

Taunton Deane Borough Council

At a meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council held in the John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton on 25 February 2014 at 6.30 pm.

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

1. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council held on 10 December 2013, copies having been sent to each Member, were signed by the Mayor.

2. **Apologies**

Councillors Mrs Baker, Mrs Gaden, Morrell, Nottrodt and Ross.

3. **Communications**

- (a) The Mayor announced that a team comprising Councillors A Govier, Mrs Govier, Mrs Herbert and Mrs Warmington had recently swum to raise money for the Mayor's Charities at the Soroptomists Annual Swimathon at Taunton School. She presented the four Councillors with their swimming medals and a photograph and thanked them for their efforts.
- (b) Councillor Gill Slattery stated that since just before Christmas, life on the Levels had been difficult, worrying and threatening for many due to the extensive flooding.

She thanked the Taunton Deane Councillors from across the political divide for all their kind messages of concern and support.

It quickly became apparent that some authorities were having difficulties in understanding their role with regard to the floods which created a temporary void into which a number of volunteer organisations, such as Flooding on the Levels Action Group (FLAG),

jumped with great enthusiasm and much dismay.

After intervention by the Deputy Prime Minister, the co-ordination between FLAG and the statutory authorities gradually improved. Several of the County Councillors had also done a great deal to ensure the Lead Local Flood Authority (Somerset County Council) carried out its appropriate functions. She was especially pleased that Taunton Deane had agreed to send a Property Officer and a Revenues Officer to provide advice to affected residents.

She went on to say that after the 2012 floods she wrote to the County Council asking when they were going to properly investigate this significant event. Eventually – after much pressure – a report was written but was not distributed.

To ensure this did not happen again, Councillor Slattery called for a public inquiry into this latest event. She felt that as a Council we would want to see the report, understand what specific lessons had been learned and what recommendations would be made by the County Council to Central Government, the Environment Agency, the Inland Drainage Board and other bodies.

She thanked Councillors Williams, Edwards and several other Taunton Deane and Somerset County Councillors for being prepared to learn the lessons from the Taunton Deane point of view in attending the customised tour on 20 February 2014. It was a great shame that the Leader of the County Council and the appropriate portfolio holder could not attend or send their apologies. Thanks were also offered to John Lewis, Chris Hall and all their colleagues for their considerable assistance and patience over many weeks.

Lastly, Councillor Slattery expressed her admiration for the staff and board of the Environment Agency who had been working '24/7' since 19 December 2013 and had been the subject of mis-informed criticism from some quarters. They were, after all, the ones who were moving the water and any resolution would be delivered by them as well. She formally requested that a letter be sent to the Environment Agency thanking them for their contribution, patience and continuing professionalism.

In response, the Mayor undertook to write a letter on behalf of the Council.

4. Declaration of Interests

Councillors Coles, A Govier, A Wedderkopp and D Wedderkopp declared personal interests as Members of Somerset County Council. Councillor Henley declared personal interests both as a Member of Somerset County Council and as an employee of Job Centre Plus. Councillor Hunt declared personal interests both as a Member of Somerset County Council and as

one of the Council's representatives on the Somerset Waste Board. Councillor Prior-Sankey declared a personal interest as a Member of Somerset County Council. Councillors Mrs Hill and Stone declared personal interests as employees of Somerset County Council. Councillor T Slattery declared a personal interest as an employee of Sedgemoor District Council. Councillor Tooze declared a personal interest as an employee of the UK Hydrographic Office. Councillor Wren declared personal interests as an employee of Natural England and as Clerk to Milverton Parish Council. Councillor Nottrodt declared a personal interest as a Director of Southwest One. Councillors D Durdan and Stone declared prejudicial interests as Tone Leisure Board representatives. Councillor Gill Slattery declared personal interests as a member of the Board of Governors at Somerset College and as a Patron of the Supporters of Taunton Women's Aid. Councillor Farbahi declared personal interests as a local owner of land in Taunton Deane and as a member of Taunton Forward. Councillor D Reed declared a personal interest as a Director of the Taunton Town Centre Company. Councillor Miss James declared a personal interest as an employee of Somerset College. Councillors D Durdan, Gill Slattery and T Slattery declared prejudicial interests as owners of land that would benefit from any future flood alleviation works. They all indicated that they would leave the meeting if any discussion on this topic took place. Councillor Horsley declared a personal interest as a member of Taunton Forward.

5. **Public Question Time**

(a) Liz Payne-Ahmadi representing the 'Taunton Campaign Against Cuts' asked the following questions:-

(i) There are cuts this year, next year and the next. When and how do you see it ending? What will the situation of the Council and the public services it provides be at the end?

(ii) What representations do you make and will you make to the Government about the impact of the cuts on local people?

(iii) You have said that the cuts will impact in particular on older people and those with disabilities. We are talking here about cumulative impact. There is evidence that vulnerable groups of people are disproportionately impacted upon by both national and local cuts? Are you taking this into account? Will you do so in the future and how will you mitigate cumulative impacts that are so severely affecting people's lives?

(iv) The Campaign welcomes the proposed increase in Council Tax and that some of the increased revenue will be used to help reduce the impact of the cuts. Can you give more details about how this will be done and where funds will be targeted?

(b) Alan Debenham asked the following questions:-

(i) With all the further savage cuts in the Council's spending, when will we see just one Taunton Deane Councillor making vehement public protests against this Government's continued massacre of Local Government's services and jobs? And who is that Councillor likely to be when there are no Green Party representatives to put that Party's alternative economic policies which do not include any cuts in frontline public spending? And why is it, when there is no local coalition, we do not see Liberal Democrats protesting against the Government as they have often done in the past;

(ii) When the Government is planning to spend £billions over the next 20 years on the renewal of nuclear weapons, subsidies to prop-up new nuclear generation and controversial fossil fuel 'fracking', is it not a blatant lie to say that Councils' spending must be severely cut to control the national budget deficit? And when, like some other Councils in the South West, is Taunton Deane going to pass a resolution to the effect of requesting the Government to stop wasting these essential public funds?

In response the Leader of the Council, Councillor John Williams, stated that:-

- (1) The Government was cutting the Support Grant it gave to Councils on an annual basis with it due to disappear in 2018. The Council therefore had to find ways of making up what was lost through new initiatives, particularly through growth in Taunton Deane;
- (2) The budget deficit was created as a result of national and international difficulties. Whilst efforts continued to be made to address the significant deficit which still existed, Councillor Williams could not see how standing up and saying "it's all wrong!" would help;
- (3) The proposed 1.99% rise in Council Tax would allow Taunton Deane to retain more of the front line services which currently existed than otherwise would have been the case.

Councillor Williams undertook to provide written answers to the other points that had been raised by the questioners.

6. Proposed re-opening of The Brewhouse Theatre, Taunton

Reported that negotiations had progressed with the Taunton Theatre Association (TTA) in recent months to secure the reopening of The Brewhouse Theatre and Arts Centre. The Council had purchased the lease on the property from the Administrator in October 2013.

The Executive had subsequently approved the leasing of the property to the TTA and resolved to delegate authority to the Portfolio Holder to sign off the TTA's Business Plan and to enter a lease and a funding agreement.

The Brewhouse Steering Group had met on 10 February 2014 and considered correspondence from the TTA intended to reassure Members of the robustness of the Business Plan. The Steering Group had acknowledged the uncertainties involved in the re-opening of the theatre and had agreed to sign off the Business Plan.

A draft set of Heads of Terms for a ten year lease on the property and a draft funding agreement in relation to the Council's annual grant had both been issued to the TTA.

Under the proposed terms of the lease the Council would retain responsibility for the maintenance of the external fabric of the property. Upon consideration of this item in December 2013 the Executive had agreed to allocate £70,000 per year to the maintenance for a period of five years. Since then advice had been obtained that the total maintenance cost over the proposed ten year term of the lease would be in the region of £601,000.

Further reported that in recent days a Tenancy at Will had been entered with the TTA, and a short term funding agreement had also been agreed.

The tenancy had enabled the TTA to take occupation of the property in order to carry out preparatory works for two events at The Brewhouse during April 2014. The short term funding agreement had enabled the payment of monies to the TTA for the procurement of start up services and minor improvement works. Both agreements were intended to be short term, whilst the parties agreed a ten year lease and a longer term funding agreement.

Resolved that:-

- (a) The report be noted; and
- (b) The long term financial implications for building maintenance works at The Brewhouse Theatre of an estimated £601,000 over ten years also be noted. This would need to be reflected in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and longer term financial projections for the period.

7. **Flooding response for the Levels – Council Tax and National Non Domestic Rates**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning proposals that would form the Council's response to the flooding on the levels in relation to Council Tax and Business Rates.

Flooding on the levels had affected three of the Somerset Districts. Taunton Deane Borough Council, Sedgemoor District Council and South Somerset District Council had all been working together to take a

consistent and fair approach in providing support to Council Tax payers in the affected villages.

The villages in Taunton Deane that had been most affected by the recent flooding were Saltmoor, Burrowbridge, Stathe, North Curry, Stoke St Gregory, Curload, Knapp and Ruishton. The impact of the floods applied to businesses as well as people's homes.

Unless already exempt there would be a liability to pay Council Tax or Business Rates, or in the case of a mixed hereditament, possibly both. There were already some discounts or exemptions that could be applied but these did not cover all situations arising from the current flooding.

The proposals set out in the report would apply a policy extension to the following policies:-

- Section 13a (1)(c) Reductions Procedures
- Business Rates Discretionary Relief Policy effective from 2014 and the previous policy from 2008 up to 31 March 2014.

Centrally prescribed Council Tax and Business Rate reliefs did not offer any specific support for victims of flooding. However, where a property had been left uninhabitable, the local "Class D" discount could be awarded for a period of up to 52 weeks. To date, ten properties had been classified as uninhabitable and the discount applied. This cost would be borne by all of the major precepting authorities.

Noted that Authorities could also provide a "local discount" under exceptional circumstances such as flooding under Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended.

The Council had the right to choose whether to use this power on a case by case basis or it also had the right to specify a class of use. A class of use was where several people who paid Council Tax fell into a group because their circumstances were similar e.g. Council Tax payers who had been affected by flooding. Members were requested to consider 100% discount for six months for a "class of property" - in this case residents of Saltmoor, Burrowbridge, Stathe, North Curry, Stoke St Gregory, Curload, Knapp and Ruishton whose homes were flooded at the end of December/ early January.

Reported that the billing authority awarding the discount had to fund the cost of that discount. This meant that the other precepting authorities wishing to support this initiative would need to make a direct financial contribution to the Council. There was sufficient evidence to apply the discount without this requirement to approximately 15 homes within these specific villages.

The discount proposed would apply where the property was flooded since late December / early January and the resident had decided to remain in

the property (living upstairs). The period of award proposed was 100% for a period of up to approximately six months from 23 December 2013 (or date first flooded) to 30 June 2014.

In addition it was proposed that if a household was inaccessible due to flooding of the surrounding area and road infrastructure, such that the occupants were fully cut off and stranded in their homes they would receive 100% relief via Section 13A for a maximum of three months. It was estimated this could range from an estimated 20 properties.

It would also be appropriate to possibly discount other properties on the Levels or other severely flooded areas depending on their individual circumstances but these would need to be based on individual requests.

The Prime Minister announced on 19 February 2014 that funding of up to £4,000,000 would be available to local authorities in support of Council Tax Discounts for homes that had been flooded.

The guidance that followed confirmed that local authorities would be able to claim funding support from the Government towards the cost of discretionary flood relief. It was anticipated this additional funding would cover the cost of providing Council Tax relief for a period of up to three months.

Further reported that the Prime Minister had recently announced that 100% relief for three months would be given to businesses affected by the flooding.

Following receipt of guidance it was proposed that Flood Relief would be applied before statutory reliefs for a maximum of three months between the period 1 December 2013 and 31 March 2014, after which statutory reliefs could be applied and/or discretionary reliefs as per policy.

Where the income of a business had suffered as a result of the flooding they were able to apply under the Council's Hardship Policy.

The time limit of three months might not be enough time for some businesses to re-occupy so there might be a mix of assistance given with options that were already available.

Statutory reductions would be applied before any discretionary relief or new three months flood relief was paid, as follows:-

- Empty rate relief - where businesses had vacated due to the floods, the Council was able to give up to three months 100% relief, or six months for industrial units; and
- Hardship - where the income of a business had suffered as a result of the flooding they were able to apply under the Council's Hardship Policy.

Noted that agricultural land and buildings were generally exempt from Business Rates and did not appear in the Rating List.

Guidance had also been received from the Government in respect of a new Business Support Scheme. Taunton Deane had been awarded £85,000 to distribute through this scheme.

Support through this scheme was available for small and medium sized businesses that had been flooded or whose business had been adversely affected by flooding, in order to develop and implement business recovery plans. Details of the type of costs that could be covered and the categories of businesses that could apply for grant funding were set out in the report.

Reported that a new scheme to provide grants of up to £5,000 to homeowners and businesses that had been flooded had also been introduced by the Government. The Repair and Renewal Grant Scheme would be administered by local authorities and would be aimed at providing funds for additional flood resilience and resistance measures for homes that had been flooded since 1 December 2013.

Resolved that:-

- (1) The Council used its discretionary powers to introduce a once-off local Council Tax discount of 100% for up to six months for residents in Saltmoor, Burrowbridge, Stathe, North Curry, Stoke St Gregory, Curload, Knapp and Ruishton, who had decided not to leave their flooded property using the award criteria set out in the report;
- (2) Up to £40,000 be allocated from General Reserves to fund the above Council Tax discount;
- (3) Consideration and allocation of discounts of up to 100% for up to six months for other domestic properties in the severely flooded areas that had been flooded be delegated to the Assistant Director – Resources in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for any applications received by the Council prior to 30 June 2014 only. A further report on the use of this delegated authority be provided to Council after it had expired;
- (4) The help available for Business Rates to assist businesses affected by the flooding be noted; and
- (5) A new Flood Relief Business Support Scheme Budget totalling £85,000, funded by Section 31 Grant from the Government, be approved and that decisions regarding individual applications be delegated to the Economic Development Manager.

8. **Changes to Standing Order 18 - Voting**

Reported that the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, which were issued on 7 February 2014, required local authorities to amend their Standing Orders to provide that votes at key budget decision making meetings were recorded.

Because of their recent introduction, there had not been time to bring the changes through the Council's normal decision making processes.

The regulations came into force on the same day as the Council's budget decision making meeting and therefore the changes to the Standing Orders needed to be approved to comply with this legislation. A failure to comply would make the decisions made at the budget decision meeting unlawful.

Resolved that the changes to Part 4 of the Constitution, Standing Order 18 as detailed in the Appendix to these Minutes, be approved.

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

From Councillor Morrell to Councillor Mrs Vivienne Stock-Williams – Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) and West Somerset Council (WSC) Shared Service Arrangements

(a) Had the TDBC / WSC Chief Executive Officer (CEO) re-joined the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and, if true, why was the CEO not contributing to the Civil Service Scheme beforehand? Also, what was the impact from April 2014 on the claimed savings for a shared CEO if the TDBC / WSC CEO re-joined the LGPS?

Reply - The TDBC/WSC CEO had not re-joined the Local Government Pension Scheme. The 'costings' for the Joint CEO had been based on the 'spot salary' approved by Council on 12 November 2013 plus the employers Local Government Pension Scheme contribution as employees can opt in and out of the Scheme.

(b) Also, since the TDBC / WSC merger I understand lease cars had / were to be provided to staff and, if true, why, to whom, and at what cost to the taxpayer?

Reply - There had been no changes to our policy on lease cars as a result of the Joint Management and Shared Services Project (JMASS).

TDBC currently had a protected Lease Car and Cash Alternative Scheme which was reviewed by Council on 2 October 2012 when the cost of the scheme reduced by approximately 50%.

As part of the JMASS Project Consultation was taking place with UNISON on a review of terms and conditions of employment and no decisions had

been made on any elements of a new set of terms and conditions of employment.

10. **Recommendations to Council from the Executive**

(a) General Fund Revenue Estimates 2014/2015

The Executive had considered its final 2014/2015 budget proposals which 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 budget contained details on:-

- (i) the General Fund Revenue Budget proposals for 2014/2015, including the proposed Council Tax rate; and
- (ii) draft figures on the predicted financial position of the Council for the following four years.

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee considered the draft budget proposals at its meeting on 21 January 2014. Although there were no specific amendments proposed by the Committee, a number of comments were made in connection with the proposals relating to the Mayoralty, the use of New Homes Bonus, Shopmobility, increased fees for pitch fees and open spaces, Council Tax, Deane Helpline and play equipment inspections.

The Council Tax calculation and formal tax setting resolution was to be considered separately. The proposed budget for Taunton Deane contained a proposed 1.99% Council Tax increase for 2014/2015 which would mean that the Band D Council Tax would increase to £137.88. The Band D taxpayer would therefore receive all the services provided by the Council in 2014/2015 at a cost of £2.69 per week.

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 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) provided an indication of the expected budget gap going forward into 2015/2016 and beyond and a summary of this position was reflected in the following table:-

	2014/15 £k	2015/16 £k	2016/17 £k	2017/18 £k	2018/19 £k
Net Expenditure	10,860	10,239	11,103	11,644	12,325
<i>Financed By:</i>					
Retained Business Rates	(2,346)	(2,411)	(2,471)	(2,533)	(2,596)
Revenue Support Grant	(2,766)	(1,901)	(1,309)	(720)	(324)
Tax Freeze Grant	0	0	0	0	0
Council Tax	(5,748)	(5,846)	(5,980)	(6,118)	(6,260)
Predicted Budget Gap	0	81	1,343	2,273	3,145

These estimates included the following main assumptions relating to funding:-

- Revenue Support Grant (RSG) for 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 was as set out in the Provisional Finance Settlement. It was then projected to diminish to nil by 2020.
- Retained Business Rates for 2014/2015 was currently based on the provisional forecasts for 2014/2015 – but final estimates needed to be reviewed once final guidance was received from the Government. Broadly, funding in subsequent years was projected to increase in line with inflation.
- Council Tax was assumed to increase by 1.99% in 2014/15, then subsequently increase by 2% per year.

It was proposed that the minimum acceptable reserves position should be retained at £1,500,000, or £1,250,000 if funds were allocated to ‘invest to save’ initiatives.

The current Budget for 2014/2015 would maintain reserves above this minimum, but following a number of allocations from reserves agreed during 2013/2014 there was limited ‘headroom’ in the current estimated balance. This would significantly limit the Council’s ability to fund ‘up front’ service and transformation investment from revenue reserves.

Based on the MTFP position set out above the General Reserves forecast was summarised as follows:-

General Reserves Forecast

	2014/15 £k	2015/16 £k	2016/17 £k	2017/18 £k	2018/19 £k
Estimated Balance B/F	(1,697)	(1,697)	(1,616)	(273)	2,000
Predicted Budget Gap	0	81	1,343	2,273	3,145
Estimated Balance C/F	(1,697)	(1,616)	(273)	2,000	5,145

Clearly the Council would need to ensure that further action was taken in future to balance the budget and maintain a sustainable reserves position.

The Budget proposal for 2014/2015 plus the savings that would be delivered through the Joint Management and Shared Services in 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 meant that the reserves forecast for the next two years would remain above the minimum requirement.

However reserves were currently projected to fall below the acceptable minimum in 2016/2017 if no further action was taken. The Council would need to continue to plan to deliver a sustainable financial position as part of the Corporate Business Plan and supporting financial strategy.

The estimated Special Expenses chargeable to the non-parished area of Taunton in 2014/2015 amounted to £42,290, which represented a 1.99% increase in the special expenses per Band D equivalent of £2.98 per property per year in the Unparished Area.

In line with the Policy recently agreed by Full Council, it was proposed to 'top up' the budget for the Unparished Area by allocating £6,220 of the Council Tax Support Grant Funding to increase the budget for the new financial year to £48,510.

Before the start of each financial year, the Council was required to determine the basis on which it would make provision from revenue for the repayment of borrowing undertaken for the purpose of financing capital expenditure. This annual provision, known as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), was designed to ensure that authorities made prudent provision to cover the continuing costs of their borrowing.

The proposed Policy for 2014/2015 was for the calculation of MRP to be the same as the current year.

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 her response, Shirlene Adam had stated that she believed the Council's reserves to be adequate and the budget estimates used in preparing the 2014/2015 budget to be robust.

Moved by Councillor Williams, seconded by Councillor Mrs Adkins, that the budget proposals be amended as follows:-

Wiveliscombe Town Council and Milverton Parish Council had called for more time to deliver a workable solution to keeping the public toilet facility open in their areas. Proposed to offer a one-off sum to these parishes to deliver a local solution to keeping the facilities open. This would cost Taunton Deane £20,950 (£9,350 for Milverton; £11,600 for Wiveliscombe) to be funded from an 'in year' under spend.

In accordance with Standing Order 18(6), the Mayor called for a formal roll call of votes to be taken and recorded in the Minutes.

The amendment was put and was carried with forty Councillors in favour, six Councillors voting against and five abstaining, as follows:-

Yes	No	Abstain
Councillor Mrs Adkins	Councillor Henley	Councillor Mrs Govier
Councillor Mrs Allgrove	Councillor Prior-Sankey	Councillor Mrs Hill
Councillor Beaven	Councillor P Smith	Councillor Mrs Lees
Councillor Bishop	Councillor Mrs Waymouth	Councillor Miss Smith
Councillor Bowrah	Councillor A Wedderkopp	Councillor Wren
Councillor Cavill	Councillor D Wedderkopp	
Councillor Coles		
Councillor Denington		
Councillor D Durdan		
Councillor Miss Durdan		
Councillor Edwards		
Councillor Farbahi		
Councillor Mrs Floyd		
Councillor Gaines		
Councillor A Govier		
Councillor Hall		
Councillor Hayward		
Councillor Mrs Herbert		
Councillor C Hill		
Councillor Horsley		
Councillor Hunt		
Councillor Miss James		
Councillor R Lees		
Councillor Ms Lisgo		
Councillor Meikle		
Councillor Mrs Messenger		
Councillor Ms Palmer		
Councillor D Reed		
Councillor Mrs Reed		
Councillor Gill Slattery		
Councillor T Slattery		
Councillor Mrs Smith		
Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams		
Councillor Stone		
Councillor Swaine		
Councillor Tooze		
Councillor Mrs Warmington		
Councillor Watson		
Councillor Ms Webber		
Councillor Williams		

(Councillor Mrs Waymouth left the meeting at 8.15 p.m.)

(Councillor Mrs Hill declared a personal interest as a trustee of

Hestercombe House and stated that she would take no part in the discussion of the following amendment.)

Moved by Councillor Horsley, seconded by Councillor Coles, that the budget proposals be amended as follows:-

Hestercombe Gallery - That the sum of £10,000 be earmarked from the under spend in 2013/2014 towards matching the £48,000 grant received from the Arts Council England to meet the cost of holding a Modern Art Exhibition in the newly acquired building to begin the process of establishing Hestercombe as a venue of national as well as regional significance.

The amendment was withdrawn following the provision of information that the Executive was already looking to provide some match funding.

Moved by Councillor Horsley, seconded by Councillor Coles, that the budget proposals be amended as follows:-

Car Parking at Firepool/Tree Planting – That a temporary joint venture be entered into with Premium Parking Solutions Limited to use the appropriate part of the Firepool site to act as an overspill car park for passengers who used the railway station. The Business Plan for a 50% split in the income derived was estimated to bring about a net income of £24,000 in a year. It was further proposed that the net proceeds be used for a comprehensive tree planting aimed at helping the long term strategy to build up flood defences.

In accordance with Standing Order 18(6), the Mayor called for a formal roll call of votes to be taken and recorded in the Minutes.

The amendment was put and was carried on the casting vote of the Mayor with twenty five Councillors in favour and twenty five Councillors voting against, as follows:-

Yes	No	Abstain
Councillor Coles	Councillor Mrs Adkins	
Councillor Farbahi	Councillor Mrs Allgrove	
Councillor Mrs Floyd	Councillor Beaven	
Councillor Gaines	Councillor Bishop	
Councillor A Govier	Councillor Bowrah	
Councillor Mrs Govier	Councillor Cavill	
Councillor Henley	Councillor Denington	
Councillor Mrs Hill	Councillor D Durdan	
Councillor Horsley	Councillor Miss Durdan	
Councillor Miss James	Councillor Edwards	
Councillor R Lees	Councillor Hall	
Councillor Mrs Lees	Councillor Hayward	
Councillor Ms Lisgo	Councillor Mrs Herbert	

Councillor Mrs Messenger	Councillor C Hill
Councillor Prior-Sankey	Councillor Hunt
Councillor Gill Slattery	Councillor Meikle
Councillor T Slattery	Councillor Ms Palmer
Councillor Miss Smith	Councillor D Reed
Councillor Mrs Smith	Councillor Mrs Reed
Councillor P Smith	Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams
Councillor Stone	Councillor Mrs Warmington
Councillor Swaine	Councillor Watson
Councillor Tooze	Councillor Ms Webber
Councillor A Wedderkopp	Councillor Williams
Councillor D Wedderkopp	Councillor Wren

Moved by Councillor Horsley, seconded by Councillor Coles, that the budget proposals be amended as follows:-

Shopmobility - Proposed that the 12 months notice be withdrawn so that further discussions and negotiations could take place, involving the Community Scrutiny Committee, before an irreversible decision was taken by the operators and the Council to terminate the service.

In accordance with Standing Order 18(6), the Mayor called for a formal roll call of votes to be taken and recorded in the Minutes.

The amendment was put and was lost with twenty three Councillors in favour, twenty five Councillors voting against and one abstaining, as follows:-

Yes	No	Abstain
Councillor Coles	Councillor Mrs Adkins	Councillor Mrs Govier
Councillor Farbahi	Councillor Mrs Allgrove	
Councillor Mrs Floyd	Councillor Beaven	
Councillor Gaines	Councillor Bishop	
Councillor Henley	Councillor Bowrah	
Councillor Mrs Hill	Councillor Cavill	
Councillor Horsley	Councillor Denington	
Councillor Miss James	Councillor D Durdan	
Councillor R Lees	Councillor Miss Durdan	
Councillor Mrs Lees	Councillor Edwards	
Councillor Ms Lisgo	Councillor A Govier	
Councillor Mrs Messenger	Councillor Hall	
Councillor Prior-Sankey	Councillor Hayward	
Councillor Gill Slattery	Councillor Mrs Herbert	
Councillor T Slattery	Councillor C Hill	
Councillor Miss Smith	Councillor Hunt	
Councillor Mrs Smith	Councillor Meikle	
Councillor P Smith	Councillor Ms Palmer	
Councillor Stone	Councillor D Reed	

Councillor Swaine
Councillor Tooze

Councillor Mrs Reed
Councillor Mrs Stock-
Williams

Councillor A Wedderkopp
Councillor D Wedderkopp

Councillor Mrs Warmington
Councillor Watson
Councillor Ms Webber
Councillor Williams
Councillor Wren

Moved by Councillor Horsley, seconded by Councillor Coles, that the budget proposals be amended as follows:-

Grass Cutting and Dog Wardens - Proposed that the sum of £10,000 was applied towards the grass cutting of verges in Taunton to supplement the twice a year cut that was undertaken by Somerset County Council. This sum to be matched by an application to the Unparished Area Fund which, if successful, would increase the sum available to £20,000. Further proposed that a sum of £5,000 be applied to maintain the frequency of collection and disposal from dog bins in the town with an equal amount sought from the Unparished Area Fund.

In accordance with Standing Order 18(6), the Mayor called for a formal roll call of votes to be taken and recorded in the Minutes.

The amendment was put and was carried unanimously, as follows:-

Yes

No

Abstain

Councillor Mrs Adkins
Councillor Mrs Allgrove
Councillor Beaven
Councillor Bishop
Councillor Bowrah
Councillor Cavill
Councillor Coles
Councillor Denington
Councillor D Durdan
Councillor Miss Durdan
Councillor Edwards
Councillor Farbahi
Councillor Mrs Floyd
Councillor Gaines
Councillor A Govier
Councillor Mrs Govier
Councillor Hall
Councillor Hayward
Councillor Henley
Councillor Mrs Herbert
Councillor C Hill
Councillor Mrs Hill

Councillor Horsley
Councillor Hunt
Councillor Miss James
Councillor R Lees
Councillor Mrs Lees
Councillor Ms Lisgo
Councillor Meikle
Councillor Mrs Messenger
Councillor Ms Palmer
Councillor Prior-Sankey
Councillor D Reed
Councillor Mrs Reed
Councillor Gill Slattery
Councillor T Slattery
Councillor Miss Smith
Councillor Mrs Smith
Councillor P Smith
Councillor Mrs Stock-
Williams
Councillor Stone
Councillor Swaine
Councillor Tooze
Councillor Mrs Warmington
Councillor Watson
Councillor Ms Webber
Councillor A Wedderkopp
Councillor D Wedderkopp
Councillor Williams
Councillor Wren

(Councillor Ms Webber left the meeting at 9.05 p.m.)

(Councillors D Durdan and Mrs Hill declared prejudicial interests in the following amendment as Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayor Elect respectively and left the meeting during its consideration.)

Moved by Councillor Horsley, seconded by Councillor Coles, that the budget proposals be amended as follows:-

The Mayoralty - Proposed that the £17,200 saving identified be reinstated in full. This was recognition that the First Citizen of Taunton Deane should be supported properly or not at all. He/she was the town's ambassador and needed that status if the role was to be maintained. Also proposed that thought and research should be put into seeing what opportunities there were to seek commercial advantage from this prestigious position.

In accordance with Standing Order 18(6), the Mayor called for a formal roll call of votes to be taken and recorded in the Minutes.

The amendment was put and was carried with twenty eight Councillors in favour, eighteen Councillors voting against and one abstaining, as follows:-

Yes	No	Abstain
Councillor Bowrah	Councillor Mrs Adkins	Councillor Beaven
Councillor Cavill	Councillor Mrs Allgrove	
Councillor Coles	Councillor Bishop	
Councillor Farbahi	Councillor Denington	
Councillor Mrs Floyd	Councillor Miss Durdan	
Councillor Gaines	Councillor Edwards	
Councillor A Govier	Councillor Mrs Herbert	
Councillor Mrs Govier	Councillor C Hill	
Councillor Hall	Councillor Hunt	
Councillor Hayward	Councillor Meikle	
Councillor Henley	Councillor Ms Palmer	
Councillor Horsley	Councillor D Reed	
Councillor Miss James	Councillor Mrs Reed	
Councillor R Lees	Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams	
Councillor Mrs Lees	Councillor Mrs Warmington	
Councillor Ms Lisgo	Councillor Watson	
Councillor Mrs Messenger	Councillor Williams	
Councillor Prior-Sankey	Councillor Wren	
Councillor Gill Slattery		
Councillor T Slattery		
Councillor Miss Smith		
Councillor Mrs Smith		
Councillor P Smith		
Councillor Stone		
Councillor Swaine		
Councillor Tooze		
Councillor A Wedderkopp		
Councillor D Wedderkopp		

Members went on to discuss the substantive Budget of the Council.

(Councillors D Durdan, Gill Slattery and T Slattery declared prejudicial interests as owners of property which would benefit from the proposed dredging of local rivers and left the meeting during the consideration of this issue.)

(Councillors Mrs Messenger and Swaine left the meeting at 9.15 p.m.)

In accordance with Standing Order 18(6), 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 forty four Councillors in

favour and three abstaining:-

Resolved that the budget for General Fund services for 2014/2015 as shown in the original report to Full Council and as amended above, be approved and that:-

- (a) The Section 151 Officer's Statement of Robustness, which applies to the whole budget including General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Budget proposals be noted and that the recommended minimum acceptable level of reserves at £1,500,000 or £1,250,000 if funds are allocated to invest to save initiatives, be approved;
- (b) The General Fund Revenue Budget 2014/2015, including a Basic Council Tax Requirement budget of £5,192,970 and Special Expenses of £48,512 be approved;
- (c) The transfer of any under/overspend in the 2013/2014 General Fund Revenue Account Outturn to/from the General Fund reserves be approved;
- (d) The Budget Savings Proposals for 2014/2015 – with the exception of those relating to the Mayoralty - as set out in the report to the Executive be approved and the Equalities Impact Assessments provided as part of the budget decision process be noted;
- (e) (i) A Supplementary Estimate of £72,500 in 2013/2014 to provide funding for the estimated redundancy costs related to the Savings Proposals be approved; (ii) A Supplementary Estimate from the General Fund Reserves of £17,500 in 2014/2015 be approved to fund the reinstated savings on the Mayoralty; (iii) A sum of £20,950 from 2013/2014 in-year under spends be set aside to fund payments to Milverton Parish Council and Wiveliscombe Town Council with regard to public conveniences; and (iv) A sum of £15,000 from the 2013/2014 in-year under spends be set aside to fund additional grass cutting / dog bins,
- (f) The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy with MRP calculated as follows, be approved:-
 - for supported borrowing, 4% on outstanding debt;
 - for unsupported borrowing, the debt associated with the asset divided by the estimated useful life of the asset; and
 - for capital grants and contributions to third parties, 4% (or 1/25th) per year on a straight line basis; and
- (g) The General Reserves position (including an additional supplementary estimate of £17,200) and the Medium Term Financial Plan projections, and the continuing financial challenge to address the Budget Gap for future years be noted.

The details of the recorded vote was as follows:-

Yes	No	Abstain
Councillor Mrs Adkins		Councillor A Govier
Councillor Mrs Allgrove		Councillor Mrs Govier
Councillor Beaven		Councillor Henley
Councillor Bishop		
Councillor Bowrah		
Councillor Cavill		
Councillor Coles		
Councillor Denington		
Councillor D Durdan		
Councillor Miss Durdan		
Councillor Edwards		
Councillor Farbahi		
Councillor Mrs Floyd		
Councillor Gaines		
Councillor Hall		
Councillor Hayward		
Councillor Mrs Herbert		
Councillor C Hill		
Councillor Mrs Hill		
Councillor Horsley		
Councillor Hunt		
Councillor Miss James		
Councillor R Lees		
Councillor Mrs Lees		
Councillor Ms Lisgo		
Councillor Meikle		
Councillor Ms Palmer		
Councillor Prior-Sankey		
Councillor D Reed		
Councillor Mrs Reed		
Councillor Gill Slattery		
Councillor T Slattery		
Councillor Miss Smith		
Councillor Mrs Smith		
Councillor P Smith		
Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams		
Councillor Stone		
Councillor Tooze		
Councillor Mrs Warmington		
Councillor Watson		
Councillor A Wedderkopp		
Councillor D Wedderkopp		
Councillor Williams		
Councillor Wren		

(Councillors A Govier, Mrs Govier, Hall, Hayward, Henley, C Hill, Meikle, Ms Palmer, D Reed, Mrs Reed and D Wedderkopp all left the meeting at 9.25 p.m.)

11. **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.

(b) Capital Programme Budget Estimates 2014/2015

The Executive had also recently considered the proposed General Fund (GF) and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programmes for 2014/2015.

Full Council had previously approved the prioritisation framework for capital schemes, reflecting the issues flagged by Members as being important during the Corporate Business Plan review process. The prioritisation system had been developed in order to ensure that the Council's very limited Capital Resources were channelled at key projects. This framework had been applied in arriving at the proposed Capital Programme for 2014/2015:-

Priority	
1	Business Continuity (corporate / organisational)
2	Statutory Service Investment (to get to statutory minimum / contractual / continuity)
3	Growth (top 5)
4	Transformation
5	Others

The Council approved a Capital Programme for General Fund schemes totalling £3,930,000 in February 2013. Slippage from the previous year plus supplementary budget approvals during the year had increased the current Budget to £17,469,000.

Approval had also recently been given for £2,040,000 of capital expenditure for 2014/2015 (and £264,000 for 2015/2016) for the Firepool Access, Section 106 Agreement Affordable Housing schemes and the Chapel Roof (Taunton Cemetery).

Further bids for capital expenditure have been received for 2014/2015 and these had been considered against the prioritisation framework. The proposed additions to the General Fund Capital Programme for 2014/2015 total £684,000.

Funding of capital investment in the future would rely upon a variety of sources including Capital Receipts, Grant Funding, Capital Contributions, Revenue Budgets or Reserves and through Borrowing.

In addition to the above programme, the Corporate Management Team had prioritised the 'Top 5' growth-related capital projects as those schemes that would be recommended to Members assuming the necessary funding sources could be identified.

These were large schemes that were not currently affordable from existing capital resources. However, the Executive had included a recommendation in the General Fund Revenue Budget report to allocate £1,600,000 of the 2014/2015 New Homes Bonus Grant to support growth and regeneration priorities which would provide a potential source of funding towards the identified schemes.

The proposed Draft HRA Capital Programme 2014/2015 totalled £7,750,000 for Maintenance and Improvement schemes plus £500,000 for the Social Housing Development Programme. This was part of a Five-Year Capital Expenditure Estimate of some £37,900,000 for the period 2014/2015 to 2018/2019. The programme reflected the priorities set out in the updated 30-Year HRA Business Plan.

It was proposed that the HRA Capital Programme for 2014/2015 would be fully funded from revenue resources, including the Major Repairs Reserve, Revenue Contributions to Capital Outlay and the Social Housing Development Fund.

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee had considered the draft programmes and had made no formal suggestions for any changes. The Tenants Services Management Board had also considered the draft Housing Capital Programme.

On the motion of Councillor Williams, it was

Resolved that:-

- (a) The additional General Fund Capital Programme Budget of £684,000 be approved; and
- (b) The Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme of £8,250,000 for 2014/2015 also be approved.

(c) Council Tax Setting 2014/2015

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.

The Town and Parish Council Precepts for 2014/2015 totalled £545,755. The increase in the average Band D Council Tax for Town and Parish Councils, including Special Expenses for the Unparished Area, was 3.80% and resulted in an average Band D Council Tax figure of £14.49 for

2014/2015.

The Police and Crime Commissioner had recently announced a 1.99% increase. The confirmed Precept was £6,454,303 which resulted in a Band D Council Tax of £171.37. The precept would be adjusted by a Collection Fund contribution of £39,010.

The Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority had recently announced a 1.99% increase. The confirmed Precept was £2,895,906 which resulted in a Band D Council Tax of £76.89. The Precept would be adjusted by a Collection Fund contribution of £17,500.

Somerset County Council had announced a 0% increase. The confirmed Precept was £38,691,169, which resulted in a Band D Council Tax of £1,027.30. The Precept would be adjusted by a Collection Fund contribution of £238,490.

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 Taunton Deane, in shares relative to their precept levels.

This year the estimated balance was a surplus of £329,630. Taunton Deane's share of this amounted to £34,630, and this had been reflected in the General Fund Revenue Estimates.

In accordance with Standing Order 18(6), 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 unanimously:-

Resolved:-

- (a) That the following formal Council Tax Resolution to reflect the proposed 1.99% increase in Council Tax in 2014/2015 be approved:-
- (1) That it be noted that on 15 January 2014 the Council calculated the Council Tax Base for 2014/2015:-
 - (i) for the whole Council area as 37,662.97 [Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act"); and,
 - (ii) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept related as in Appendix B below;
 - (2) That the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2014/2015 (excluding Parish precepts) be calculated as £5,192,970;

(3) That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2014/2015 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:-

- (i) £92,573,475 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils. (*Gross Expenditure including amount required for working balance*)
- (ii) £86,834,750 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act. (*Gross Income including reserves to be used to meet Gross Expenditure*)
- (iii) £5,738,725 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). (*Total Demand on Collection Fund.*)
- (iv) £152.37 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 (including Parish precepts). (*Council Tax at Band D for Borough Including Parish Precepts and Special Expenses*)
- (v) £545,755 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as in Appendix B below). (*Parish Precepts and Special Expenses*).
- (vi) £137.88 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. (*Council Tax at Band D for Borough Excluding Parish Precepts and Special Expenses*);

(4) To note that Somerset County Council, Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner and Devon and Somerset Fire Authority would issue 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;

(5) That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate provisional amounts shown in the table in Appendix A to these Minutes as the

amounts of Council Tax for 2014/2015 for each part of its area and for each category of dwellings;

(6) To determine that the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2014/2015 was not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB Local Government Finance Act 1992; and

(7) To note that if the above formal Council Tax Resolution was approved the total Band D Council Tax would be as follows:-

	2013/14	2014/15	Increase
	£	£	%
Taunton Deane Borough Council	135.19	137.88	1.99%
Somerset County Council	1,027.30	1,027.30	0.00%
Police and Crime Commissioner	168.03	171.37	1.99%
Devon and Somerset Fire Authority	75.39	76.89	1.99%
Sub-Total	1,405.91	1,413.44	0.54%
Town and Parish Council (average)	13.96	14.49	3.80%
Total	1,419.87	1,427.93	0.57%

The details of the recorded vote was as follows:-

Yes

No

Abstain

Councillor Mrs Adkins
 Councillor Mrs Allgrove
 Councillor Beaven
 Councillor Bishop
 Councillor Bowrah
 Councillor Cavill
 Councillor Coles
 Councillor Denington
 Councillor D Durdan
 Councillor Miss Durdan
 Councillor Edwards
 Councillor Farbahi
 Councillor Mrs Floyd
 Councillor Gaines
 Councillor Mrs Herbert
 Councillor Mrs Hill
 Councillor Horsley
 Councillor Hunt
 Councillor Miss James
 Councillor R Lees
 Councillor Mrs Lees
 Councillor Ms Lisgo
 Councillor Prior-Sankey
 Councillor Gill Slattery
 Councillor T Slattery
 Councillor Miss Smith

Councillor Mrs Smith
Councillor P Smith
Councillor Mrs Stock-
Williams
Councillor Stone
Councillor Tooze
Councillor Mrs Warmington
Councillor Watson
Councillor A Wedderkopp
Councillor Williams
Councillor Wren

**APPENDIX
A**

Valuation Bands								
Council Tax Schedule 2014/15	Band A £	Band B £	Band C £	Band D £	Band E £	Band F £	Band G £	Band H £
Taunton Deane Borough Council *	91.92	107.24	122.56	137.88	168.52	199.16	229.80	275.76
Somerset County Council	684.87	799.01	913.16	1,027.30	1,255.59	1,483.88	1,712.17	2,054.60
Police and Crime Commissioner	114.25	133.29	152.33	171.37	209.45	247.53	285.62	342.74
Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority	51.26	59.80	68.35	76.89	93.98	111.06	128.15	153.78
Parish / Town only (a)*	9.66	11.27	12.88	14.49	17.71	20.93	24.15	28.98
Parish / Town & District (b)*	101.58	118.51	135.44	152.37	186.23	220.09	253.95	304.74
Total (c) *	951.95	1,110.61	1,269.27	1,427.93	1,745.25	2,062.57	2,379.88	2,855.86
<u>Parish:</u>								
Ash Priors	942.30	1,099.34	1,256.40	1,413.44	1,727.54	2,041.63	2,355.74	2,826.88
Ashbrittle	955.41	1,114.64	1,273.88	1,433.11	1,751.58	2,070.04	2,388.52	2,866.22
Bathealton	946.20	1,103.89	1,261.60	1,419.29	1,734.69	2,050.08	2,365.49	2,838.58
Bishops Hull	955.43	1,114.66	1,273.91	1,433.14	1,751.62	2,070.09	2,388.57	2,866.28

Bishops Lydeard/Cothelstone	962.80	1,123.26	1,283.73	1,444.19	1,765.12	2,086.05	2,406.99	2,888.38
Bradford on Tone	955.15	1,114.33	1,273.53	1,432.71	1,751.09	2,069.46	2,387.86	2,865.42
Burrowbridge	958.61	1,118.37	1,278.15	1,437.91	1,757.45	2,076.98	2,396.52	2,875.82
Cheddon Fitzpaine	957.43	1,116.99	1,276.57	1,436.13	1,755.27	2,074.40	2,393.56	2,872.26
Chipstable	953.69	1,112.63	1,271.59	1,430.53	1,748.43	2,066.32	2,384.22	2,861.06
Churchstanton	958.89	1,118.69	1,278.52	1,438.32	1,757.95	2,077.57	2,397.21	2,876.64
Combe Florey	954.75	1,113.87	1,273.00	1,432.12	1,750.37	2,068.61	2,386.87	2,864.24
Comeytrowe	950.19	1,108.55	1,266.92	1,425.28	1,742.01	2,058.73	2,375.47	2,850.56
Corfe	949.85	1,108.14	1,266.46	1,424.76	1,741.38	2,057.98	2,374.61	2,849.52
Cotford St Luke	956.31	1,115.68	1,275.08	1,434.45	1,753.22	2,071.98	2,390.76	2,868.90
Creech St Michael	961.17	1,121.35	1,281.56	1,441.74	1,762.13	2,082.51	2,402.91	2,883.48
Durston	949.09	1,107.27	1,265.46	1,423.63	1,739.99	2,056.35	2,372.72	2,847.26
Fitzhead	958.63	1,118.39	1,278.17	1,437.93	1,757.47	2,077.00	2,396.56	2,875.86
Halse	951.83	1,110.45	1,269.10	1,427.73	1,745.01	2,062.27	2,379.56	2,855.46
Hatch Beauchamp	952.85	1,111.64	1,270.46	1,429.26	1,746.88	2,064.48	2,382.11	2,858.52
Kingston St Mary	950.92	1,109.40	1,267.89	1,426.37	1,743.34	2,060.31	2,377.29	2,852.74

Langford Budville	955.44	1,114.67	1,273.92	1,433.15	1,751.63	2,070.10	2,388.59	2,866.30
Lydeard St Lawrence/Tolland	955.16	1,114.34	1,273.55	1,432.73	1,751.12	2,069.49	2,387.89	2,865.46
Milverton	958.69	1,118.47	1,278.26	1,438.03	1,757.59	2,077.15	2,396.72	2,876.06
Neroche	954.47	1,113.53	1,272.62	1,431.69	1,749.85	2,067.99	2,386.16	2,863.38
North Curry	957.07	1,116.57	1,276.09	1,435.59	1,754.61	2,073.62	2,392.66	2,871.18
Norton Fitzwarren	960.81	1,120.94	1,281.08	1,441.21	1,761.48	2,081.74	2,402.02	2,882.42
Nynehead	959.75	1,119.70	1,279.67	1,439.62	1,759.54	2,079.45	2,399.37	2,879.24
Oake	952.71	1,111.49	1,270.28	1,429.06	1,746.63	2,064.19	2,381.77	2,858.12
Otterford	942.30	1,099.34	1,256.40	1,413.44	1,727.54	2,041.63	2,355.74	2,826.88
Pitminster	955.43	1,114.66	1,273.91	1,433.14	1,751.62	2,070.09	2,388.57	2,866.28
Ruishton/Thornfalcon	958.50	1,118.24	1,278.00	1,437.74	1,757.24	2,076.73	2,396.24	2,875.48
Sampford Arundel	967.92	1,129.23	1,290.56	1,451.87	1,774.51	2,097.14	2,419.79	2,903.74
Staplegrove	952.88	1,111.68	1,270.51	1,429.31	1,746.94	2,064.55	2,382.19	2,858.62
Stawley	954.30	1,113.34	1,272.40	1,431.44	1,749.54	2,067.63	2,385.74	2,862.88
Stoke St Gregory	959.34	1,119.22	1,279.12	1,439.00	1,758.78	2,078.55	2,398.34	2,878.00
Stoke St Mary	953.15	1,112.00	1,270.87	1,429.72	1,747.44	2,065.15	2,382.87	2,859.44

Taunton	944.29	1,101.66	1,259.05	1,416.42	1,731.18	2,045.93	2,360.71	2,832.84
Trull	954.37	1,113.42	1,272.49	1,431.54	1,749.66	2,067.77	2,385.91	2,863.08
Wellington	958.93	1,118.75	1,278.58	1,438.39	1,758.03	2,077.67	2,397.32	2,876.78
Wellington Without	955.17	1,114.36	1,273.56	1,432.75	1,751.14	2,069.52	2,387.92	2,865.50
West Bagborough	952.49	1,111.23	1,269.99	1,428.73	1,746.23	2,063.72	2,381.22	2,857.46
West Buckland	954.19	1,113.22	1,272.26	1,431.28	1,749.34	2,067.40	2,385.47	2,862.56
West Hatch	953.74	1,112.69	1,271.65	1,430.60	1,748.51	2,066.42	2,384.34	2,861.20
West Monkton	958.82	1,118.61	1,278.43	1,438.22	1,757.83	2,077.42	2,397.04	2,876.44
Wiveliscombe	958.23	1,117.92	1,277.64	1,437.33	1,756.74	2,076.14	2,395.56	2,874.66

**APPENDIX
B**

TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL PRECEPTS

Parish/Town Council	2013/14			2014/15			Council Tax Increase*
	Tax Base	Precept Levied	Council Tax Band D	Tax Base	Precept Levied	Council Tax Band D	
		£	£		£	£	
Ash Priors	81.46	-	-	77.15	-	-	0.00%
Ashbrittle	86.74	2,000	23.06	91.49	1,800	19.67	-14.67%
Bathealton	84.83	500	5.89	85.52	500	5.85	-0.81%
Bishops Hull	1,052.00	20,750	19.72	1,066.11	21,000	19.70	-0.13%
Bishops Lydeard/Cothelstone	1,021.90	28,489	27.88	1,051.08	32,321	30.75	10.30%
Bradford on Tone	285.01	5,500	19.30	285.36	5,500	19.27	-0.12%
Burrowbridge	196.21	4,700	23.95	200.22	4,900	24.47	2.17%
Cheddon Fitzpaine	598.80	9,843	16.44	612.72	13,900	22.69	38.01%
Chipstable	129.81	2,150	16.56	130.11	2,223	17.09	3.16%
Churchstanton	342.98	8,126	23.69	348.93	8,681	24.88	5.01%
Combe Florey	116.50	2,250	19.31	120.42	2,250	18.68	-3.26%

Comeytrove	1,967.11	23,290	11.84	1,955.60	23,154	11.84	0.00%
Corfe	132.02	1,500	11.36	132.54	1,500	11.32	-0.39%
Cotford St Luke	752.62	15,300	20.33	764.65	16,065	21.01	3.35%
Creech St Michael	937.95	26,544	28.30	952.22	26,948	28.30	0.00%
Durston	58.64	607.37	10.36	58.89	600	10.19	-1.63%
Fitzhead	113.55	2,832	24.94	116.15	2,844	24.49	-1.82%
Halse	139.03	1,800	12.95	139.93	2,000	14.29	10.40%
Hatch Beauchamp	249.16	4,000	16.05	252.87	4,000	15.82	-1.47%
Kingston St Mary	424.73	5,496	12.94	425.85	5,508	12.93	-0.05%
Langford Budville	225.54	4,500	19.95	228.27	4,500	19.71	-1.20%
Lydeard St Lawrence/Tolland	199.03	3,839.23	19.29	204.14	3,938	19.29	0.01%
Milverton	562.51	12,650	22.49	569.28	14,000	24.59	9.36%
Neroche	239.15	4,446	18.59	245.73	4,484	18.25	-1.85%
North Curry	692.23	15,366	22.20	692.49	15,342	22.15	-0.19%
Norton Fitzwarren	903.16	25,871	28.64	904.74	25,122	27.77	-3.06%
Nynehead	165.34	4,250	25.70	162.35	4,250	26.18	1.84%

Oake	317.34	5,000	15.76	320.09	5,000	15.62	-0.86%
Otterford	165.11		-	168.69		-	0.00%
Pitminster	435.08	8,885	20.42	451.84	8,899	19.70	-3.56%
Ruishton/Thornfalcon	574.63	14,000	24.36	576.15	14,000	24.30	-0.26%
Sampford Arundel	121.94	4,800	39.36	124.91	4,800	38.43	-2.38%
Staplegrove	708.57	10,000	14.11	743.74	11,800	15.87	12.42%
Stawley	132.17	2,460	18.61	133.37	2,400	18.00	-3.32%
Stoke St Gregory	356.14	10,000	28.08	352.08	9,000	25.56	-8.96%
Stoke St Mary	198.25	3,008	15.17	198.81	3,236	16.28	7.28%
Taunton	14,115.83	41,218	2.92	14,206.18	42,292	2.98	1.95%
Trull	992.02	18,000	18.14	994.65	18,000	18.10	-0.26%
Wellington	4,290.56	97,396	22.70	4,355.37	108,666	24.95	9.91%
Wellington Without	293.61	5,500	18.73	292.04	5,640	19.31	3.10%
West Bagborough	154.78	2,500	16.15	163.53	2,500	15.29	-5.35%
West Buckland	424.77	7,580	17.84	419.36	7,483	17.84	-0.01%
West Hatch	136.11	2,330	17.12	135.80	2,330	17.16	0.23%

West Monkton	1,077.78	27,664	25.67	1,105.07	27,379	24.78	-3.47%
Wiveliscombe	1,027.90	23,500	22.86	1,046.48	25,000	23.89	4.49%
Totals	37,280.60	520,441	13.96	37,662.97	545,755	14.49	3.80%

* Please note that when this is run through the Council Tax system there could be small rounding differences on the percentage shown.

(d) Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy

At its last meeting, the Executive considered a report which detailed the Treasury Management and Investment Strategies for the 2014/2015 financial year.

The Council's debt was currently £94,200,000. Short-term interest rates were currently at 0.5% and this rate was expected to be at this level for the next financial year.

The Financial Services (Banking Reform) Act 2013 changes – which included the bail-in provisions – were reflected within the Treasury Management Strategy Statement.

The Strategy had taken account of the Government's predictions for growth, advice from the Council's Treasury advisors Arlingclose including their predictions on interest rates and changes in legislation governing financial institutions.

The Strategy looked to reduce the levels of investment per counterparty but included more counterparties with whom the Council could invest any cash surpluses. To reduce exposure to risk and volatility Taunton Deane would continue to:-

- (1) Consider security, liquidity and yield, in that order;
- (2) Consider alternative assessments of credit strength;
- (3) Spread investments over a range of approved counterparties; and
- (4) Only invest for longer periods to gain higher rates of return where there were acceptable levels of counterparty risk.

The historically low interest rate situation had led to significant reductions in investment income in the past years which impacted directly on the Council's budget.

The Council's General Fund Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) for 2014/2015 was £11,908,000 which was currently funded through internal borrowing. The Council was able to borrow funds in excess of the current CFR up to the projected level in 2016/2017 of £10,777,000.

On the motion of Councillor Williams, it was

Resolved that:-

- (1) The Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy be approved; and
- (2) The Prudential Indicators, set out in the Appendix to the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy be also approved.

(e) Council Tax Base 2014/2015 and Business Rates Retention and the National Non-Domestic Rates Return 2014/2015

At its January meeting, the Executive had been asked to consider reports on the:-

- (a) Council Tax Base – which had to be calculated for each financial year and was used to determine the Band D Council Tax for the year. The calculation was in accordance with the requirements of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base (England) Regulations 2012. The responsibility to approve the Council Tax Base was currently delegated to the Executive; and
- (b) Business Rates Retention and the National Non-Domestic Rates Return (NNDR1) 2014/2015 – Under the Business Rates Retention funding system, the Council was required to approve the NNDR1 for 2014/2015 by the end of January each year. The responsibility to approve the NNDR1 Return was currently delegated to the Executive.

As the Tax Base was largely a factual matter together with adjustments applied through approved policies, the Executive was of the view that the approval of the Tax Base should be delegated to the Section 151 Officer in future years.

The production of the NNDR1 this year had caused significant issues due to the late issue of the NNDR1 form template and guidance by the Department of Communities and Local Government. To comply with the deadline to submit the NNDR1 Return by 31 January 2014, the Executive had agreed to delegate the completion and submission of the Return to the Section 151 Officer. In addition, it was agreed that delegated authority should be sought to enable the Council's Section 151 Officer to approve the NNDR1 Return in future years too.

On the motion of Councillor Williams, it was

Resolved that:-

- (1) The requirement to approve the Council Tax Base be delegated to the Section 151 Officer in future years; and
- (2) Authority be formally delegated to the Council's Section 151 Officer to approve the National Non-Domestic Rates Return in future years too.

(f) Housing Revenue Account Estimates 2014/2015

The Executive had given consideration to the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) estimates for the 2014/2015 Financial Year. It also included details of the proposed increase in Average Weekly Rent for the year where a 6.23% increase had been recommended.

The Proposed Budget was based on assumptions and estimates on

expenditure requirements and income projections, in order to deliver the updated Business Plan.

Dwelling rents for approximately 6,000 properties provided annual income of over £24,000,000 for the HRA.

Local authorities had both the power and duty to set their own rent. However, in December 2000 Central Government set out a policy for social rents in England to be fair, affordable and less confusing for tenants. Local Authorities and Housing Associations were required to bring rents into line over several years, using a national formula to set a target rent (also called 'formula rent') based on property values and average manual earnings in each area.

The previous subsidy system required Local Authorities to raise their 'average weekly rent' to meet the 'target' or 'formula' rent by the convergence date of 2015/2016. However, the Government had recently amended its guidance in this respect and full convergence could not now be obtained.

The final year that a convergence factor could be included in the rent calculation would now be 2014/2015 and the continuing budget impact of this change was that the Council would lose the potential to increase rent income by approximately £250,000 per year from 2015/2016 onwards.

From 2015/2016 the Government had proposed to alter the basis for calculation of guideline rent increases, from RPI plus ½%, to CPI plus 1% but the full impact of this change could not yet be predicted.

Increasing the actual average weekly rent paid by tenants to the target rent would make the rent paid higher than the guideline rent. It was therefore proposed that the average weekly rent for dwellings for 2014/2015 should be set at the guideline rent of £82.06, an increase of 6.23% or £4.81 per week.

The dwelling rents formed the major element of income for the HRA. Each ½% rent increase was equivalent to approximately £117,300. If the average rent was set lower than the current proposal, the loss of income would have to be met by reducing expenditure.

The budget for non-dwelling rents and charges for services and facilities was based on a 3.2% increase.

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee considered the 2014/2015 draft budget at its meeting on 21 January 2014 where no formal recommendations to change the HRA budget were made. The Tenants Services Management Board had also considered the report.

On the motion of Councillor Mrs Adkins, it was

Resolved that:-

(1) The Average Weekly Rent increase of 6.23% be approved; and

(2) The Housing Revenue Account budget for 2014/2015 be agreed.

(g) Introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy in Taunton Deane – Regulation 123 List and Governance Arrangements

Full Council had previously approved the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in Taunton Deane with effect from 1 April 2014.

Under Regulation 123 of the CIL Regulations, the Council was required to publish a list of the projects that it intended to finance using CIL receipts. The purpose of the list was to ensure that developers did not end up paying twice for the same piece of infrastructure.

The draft Regulation 123 list had now been prepared and included measures believed to be those most important for the delivery of the Council's Core Strategy. Affordable Housing was not within the scope of CIL and would continue to be delivered through Section 106 Agreements.

The Council would need to publish the Regulation 123 List on its website in time for the introduction of CIL on 1 April 2014. The list would be reviewed on a regular basis and an annual report on the collection, management and distribution of the CIL receipts would also need to be prepared.

It was recognised that the Council needed to have a process to determine how the CIL receipts should be spent, to agree on the timing of spend and to arrange the distribution of funds to partner organisations.

This was likely to take the form of a 'Governance Board' made up of Members to which an officer group would report. It had been agreed that the precise composition of the Board should be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation and the Shadow Portfolio Holder.

On the motion of Councillor Edwards, it was

Resolved that:-

- (1) Both the proposed Regulation 123 List and the suggested governance arrangements for the delivery of infrastructure and spending of CIL receipts, specifically the proposed Governance Board, be endorsed; and
- (2) The Regulation 123 List be formally adopted.

(The Chief Executive (Penny James), the Section 151 Officer (Shirlene Adam) and the Assistant Chief Executive (Shirlene Adam) all declared prejudicial interests in the following item and left the meeting during its consideration.)

(h) Localism Act 2011 – Pay Policy Statement

The Localism Act 2011 had made it a requirement for all Local Authorities to prepare a Pay Policy Statement each year for approval by Members.

The first Statement was prepared in 2012 and was considered by Scrutiny and the Executive before approval by Full Council. However, due to the fact that the document was largely unchanged for the third year, the 2014/2015 Statement had again been reported directly to Full Council.

The 2014/2015 Statement covered the 'joint working' arrangements with West Somerset Council and the approvals made by Council on 12 November 2013.

The Statement had to include policies on which remuneration of its Chief Officers and its lowest paid employees (and the relationship between them) were based.

The Statement was also required to:-

- Set out arrangements for the remuneration of Chief Officers on appointment;
- Set out arrangements for payments on termination of employment for Chief Officers even if covered by other approved policies;
- Set out arrangements for the re-employment of Chief Officers; and
- Be published on the Council's website.

On the motion of Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams, it was

Resolved that the Pay Policy Statement for 2014/2015 be approved.

12. **Reports of the Leader of the Council and Executive Councillors**

Due to the lateness of the hour, the Mayor suggested that responses to questions asked of the Executive Councillors should be made in writing outside of the meeting and circulated to all Members. This was agreed.

(i) **Leader of the Council (Councillor Williams)**

Councillor Williams's report covered the following topics:-

- Flooding Events;
- Budget Setting;
- The Brewhouse Theatre and Arts Centre;
- Taunton Town Centre Rethink;
- Orchard Centre Development Proposals;
- Sale of former Taunton Youth and Community Centre Site;
- West Park Employment Site, Chelston; and
- Taunton Forward.

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

The report from Councillor Cavill covered:-

- The Brewhouse Theatre;
- New Inward Investment Website;
- Business Investment;
- Business Survey;
- Events;
- Taunton Town Centre Company and BID (Business Improvement District);
- Hinkley C;
- Somerset Growth Plan;
- Hestercombe House, Cheddon Fitzpaine, Taunton; and
- Asset Management.

(iii) **Environmental Services and Climate Change (Councillor Hunt)**

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

- Environmental Health / Licensing;
- Deane DLO; and
- Climate Change / Carbon Management.

(iv) **Sport, Parks and Leisure (Councillor Mrs Herbert)**

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

- Parks;
- Community Leisure and Play; and
- Tone Leisure (Taunton Deane) Limited Activities.

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

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

- Council House Building; and
- Housing Revenue Account Maintenance Contracts.

(vi) **Corporate Resources (Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams)**

The report from Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams provided information on the following areas within her portfolio:-

- Corporate and Client Services;
- Corporate Health and Safety;
- Customer Contact Centre;
- Health and Wellbeing;

- Legal and Democratic Services; and
- Revenues and Benefits.

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

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

- Planning Policy;
- Monkton Delivery Board;
- Duty to Cooperate – Mid Devon;
- Sandhill Park, Bishops Lydeard;
- Car Parking; and
- Communications.

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

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

- Flooding;
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- Halcon One Team – “Think differently, do differently”; and
- Other Priority Areas.

13. **Appointment of Civic Marshall**

Following the withdrawal of Councillor Mrs Adkins’s nomination, the item was deferred for further consideration.

(The meeting ended at 10.04 pm.)

Appendix

Voting *

18. (1) All motions and amendments, unless the law otherwise requires, shall be decided by affirmation or by a show of hands, as the Mayor shall choose.
- (2) If before the Mayor calls for the vote, either,
- (a) the mover and seconder of the motion - or of the amendment, or,
 - (b) any councillor supported by the votes of at least a quarter of the councillors present,
- request that a Recorded Vote be taken, then votes shall be publicly declared, and recorded in the minutes.
- (3) In addition to the option under SO 18 (2), any member may require - immediately after a vote is taken - that the manner in which that member's vote was cast (for, against or abstaining) shall be recorded in the minutes.
- (4) Where a vote is taken upon the choice of more than two candidates for an appointment and there is not an absolute majority in favour of one candidate, the candidates receiving the least number of votes shall be excluded and a further vote taken, the procedure being continued until there is an absolute majority in favour of one candidate.
- (5) (a) in the case of an equality of votes, the Mayor shall have a second or casting vote.
- (b) The Mayor shall have unfettered discretion as to its use for against the proposition.
- (6) (a) Immediately after any vote is taken at a budget decision meeting there must be a recorded vote in the minutes of the proceedings of that meeting the names of the persons who cast a vote for the decision or against the decision or who abstained from voting.
- (b) "budget decision meeting" means the meeting at which the Council makes a calculation (whether originally or by substitute) in accordance with any sections 31A, 31B 34 to 36A, 42A 42B, 45 to 49, 52ZF, 52ZJ of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 or