouracre

The Mayor reported the tragic death of Lloyd Fouracre a young Taunton Deane resident. The Council stood in silence in his memory. The Mayor informed Members that he had written to Lloyd's family expressing the sincere condolences of both the Council and the Taunton Deane community.

4. Public Question Time

- (i) Mr T Morgan drew attention to the new Community Handyman service which he noted with some interest. He asked that as in the past DLO's would not necessarily have been permitted to advertise and to trade in this manner, could an explanation be given as to how and in what way Rules, Regulation and Legislation had changed to make this proposed service possible.

Councillor Williams replied that this was not a DLO service. It was a service provided by Taunton Deane and South Somerset Home Aid Partnership. In this instance the DLO were acting in the capacity of an appointed contractor. The DLO were not responsible for the advertisement and promotion of this service and all such activities had been carried out by members of the Home Aid team.

As a supplementary question Mr Morgan drew attention to the minimum wage of £5.05 and asked how the service could be achieved without some kind of financial subsidy from the Council.

Councillor Williams answered that a fee was charged for the service rather than as an hourly rate. £5 per hour charged for people on benefits and £10 per hour for others. It was the intention that the service would go some way to helping people stay in their homes and live independently for longer periods.

- (ii) Mr B Nowlan asked a question regarding the prohibition of parking commercial vehicles outside of houses in the Priorswood area of Taunton. He asked that the Council made sure that its own vehicles were stored at its own depots when not being used and not utilised as private transport by public employees. He drew attention in particular to a DLO lorry parked next to his home.

Councillor Williams replied that he was surprised that Mr Nowlem had had to come to the Council meeting with this question as it was something he had previously asked and had partially been dealt with. Councillor Williams had taken up the question of the DLO van and had been assured that it would be removed and replaced with a small closed van. He was unaware of the covenants referred to by Mr Nowlem in his question. Councillor Williams undertook to pursue further the question as to why the pick up truck owned by the DLO was still being used.

Mr Nowlem clarified that the pick up truck had not reappeared that he wished to make a general point about the use of public assets in this way.

- (iii) Ms D Robins asked a number of questions on behalf of her father Mr S Robins concerning properties in his ownership at The Clock Tower, Cotford St Luke and 40 Silver Street, Taunton.

Councillor Williams informed the Council that he was currently unwilling to deal with questions from Ms Robins following an incident at a previous meeting of the Executive. He reminded Ms Robins that there was a set protocol and a specific line of communication to deal with issues relating to her father and his properties and he suggested that this be followed. He drew the Council's attention to the fact that liability orders previously served on Mr Robins had recently been confirmed by the Court and that this was the place to confirm or deny any accusations being made by Mr Robins.

5. Recommendation to Council from the Executive

Capital Strategy 2005-2008

Reported that although the ODPM had removed the requirement of the Council to submit to Regional Government Offices the Annual Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan it is was considered to be good practice to continue to prepare an AMP and Capital Strategy annually.

The Capital Strategy was a summary of the Council's approach to capital investment and included

- The Council's aims for capital investment
- Development and ongoing management of the capital programme
- Partnership working on capital projects
- Performance Measurement

The revised Strategy for 2005 to 2008 a copy of which had been circulated had been updated from the last year's version. The Review Board had considered the draft Strategy and made no amendment to the document.

On the motion of Councillor Williams it was RESOLVED that the draft Capital Strategy for 2005-2008 be agreed.

6. Questions to and Reports of the Leader of the Council and Executive Councillors

The following reports were made to the Council on the main items of current and future business.

(i) Leader of the Council (Councillor Williams)

Councillor Williams' report covered the following topics.

- Budget pressures
- The decision in relation to the unauthorised gypsy encampments in Oxen Lane, North Curry
- A recent incident which had resulted in damage to property at Oxen Lane, North Curry together with details of increased police patrols and security measures in and around North Curry.
- Possible redevelopment of Taunton Swimming Pools.
- Consultation prior to ballot for the Housing Stock Transfer options.
- Additional covered tennis courts.

- Livestock market at Junction 26.
- Toilets at North Street, Wellington.
- Access to the Community Office at Wellington.
- A major new software programme for Revenues and Benefits.
- The ISIS project.
- A study by the Leadership Centre.
- Enhancement and upgrading of French Weir Park.
- TDBC staff travel plans.
- The Old Municipal Buildings.
- Possible funding from Cycle England for the development of cycling in Taunton.
- Taunton Vision.

(ii) Planning Policy and Transportation (Councillor Bishop)

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

- Bus Users UK
- Taunton Railway Station
- The Slinky Bus
- Cycling England
- RTPI South West Planning Achievement Awards
- New Development Control Provisions
- Planning Delivery Grant
- LDF Briefing Sessions
- Planning Training for Members of Parish Councils

(iii) Leisure, Arts and Culture (Councillor Mrs Bradley)

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

- Sport
- Parks
- Tone Leisure Ltd Activities
- Community Arts and Development.

(iv) Economic Development Asset Management and Tourism (Councillor N P Cavill)

The report from Councillor Cavill covered:-

- Tourism
- TIC
- Rural Regeneration
- ADO
- Economic Development
- Asset Management
- Community Arts
- Taunton Town Centre Company

(v) Environmental Services (Councillor Edwards)

The report from Councillor Edwards presented in his absence by Councillor Williams covered the following issues:-

- Licensing
- Health and Safety
- Food Safety
- Environmental Protection
- Waste Services and Cemeteries and Crematorium.

(vi) Housing Services (Councillor Garner)

Councillor Garner's report presented by Councillor Williams in his absence focused on two areas within the Housing Portfolio:-

- Housing Stock Transfer Update
- The Community Handyman Service

(vii) Resources (Councillor Hall)

The report from Councillor Hall provided an update on the following areas within his portfolio:-

- ISIS
- Revenues

- Financial Services
- Member Services
- Revenues and Benefits Project
- Internal Audit Services
- Information Services
- Customer Service

(viii) Communications (Councillor Gwyneth Leighton)

Councillor Leighton submitted her report which covered the following areas:-

- Integration of the Communications function across the organisation
- Improvements to the Council's website.
- The launch of the Handyman Service.
- The Development of a Joint Communications Strategy and Action Plan with Somerset County Council for the ISIS project.
- A media monitoring and evaluation system.
- The restyling of the Weekly Bulletin.
- Deane Dispatch.
- The new post of Communications and Information Manager.

(ix) Community Leadership (Councillor Mrs Lewin Harris)

Councillor Mrs Lewin Harris's report focussed on the following areas within her portfolio:-

- Taunton Deane Crime and Disorder Partnership.
- Operation Relentless.
- Taunton Deane Local Strategic Partnership.
- Local Area Agreements.
- Community Strategies for North and East Taunton.
- Thanks to Volunteers.

7. Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the item number 8 on the Agenda because of the likelihood that exempt information would otherwise be disclosed relating to Clause 9 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

8. Proposed Acquisition of Part of Land at Blackbrook, Taunton

Reported that the Executive had considered reports regarding negotiations that had taken place to acquire the freehold interest in part of the land leased to the Council at Blackbrook, Taunton.

Terms and conditions had now been provisionally agreed. A copy of the full report of the Chief Valuer which had been submitted to the Executive was

circulated to all Members. Whilst agreeing to the proposed terms and conditions the Council were asked to agree a Supplementary Estimate to cover the costs of land acquisition.

On the motion of Councillor N P Cavill it was RESOLVED that a Supplementary Estimate be made from unallocated reserves of £65,000 in order to fund the purchase of the freehold interest in the land.

(Councillor Ms Priscott declared a prejudicial interest in the above item as a Director of Tone Leisure and left the meeting).

(Councillor Govier arrived at the meeting at 6.45 pm and Councillors Stone and Weston at 7 pm).

(Councillor Mrs Marcia Hill left the meeting at 8.35 pm and Councillor Ms Cavill at 9.00 pm).

(The meeting at 9.15 pm)

(The Press were in attendance)