

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 19 July 2005 at 6.30 pm.

Present: The Mayor (Councillor Lees)
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Hindley)
Councillors Mrs Allgrove, Beaven, Bishop, Bone, Bowrah, Mrs Bradley, N Cavill, Clark, Coles, Croad, Davies, Denington, Edwards, Floyd, Garner, Govier, Hall, Hayward, Henley, C Hill, Leighton, Meikle, Morrell, Mullins, Murphy, Paul, Ms Peppard, Phillips, Prior-Sankey, Stone, Stuart-Thorn, Wedderkopp, Weston, Mrs Whitmarsh, Williams and Mrs Wilson

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 11 May 2005 copies having been sent to each Member were signed by the Mayor.

2. Apologies

Councillors Mrs. Biscoe, Miss Cavill, C Cluff, Mrs Cluff, Mrs Hill, House, Mrs Jones,
Mrs Lewin Harris, Lisgo, Ms Priscott, Slattery, Mrs Smith and Watson.

3. Mr John Cunningham

The Mayor reported the sad death of Mr John Cunningham a former Member of Taunton Deane Borough Council. The Council stood in silence in memory of the late Mr Cunningham. The Mayor was asked to write to his family expressing the sincere condolences of all Members of the Council.

4. London Bombings

The Leader of the Council, Councillor John Williams, drew attention to the suffering, bereavement and trauma caused by the recent terrorist bombings that had taken place in London. He also paid tribute to the effort employed by the Emergency Services. It was agreed that the Mayor should write to the Mayor of London expressing the condolences of this Council.

5. Mayor of Liseux

Following a recent civic visit to Liseux France, the Mayor of Liseux had sent best wishes to Taunton Deane Borough Council on the 50th Anniversary of twinning between Taunton and Liseux.

6. Recommendation to Council from the Executive

Draft Corporate Strategy and Performance Plan 2005-2008

The Council were required to produce an Annual Performance Plan which identified its priorities for improvement, how weaknesses would be addressed and gave details of its performance indicator results and targets.

By combining the Corporate Strategy and Performance Plan, duplication was reduced and a more comprehensive document produced which gave a much clearer understanding of the Council. The Plan which had previously been considered by the Executive showed the Council's:

- Overall aim
- Background to corporate themes and four top priorities
- Achievements during the last 12 months
- Plans for the next three years
- Improvement Priorities and how the Council were addressing weaknesses
- Performance Summaries and targets for improved future performance
- Details of Performance against Statutory and Local Performance Indicators

The Review Board had also considered the Plan at its meeting on 9 June 2005 and had recommended that it be agreed.

On the motion of Councillor Williams it was RESOLVED that the draft Corporate Strategy and Performance Plan 2005-2008 be agreed.

7. 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:

- Commencement of the budget setting process for 2006/07.
- Local Government funding and the cost pressures the Council were likely to experience.
- Issues relating to gypsies and travellers.
- Wellington in Bloom.
- Taunton Vision.
- Joint Venture Studies with Somerset County Council for integrated service provision.

- Communications and Public Relations.

(Councillor Prior-Sankey declared a personal interest as a Somerset County Councillor when discussing the Joint Venture Project)

(ii) Planning Policy and Transportation (Councillor Bishop)

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

- Spatial Planning Taunton Sub-Area Strategy
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Chelston Cattle Market
- Local Transport Plan 2
- Planning Delivery Grant

(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
- Arts

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

The report from Councillor Cavill covered

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

(v) Environmental Services (Councillor Edwards)

The report from Councillor Edwards covered the following issues:

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

(vi) Housing Services (Councillor Garner)

Councillor Garner's report focused on two areas within the Housing Portfolio.

- Housing Stock Transfer Update which included details of the new project team
- The recruitment of various specialist advisers at a total fee of around £208,000
- Right to Buy/Sale of Council Dwellings

(vii) Resources (Councillor Hall)

The report from Councillor Hall provided an update on the following areas of his Portfolio.

- Member Services
- Financial Services
- Benefits
- Office Services
- Internal Audit
- Information Systems
- Revenues
- Personnel

(viii) Communications (Councillor Gwyneth Leighton)

Councillor Leighton submitted her report which covered the following areas:

- Communications Strategy
- Vision for Taunton
- Housing Stock Transfer Ballot
- Joint Venture Communications
- Communications with Members
- A Plain English Project
- Public Relations
- Deane Dispatch
- Media Relations
- Media Awareness
- Oxen Lane Public Inquiry

(ix) Community Leadership (Councillor Mrs Lewin Harris)

In the unavoidable absence of Councillor Mrs Lewin Harris, Councillor Williams submitted her report on her behalf which covered the following topics:

- Taunton Deane Local Strategic Partnership
- Local Area Agreements
- Baseline Assessment Work in north and east Taunton
- Taunton Deane Crime and Disorder Partnership
- Anne Frank Exhibition

8. Proposal for Exemption to Contract Standing Order 13 for the procurement of specialist consultancy services for the Taunton Vision

Reported that the Council had in partnership with Somerset County Council and South West Regional Development Agency entered into a partnership arrangement for three years to work together to deliver the objectives of the Taunton Vision. A joint procurement arrangement had already been entered into with these two partners. Taunton Deane was acting as banker for this project and in effect the three partners were acting as an agency.

It was envisaged that much of the necessary work in developing the Taunton Vision would be done through the commissioning of external consultants. Given the size of the respective contributions it was envisaged that the Commissions issued would be in excess of the Council's Standing Orders Threshold 2 (when full tender procedures applied) and Threshold 3 (when EU procurement rules applied).

It had been proposed by the Vision Executive Group that the consultants be drawn from the Framework Agreements already held by South West Regional Development Agency and that this be considered by the respective partners as being compliant with Contract Standing Orders.

Ordinarily all contracts over Threshold 3 must comply with EU procurement rules. However for this work exemption would be necessary under the Council's Standing Orders 13(c) and (d) but as one of the partners had already carried out this stage, this Council were exempt. This exemption stated that the Council were permitted to enter into a contract, other than in accordance with the usual procedures laid down in Standing Orders 13. Details were submitted of the advantages and disadvantages of an exemption to Contract Standing Order 13.

On the motion of Councillor Williams it was RESOLVED that the exemption to Standing Orders as described in the report be agreed and the procurement of Taunton Vision Consultancy work be approved through the use of the South West Regional Development Agency Framework as outlined in the report under exemption 14(e) this exemption to cover the period of the partnership (2005-2008).

9. Local Government Act 1992 Review of Electoral Arrangements Taunton Deane Borough Council

Submitted report previously circulated which sought the approval of the Council for the draft proposals of the Members Working Group to be submitted to the Electoral Commission.

The Boundary Committee for England were carrying out a further review of the Taunton Deane Borough Wards upon the instructions of the Electoral Commission.

The review commenced on the 17 May 2005 with the new electoral arrangements coming into force in time for the 2007 elections.

The further review was looking to achieve an equality of electoral representations throughout the Borough and would probably result in changes to the pattern of wards and their boundaries.

A cross party Working Group of Members had been formed by the Resources Review Panel to work with Officers to review Taunton Deane's electoral arrangements and to consult and prepare a draft scheme for submission to the Boundary Committee for England. The Electoral Commission had met with the Working Group and also addressed Members at a Member Briefing. Details of the timetable for the review were submitted.

Proposals had been drawn up by the Working Group and had been circulated to all Members. In addition the draft proposals had also been circulated to all Parish Councils together with Community Groups in the un Parished area. Detailed consultation would take place upon the publishing of the Electoral Commissions draft recommendations in Stage 3 of the review process.

RESOLVED that in view of the very tight statutory timetable the Strategic Director Jeremy Thornberry be authorised after consultation with the Working Group, to submit the Council's draft proposals to the Electoral Commission based upon their circulated recommendations.

10. Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the item numbered 10 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.

11. Proposed Acquisition of Land at Bishops Hull

Reported that the Executive had considered reports which gave details of two areas of land which in future might become available to the Council.

It was felt that the possible opportunity to acquire all or part of this land presented a major strategic benefit to the Council in the longer term. Details of the likely cost of the land were submitted with the report that had been considered by both the Executive on 22 June 2005 and the Review Board at its meeting on 9 June 2005.

RESOLVED that

- (i) negotiations continue with a view to the Council purchasing either or both of these areas of land
- (ii) the Leader of the Council together with the appropriate Portfolio Holder be authorised to agree terms in consultation with the Chief Valuer.

(The following Councillors arrived at the meeting at the times indicated:

Councillor Stone 7.00 pm and Councillor Hayward 7.05 pm)

(The following Councillors left the meeting at the times indicated:

Councillor Morrell 7.30 pm, Councillor Govier 7.45 pm, Councillor Bone 7.53 pm,
Councillor Paul 8.38 pm)

(The meeting ended at 9.30 pm)

(No members of the Press were present)

TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Taunton Deane Borough Council held at in the Principal Committee Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton on 5 September 2005 at 7.30 pm.

Present: The Mayor (Councillor Lees)

Councillors Beaven, Mrs Biscoe, Bishop, Clark, Coles, Davies, Denington, Durdan, Edwards, Garner, Hall, Leighton, Mrs Lewin-Harris, Lisgo, Meikle, Morrell, Paul, Phillips, Mrs Smith, Stuart-Thorn, Vail, Wedderkopp, and Williams

1. Apologies

Councillors Mrs Allgrove, Bowrah, Mrs Bradley, Cavill, Miss Cavill, C Cluff, Mrs Cluff, Croad, Floyd, Govier, Hayward, Henley, Hill, Mrs Hill, Mullins, Miss Peppard, Prior-Sankey, Priscott, Watson, Weston and Mrs Whitmarsh.

2. Joint Venture Arrangements for Corporate Services

Reported that at its meeting on 24 August 2005 the Executive had agreed to the continuation of this project. A number of reports over a period of three months had been submitted to the Executive building on the outline business case. Consideration had also been given to which services should be included. It had also been acknowledged that this project needed to be considered alongside the Council's emerging customer strategy.

The Executive had agreed that the ISIS project should continue and that the Council should be involved in the procurement process to seek a private sector partner. If this project were to continue it would be necessary to obtain external legal and financial advice. The Executive had therefore recommended that a Supplementary Estimate from General Fund reserves be agreed to fund the cost of external advisors.

RESOLVED that a Supplementary Estimate from General Fund reserves of £120,000 to fund the cost of the external advisors for the next phase of this project be agreed.

(Councillors Mrs Smith and Paul both declared personal interests in this matter as employees of Somerset County Council).

(The meeting ended at 7.50pm).