

Executive – 11 August 2011

Present: Councillor Williams (Chairman)
Councillors Mrs Adkins, Cavill, Edwards, Hayward, Mrs Stock-Williams and Mrs Warmington

Officers: Kevin Toller (Strategic Director), Joy Wishlade (Strategic Director), John Sumner (Asset Planning Manager, Southwest One), Shirlene Adam (Strategic Director), Tonya Meers (Legal and Democratic Services Manager) and Richard Bryant (Democratic Services Manager)

Also present: Councillors Bishop, R Lees, Ms Lisgo, Morrell, Mrs Waymouth and A Wedderkopp

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm.)

69. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 13 July 2011, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and were signed.

70. Taunton Deane Borough Council Carbon Management Plan for 2011/2012

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the Council's Carbon Management Plan (CMP) for reducing carbon emissions from the Council's operations during 2011/2012.

The report reflected on the Council's progress in reducing carbon emissions between 2006/2007 and today, set out the priorities for 2011/2012 and briefly described the key actions planned. These actions had been developed by the joint Member / Officer Carbon Management Steering Group.

The CMP was accompanied by an Action Plan with 46 carbon reduction actions across the Taunton Deane / Tone Leisure sites and activities. The actions from this Plan for which the Council was able to quantify potential savings would result in a year-on-year saving of 5.2% or 225 tonnes of CO₂, if fully implemented. Financially, this equated to savings of about £65,000 per year.

Priorities for 2011/2012 set out in the Action Plan included the following:-

- The harsh winter of 2010/2011 had shown that the insulation of buildings like The Deane House and the Deane DLO Depot was fairly poor. Improving the levels of insulation was therefore felt to be essential;
- Electricity prices had risen by 34% over the last three years. The Council was a large importer of electricity. Reducing the import of electricity through implementing energy efficiency measures and starting to generate Taunton Deane's own electricity was considered important; and
- Petrol and diesel prices were set to rise further in the future. Therefore,

reducing fuel consumed for travel by Deane DLO and by Taunton Deane/Southwest One staff was a third major priority for 2011/2012.

Full details as to how the above key actions would be brought into effect were set out in the report.

Further reported that the target for 2011/2012 was to reduce the Council's carbon emissions by at least 3% from 2010/2011. This was in line with the reduction target of 'at least 3% year-on-year' that had jointly been agreed between Taunton Deane, Somerset County Council and the four other Somerset districts in 2010.

Noted that the Corporate Scrutiny Committee had considered and supported the CMP and Action Plan at its meeting on 21 July 2011. A number of issues were raised by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee which would be considered through the duration of the plan, including:-

- Options for Taunton Deane to become involved in micro trading;
- Extending the energy auditors scheme; and
- Reducing energy usage at the Stoke Road Nursery.

The Committee had also commented positively in support of the installation of solar PV where possible on Council owned buildings.

Resolved that the Carbon Management Plan for 2011/2012 be agreed.

71. **Future use of The Deane House**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the future use of The Deane House, Taunton.

As part of the Budget Review, Southwest One had been requested to consider options for the future use of The Deane House. Options included the sale of The Deane House site and the build of a new property, or moving in to share with another organisation. A further option was to maximise the layout of The Deane House to free up space to share with another organisation.

With regard to this latter option, reported that the Council had recently been approached by Avon and Somerset Police (ASP) who had identified The Deane House as its preferred location for a presence in Taunton from 2014 when ASP would be required to vacate the current Police Station in Shuttern.

ASP had looked at a number of options within Taunton but the only one that really met its specification for a town centre presence with reasonably good access to the key routes in and out of Taunton and parking for their response vehicles, was The Deane House. ASP required an "in principle" decision by the Council during late summer, so that they could plan accordingly.

The Council held the freehold interest of the land, which included the swimming pool and car park. A plan of the site, which extended to 6.12 acres, was submitted for the information of Members.

The Deane House comprised 5563 square metres (sm) of Gross Internal Area (GIA) and accommodated approximately 349 staff including Southwest One, Tone Leisure and the South West Audit Partnership, permanent and fixed term.

The demand for workspace had changed in the last ten years and office space had been increasingly seen as an overhead which organisations had sought to reduce.

The options for The Deane House and adjoining land were reported as follows:-

- (1) Rationalise The Deane House office space to release 500sm (GIA) and let Avon and Somerset Police and secure a rental from the Police;
- (2) Rationalise The Deane House office space to release 2550sm (GIA) and let to Avon and Somerset Police and other appropriate partners. Letting large areas of floor space to office based public sector partners, in the current office market was likely to prove difficult. Consideration could though be given to other uses, such as serviced office space or educational;
- (3) Relocate the Council headquarters to County Hall in Taunton. This would need to be simultaneous to a sale of The Deane House and its campus, investment of the capital receipt and accommodation at County Hall being ready to move into;
or
- (4) The Council undertaking to build a new, preferably shared and zero carbon headquarters. The sale or letting of The Deane House would be required to fund the rent.

All options would involve the adoption of a more “Smart Office” approach that optimised workspace layout, provided collaborative workspaces, enhanced meeting room management, harnessed technology and managed the cultural change required by staff.

All the options would also provide significant improvements towards the Government’s Total Place workplace, the aims of which were to join up public services to make them work more effectively and to save costs in a tough spending environment.

ASP had commissioned a feasibility study which had shown that it would be possible to fit their requirements into the ground floor and first floor areas reported.

The requirements of the Police included basing 131 staff at The Deane House, with 47 workstations/desk spaces, working to Smart Office principles of open plan and “hot-desking”. Storage facilities would be required, along with lockers, showers and access to interview rooms and to the building at all times. ASP had also requested sharing the current reception area and sufficient spaces in the car park for 33 response vehicles.

Avon and Somerset Police’s opening times were 8am to 10pm, plus Saturday mornings. Issues that would be dealt with at reception included:-

- Reporting crime/incidents;

- Reporting traffic accidents;
- Production of driving documents;
- Message taking;
- Reporting of information/intelligence;
- Reporting lost property;
- Handing in/collecting found property;
- Signing on bail;
- Pedlar licences;
- Shotgun applications;
- Surrender of offensive weapons;
- Registration of sex offenders;
- Surrender of firearms; and
- Recovery of seized vehicles.

To enable further information to be provided on the financial elements of the options, it was **resolved** that the press and public be excluded from the meeting because of the likelihood that exempt information would otherwise be disclosed relating to Clause 3 of Schedule 12(A) to the Local Government Act 1972 and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

Further reported that the Corporate Scrutiny Committee had considered the options at its meeting on 21 July 2011 and decided that Option 1 (sharing with the ASP) and funding for the feasibility study for Option 1 should be recommended to the Executive. The Committee was also concerned that Taunton Deane might wish to implement Option 2 in the future so that any work done for Option 1 should be done in such a way that Option 2 could be achieved later on as opportunities arose.

Noted that if the Executive's decision was to accede to the ASP request, a further report would need to be brought to both Scrutiny and the Executive when more detailed work had been done and before any final decision was made.

Resolved that:-

- (1) Option 1, rationalising The Deane House office space to release circa 500sm (Gross Internal Area) and letting this to Avon and Somerset Police, be approved to go forward to the next stage of a full feasibility study. Also that this be undertaken in a way that would not prevent Option 2 (Rationalising The Deane House office space to release circa 2550sm and letting to Avon and Somerset Police and other appropriate 'partners') coming forward in the future as opportunities arose; and
- (2) funding from the property maintenance budget for The Deane House, for a feasibility study, which would cost in the region of £1570 (Option 1) together with IT consultation costs, be also approved.

72. **Executive Forward Plan**

Submitted for information the Forward Plan of the Executive over the next few months.

Resolved that the Forward Plan be noted.

(The meeting ended at 6.48 pm.)