

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 4 October 2011 at 6.30 pm.

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

Also present : Mrs Anne Elder, Chairman of the Standards Committee.

1. Prayer

The meeting was opened with a prayer offered by the Mayor's Chaplain, The Reverend David Fayle.

2. Mrs Audrey Meikle

The Mayor reported on the sad death of Mrs Audrey Meikle, wife of Councillor John Meikle and a former Mayoress of Taunton Borough Council.

The Council stood in memory of Mrs Meikle.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council held on 19 July and 16 August 2011, copies having been sent to each Member, were signed by the Mayor.

4. Apologies

Councillors Cavill, Meikle, Mrs Messenger and Tooze.

5. Declaration of Interests

Councillors Brooks, A Govier, Prior-Sankey, Mrs Waymouth and D Wedderkopp declared personal interests as Members of Somerset County Council. Councillor Henley declared personal interests both as a Member of the Somerset County Council and as an employee of Job Centre Plus. Councillors Mrs Hill, Mrs Smith and Stone declared personal interests as employees of Somerset County Council. Councillor Miss James declared a personal interest as an employee of Viridor. Councillor Slattery declared a

personal interest as an employee of Sedgemoor District Council. Councillor Wren declared a personal interest as an employee of Natural England. Councillors Hayward and Ross declared personal interests as the Council's representatives on the Somerset Waste Board. Councillor Nottrodt declared a personal interest as a Director of Southwest One. Councillor Ross also declared a personal interest as the alternate Director of Southwest One. Councillors D Durdan and Stone declared personal interests as Tone Leisure Board representatives. Councillor Swaine, as a part-time swimming instructor at St James Street Pool, declared a personal interest. Councillor Mullins declared a personal interest as EDF Energy at Hinkley Point was his employer. Councillor Ms Lisgo declared a personal interest as Chief Executive of Age UK Somerset Limited.

6. **Public Question Time**

(1) Mr Paul Partington made reference to the questions he had previously asked about the fly-tipping of various items on land adjacent to the Kingston Stream on the north side of 28 Grange Walk, Taunton and waste ground south of 97 and 99 Wedlands.

He acknowledged that a considerable amount of material had been removed from the land and that some fencing had been erected to prevent further tipping. However, at one point at the boundary a large patch of brambles remained which still contained some of the tipped materials that he had originally complained about.

Mr Partington asked whether the Council would be removing this fly-tipping and clearing the brambles on the boundary of the parkland and when this would be undertaken?

He also asked about the status of the parkland. Was it registered as an open space, public park or something else?

In response, Councillor Hayward confirmed that he would look into these further issues and would send Mr Partington a written response to his questions.

(2) The Reverend David Fayle referred to the current proposals to redevelop the Halcon North part of Taunton.

Whilst he was generally in favour of new housing developments, he was very aware how worried and frightened local people were about their futures and whether they would be able to return to live in the area. He asked what plans the Council had to address these fears? He also questioned how removing approximately 200 structurally stable homes would improve things in the area?

Councillor Jean Adkins reported that the Council was currently doing a great deal to keep people informed through written communications, meetings and 'drop-in' surgeries. The aim was to work very closely with those who would be affected to provide the information that was wanted to reassure them of future plans. She regretted that some local residents were worried and hoped

that they would contact the Housing Enabling Lead, Lesley Webb-Crookes, who was very approachable to talk through their concerns.

She added that the overall project was longstanding and would considerably improve the area if it took place.

7. Motion – Provision of Confidential Reports to Councillors

Moved by Councillor Horsley, seconded by Councillor Mrs Smith.

Taunton Deane Borough Council had always been in the vanguard of progress in openness and transparency in all its forms of communication with members of the public and the citizens of Taunton Deane who it served. Council Tax payers on the one hand and recipients of the services on the other should always be considered first when decisions affecting citizens' way of life were concerned.

It was recognised that from time to time items of a confidential nature might impact on the providers of services either personally or commercially where sensitivity had to be applied about the release of certain information.

Notwithstanding this, Taunton Deane Borough Council explicitly acknowledged Councillors 'Right to Know' on all matters where decisions were being taken; whether by the whole Council, the Executive or under delegated responsibilities as set out in the Constitution.

It followed that all Councillors could attend all meetings of the Executive, Committees, Sub-Committees and Panels where confidential items were laid before the relevant Members, and should therefore be entitled to receive such items at least two working days before the relevant meeting at which they would be discussed.

The mover and seconder of the motion requested that a formal roll call of votes be taken and recorded in the Minutes in accordance with Standing Order 18(2).

The motion was put and was lost with twenty two Councillors voting in favour of the motion and twenty nine Councillors voting against, as follows:-

Yes

Councillor Mrs Baker
Councillor Brooks
Councillor Coles
Councillor Farbahi
Councillor Mrs Floyd
Councillor Henley
Councillor Mrs Hill
Councillor Horsley
Councillor Miss James
Councillor R Lees
Councillor Mrs Lees

No

Councillor Mrs Adkins
Councillor Mrs Allgrove
Councillor Beaven
Councillor Bishop
Councillor Bowrah
Councillor Denington
Councillor D Durdan
Councillor Ms Durdan
Councillor Edwards
Councillor Gaines
Councillor A Govier

Councillor Ms Lisgo
Councillor Mullins
Councillor Prior-Sankey
Councillor G Slattery
Councillor T Slattery
Councillor Mrs Smith
Councillor P Smith
Councillor Stone
Councillor Swaine
Councillor A Wedderkopp
Councillor D Wedderkopp

Councillor Mrs Govier
Councillor Hall
Councillor Hayward
Councillor Mrs Herbert
Councillor C Hill
Councillor Hunt
Councillor Nottrodt
Councillor Ms Palmer
Councillor D Reed
Councillor Mrs Reed
Councillor Ross
Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams
Councillor Mrs Warmington
Councillor Watson
Councillor Mrs Waymouth
Councillor Ms Webber
Councillor Williams
Councillor Wren

8. **Recruitment of an independent Member to Taunton Deane Borough Council's Standards Committee**

Reported that following the resignation of Mr Maurice Stanbury from the Standards Committee earlier in the year, the Committee's interviewing panel had recommended that the vacancy be filled by Mr Adrian Cox.

As someone who had previously held senior positions with the Somerset County Council and the Department of Health, the interviewing panel was of the view that Mr Cox would be a real asset to the Council and had therefore invited him to provisionally join the Committee.

In order to comply with the terms of the Council's Constitution this appointment had to be formally made by Council.

Resolved that Mr Adrian Cox be appointed as an independent Member of the Council's Standards Committee.

9. **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's report covered the following topics:-

- Breach of Confidentiality;
- Notable Events;
- Long Term Budget Strategy;
- Taunton Regional Fire Centre;

- Castle Green Enhancement and High Street, Taunton;
- EDF Contacts;
- Meeting with Business Leaders; and
- Good News for Taunton.

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

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

- The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill;
- Safer Somerset Partnership;
- Community Policing Awards;
- Health and Wellbeing Boards;
- Taunton Deane Partnership;
- Priority Areas;
- Total Somerset – Customer Access;
- Community Development Team;
- Youth Initiatives Fund; and
- The Weekly Bulletin.

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

The report from Councillor Cavill covered:-

- Keeping Members informed;
- Stimulating Business Growth and Investment;
- Ensuring a Skilled and Entrepreneurial Workforce;
- Creating an Attractive Business Environment;
- Tourist Information Centre; and
- Asset Management.

(iv) **Environmental Services and Climate Change (Councillor Hayward)**

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

- Crematorium;
- Climate Change / Carbon Management;
- Waste Management;
- Deane DLO; and
- Environmental Health Teams.

(v) **Sports, Parks and Leisure (Councillor Mrs Herbert)**

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

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

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

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

- Empty Homes and New Homes Bonus;
- “Rogue” Landlords and the Landlord Accreditation Scheme;
- Stakeholder Event and the HRA 30 Year Business Plan;
- Estates Team and Anti-social Behaviour;
- Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership; and
- Halcon Regeneration Project.

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

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

- Customer Contact Centre;
- Legal and Democratic Services;
- Performance and Client Team;
- Revenues and Benefits;
- Southwest One.

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

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

- Planning Appeal;
- Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA);
- Core Strategy;
- National Planning Framework;
- Neighbourhood Plans;
- Planning Review;
- Deregulation of Planning Fees;
- Heritage and Landscape;
- Economic Development and Planning;
- Parking Strategy Review;
- Communications.

(Councillors Bishop and Ms Palmer left the meeting at 7.40 pm. Councillors D Reed, Stone and D Wedderkopp left the meeting at 7.45 pm. Councillor Morrell arrived at the meeting at 7.54 pm and then left at 8.12 pm. Councillors Farbahi, Horsley, Mrs Smith and P Smith all left the meeting at 8.15 pm. Councillor Mrs Hill left the meeting at 8.17 pm. Councillors D Durdan and Ms Durdan left the meeting at 8.20 pm. Councillor Swaine left the meeting at 8.40 pm.)

(The meeting ended at 9.15 pm.)