

Executive – 16 November 2011

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

Officers: Penny James (Chief Executive), Shirlene Adam (Strategic Director), Joy Wishlade (Strategic Director), Adrian Priest (Principal Estates Surveyor, Southwest One Property and Facilities Management), Tim Child (Freehold Property Team Leader (Estates), Southwest One Property and Facilities Management), David Evans (Economic Development Specialist), Martin Griffin (Retained HR Manager) and Richard Bryant (Democratic Services Manager)

Also present: Councillors Bishop, Coles, Gaines, Henley, Morrell, Ross, A Wedderkopp and Wren
Francis Cornish (Chairman of the Taunton Town Centre Company), Graham Love (Taunton Town Centre Manager) and Mrs Anne Elder (Chairman of the Standards Committee)

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm.)

96. Apology

Councillor Edwards.

97. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 12 October 2011, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and were signed.

98. Public Question Time

(a) Councillor Henley reported that the paving slabs in Bath Place, Taunton looked as if they were going to be replaced by “blacktop” (tarmacadam). He asked whether any consultation with Taunton Deane had occurred prior to work commencing in Bath Place and what this Council’s response had been? He also asked if any financial contribution had been sought by the County Council in connection with the replacement of the slabs?

The Chairman stated that he would seek answers to the questions asked and would let Councillor Henley have a written response in due course.

(b) Councillor A Wedderkopp asked the following two questions:-

(1) He was aware that the electricity company EDF were looking to relocate its office of 2,500 people from London. Had any contact been made with EDF by the Council in respect of this matter?

(2) What recent lobbying of the Police had occurred to try and move things forward in respect of Montpellier Estates’ development for a secure unit at Westpark, Chelston, Wellington?

With regard to the first question, the Chairman confirmed that there had, and would continue to be, regular contact with EDF in respect of the availability of office space in Taunton in connection with the forthcoming Hinkley Point C project. The reported relocation of the company's offices would also now be pursued.

As to Councillor Wedderkopp's second question, Councillor Cavill reported that the Police had now provided the information sought from them which had enabled the Section 106 Agreement to be submitted and signed by the parties. This should result in the development proceeding.

99. Declaration of Interest

Councillor Wren declared personal and prejudicial interests as an employee of Milverton Parish Council in connection with the next item relating to Creedwell Orchard, Milverton. He was aware that he could remain in the room to hear the presentation of the report, after which he could address the Executive. He would then leave the meeting.

100. Land at Creedwell Orchard Housing Estate, Milverton, Taunton

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the proposed sale of a small area of land forming part of the Creedwell Orchard Housing Estate, Milverton to enable an access to be provided to a residential development on an adjoining site.

The adjoining land of approximately 9.5 acres, was owned by the property developers S Notaro Limited and it had the benefit of an extant planning consent for 72 dwellings.

The Council had granted conditional outline planning permission in December 1975 for residential development on the Notaro land with an application for reserved matters being approved in August 1979.

In June/July 1981 works were undertaken on site to lawfully implement the planning permission. These works comprised the excavation of foundation trenches for one of the plots that were subsequently backfilled for health and safety reasons.

In November 2006 an application for a Certificate of Lawful Existing Use or Development in respect of the planning consents that had previously been granted was submitted by Bach Homes who, at the time, had an option to purchase the development site. The application had been submitted on the basis the planning permission was validly implemented and therefore remained extant.

In the balance of probability it had been proven that the foundation trenches had been dug which in turn amounted to a material operation comprised in the development. Accordingly, in May 2007 Taunton Deane granted a Certificate of Lawfulness for the proposed residential development.

Originally it had been proposed to access the development site from the two points detailed in the report. However, it was now evident that the development site needed only to be accessed from land owned by Taunton Deane, subject to redesigning the service road layout to the satisfaction of the County Highway Authority.

Following the issue of the Certificate of Lawfulness for the development site, Bach Homes made formal approaches to the Council to request to purchase or acquire an option to purchase the Council's land to enable an access to be created.

The Council's land, which extended to approximately 364 sq m (0.09 acres), was situated on the Creedwell Orchard Housing Estate and had been used for a number of years to site three private garages owned by local residents.

Following negotiations with Bach Homes, terms and conditions were provisionally agreed by the Asset Holdings Manager for an Option to purchase the Council's land to provide the required access.

Although work began on preparing a report on the outcome of these negotiations to the Executive for its meeting in May 2008, this was not completed as the Milverton Parish Council formally requested that the Certificate of Lawfulness was revoked by the Council.

No further discussions took place with Bach Homes whilst this request was considered which subsequently became the subject of a Judicial Review as the Council remained of the view that the Certificate of Lawfulness was valid. The Council successfully defended itself in this action and the Judicial Review was formally withdrawn in February 2011.

Following the withdrawal of the Judicial Review, the company S Notaro Limited made a new approach to the Council as to the availability of the access land and, as a result, terms including the level of consideration had been provisionally agreed.

The development company had been informed that the requirements contained in the Section 52 Highway Agreement relating to the extant planning consent could be varied to provide that only a single point of access to the development site was required without the need to carry out any road widening works in Creedwell Orchard.

The land was held by the Housing Revenue Account and by formally resolving to reinvest the capital receipt from its sale into affordable housing, the Council would be able to retain 100% of the proceeds of sale.

The terms and conditions of sale would ensure that the Council would receive a share of further value that might be obtained through the intensification of the use of its land providing the access to the development site and beyond. It was further provided that S Notaro Limited would be required to replace the garages currently situated on the Council's land and transfer the buildings and land back to the Council. The present licensees would be given first option to use and occupy the garages on new agreements.

Final details of the development scheme, including density and any Section 106 Agreement affordable housing provisions would be determined through the planning application process, in which the Parish Council and local residents would have the opportunity to make representations.

As an alternative to selling the Council's land to provide access to the development

site, which would clearly produce the highest value, the land needed for access to the proposed development site could be suitable for development with one or two dwellings, subject to obtaining planning permission. The level of capital receipt that might be obtained under these circumstances was submitted for the information of the Executive.

Furthermore, Milverton Parish Council had also expressed an interest in acquiring the Council's land for use as a play/amenity area and details of the formal offer that it had made to the Council for its consideration were also submitted.

However, if the Council was minded to sell the land as a small development site in isolation or to the Parish Council at this level of price, the opportunity to obtain a very substantial capital receipt for reinvestment in to affordable housing would be lost.

Further reported that this issue had been considered by the Community Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 8 November 2011. Although broadly supportive of the proposal to sell the land required to provide the access, Members were concerned about the transparency of the terms of the deal and recommended that the District Valuer's advice was sought.

Before the Executive considered the contents of the report, representations were received from Councillor Gwilym Wren, Jenny Hoyle, County Councillor Tony McMahon, Canon Ian Ainsworth-Smith, Gill Lumby, Lindsay Fortune, Michael Reynolds, Chris Mann and Rhodri Powell. One of the points made concerned the Critchel Down Rules which it was thought could apply to this particular case.

During the discussion of the item, Members discussed the sale of the land and whether the Council should await the receipt of a detailed planning application before any further action was taken. A proposal to defer a decision was defeated.

Resolved that:-

- (1) The sale of the freehold interest in the land shown cross-hatched on the plan (accompanying the report) to S Notaro Limited to enable access to be created to serve the development site outlined in bold on the same plan, on the terms and conditions agreed by Southwest One, be agreed;
- (2) The proceeds of the sale be directly re-invested into affordable housing;
- (3) The offer made by the Milverton Parish Council to purchase the Council's land (cross-hatched on the plan) be rejected;
- (4) The District Valuer be appointed to advise on terms and conditions relating to the proposed sale of the land to ensure the Council was obtaining best value; and
- (5) No sale of the land be proceeded with until clarification as to whether the Critchel Down Rules should be applied had been obtained.

101. Development of "Maggie's" Cancer Charity provision using a small part of Galmington Playing Field, Taunton

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the potential development of a psycho-social support centre for people with cancer and their families, friends and carers at Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton.

Maggie's was a national charity founded by Maggie Keswick Jencks, a writer and landscape designer who, following a diagnosis of breast cancer, developed a vision for a cancer caring centre that could make the experience of diagnosis and treatment easier to bear. Maggie's unique centres were located on hospital grounds to provide the very best complement to medical care

Maggie's wanted to provide a centre in the South West and their preferred location was Taunton. Musgrove Park Hospital had looked at its site and had come to the conclusion that the most appropriate location would involve encroaching onto a small part of the Galmington Playing Field.

Although only a corner of the field would be required, the charity would provide some area around the building such as a sensory garden which would be open to the public in mitigation. It was likely that further mitigation on improved facilities such as play equipment or improved sports facilities would also be required.

Reported that there were two restrictions affecting the land at Galmington Playing Field which meant the Council was not free to sell all or part of the land without taking some preliminary steps:-

1. There was a restrictive covenant on the land which required it to be used only for recreational purposes. To remove this would require someone who currently had the benefit of the covenant (a descendant of the original vendor) to consent. A consideration would normally be paid.

Alternatively an application could be made to the Lands Tribunal for the covenant to be lifted. This would incur the legal costs of making such an application and could take up to a year to get a decision.

2. In addition the land was subject to a Charitable Trust and the Council as Trustee could only sell on the terms set out in the Charities Act. This required the Council to comply with various requirements and to be satisfied that it was obtaining the best terms possible for the sale. If not, the consent of the Charity Commissioners would be needed.

Whilst both of these restrictions could be overcome, it did mean that the period prior to sale was likely to be considerably longer than for a normal transaction.

Noted that the proceeds arising from any sale would have to be used for the original purpose of the charity - the provision of recreational facilities. It was likely that such provision would need to be elsewhere on the Galmington Playing Field if only part of the field were to be sold.

Further reported that one of the key issues for the community around the Musgrove Park Hospital site was parking on the local streets. The development should not cause significant deterioration to the current position.

A transport strategy and travel plan would be required as part of the development process and would form part of the planning application. The number of staff employed would not greatly add to the number currently working at the hospital. Therefore, whilst the concerns of the local residents were well understood, this development on its own was not likely to have a significant negative impact on the current position.

This matter was discussed at the Community Scrutiny Committee meeting on 11 October 2011 when the principle of selling the playing field land was supported for this proposed development with the proviso that careful consideration be given to local parking issues and providing access to the new centre exclusively through the hospital grounds.

Resolved that:-

- (1) The principle of selling a small part of the Galmington Playing Field to Maggie's Cancer Charity for the development of a new psycho-social support centre at Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton be agreed; and
- (2) Maggie's and Musgrove Park Hospital be requested to give careful consideration at the design stage to the potential impact on local parking issues and the provision of access to the new centre through the hospital grounds.

102. Review of Town Centre Management activities in Taunton and a request for a financial contribution towards Taunton Town Centre Company Business Improvement District Administration costs during 2011/2012

Considered report previously circulated, concerning a further request for a contribution towards the administration of the Business Improvement District (BID) programme, delivered by the Taunton Town Centre Company (TTCC).

TTCC had been active over the last year in delivering an extensive programme of events, improvements and initiatives aimed at attracting people into the town centre, enhancing their stay and increasing the income of town centre businesses.

The five year BID programme had commenced on 1 October 2007 and would conclude on 30 September 2012, unless a second term ballot approved its continuation.

During its current term the BID would invest over £1 million in service enhancements funded by the levy paying business community. In the first four years of the programme, this investment had been enhanced through additional funding contributions from the private sector, Avon and Somerset Constabulary and the Council.

Noted that an annual contribution from the Council had been envisaged at the inception of the BID to support TTCC in meeting the administrative costs of the BID, ensuring the levy collected was directed towards actual service delivery.

To date aggregate receipts for the BID levy totalled approximately £900,000; a reduction of £80,000 on business plan projections. A further £40,000 remained

available for collection. However, there had been a significant reduction in the total number of businesses trading, largely attributable to recession. Due to this reduction in the total number of businesses trading within the BID area there has been a small but significant reduction in levy income when compared to the BID Business Plan agreed in 2007.

The reduction in business numbers and levy had resulted in adjustments to service delivery in year four and further adjustments would be required in year five to keep expenditure in line with the income derived from the levy.

In order to protect service delivery under the BID, the Council had been requested to review the BID Business Plan for decision each year prior to commencement of the BID operating year on 1st October.

During the current year the company had an ambitious programme of events and activities planned, including provision of the town's Christmas Festival and seasonal lighting display. TTCC would also be supporting celebrations for the Olympic Torch Relay and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

The BID provided for an award winning BID Police Team and a programme of street cleaning and graffiti removal in support of the county town. Support was given to the specialist and independent retail offering within the town including management support, signage project and the marketing initiative, "SHOP TAUNTON".

The Company had therefore asked the Council to contribute £20,000 towards the administration of the BID during the current financial year. That contribution would cover TTCC's financial year between October 2011 and September 2012.

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee had considered this item at its meeting on 27 October 2011 and had resolved to recommend the Executive to agree the requested contribution to the Taunton Town Centre Company from Local Authority Business Growth Incentives (LABGI) reserves.

Resolved that a contribution of £20,000 from Local Authority Business Growth Incentives reserves be provided to the Taunton Town Centre Company to maintain the administration of the Taunton Business Improvement District.

103. Request from the Taunton Town Centre Company Limited for support to plans to develop a second term Business Improvement District proposal leading to a renewal ballot

Considered report previously circulated, which sought the involvement of the Council with the Taunton Town Centre Company's (TTCC) intention to develop new Business Plan proposals to continue with the Business Improvement District (BID) for a second term.

Taunton BID was a five year programme of investment by local business rate payers to bring enhanced service improvements in support of retail, commerce and public areas across the town centre.

The TTCC had first proposed a BID for Taunton Town Centre in 2007. The five year programme had been accepted by the business community through a local referendum. At the time Taunton Deane had fully assisted TTCC towards the making of a formal BID Submission and in making formal arrangements to hold the ballot.

The current five year programme of investment had commenced on the 1 October 2007 and would conclude on the 30 September 2012, prior to which it was anticipated that a second term ballot would be held amongst the town businesses probably in the Spring to obtain a mandate to continue the BID for a second term.

The TTCC therefore intended to develop a new BID proposal (the BID Submission) to be lodged with the Council early in 2012. It had also embarked on a consultation with the business community to determine the appetite for a second term BID and to establish the priority services to be delivered under the BID during a second five year term. This consultation would form the basis of a new business plan proposal for a second term BID.

A formal notice and request for a further referendum to be held among the business community in the form of a secret ballot would be submitted to the Council in due course. On receiving the BID Submission it would be incumbent on the Council to make onward arrangements and to instruct the ballot.

This item was considered by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 27 October 2011. The Committee recommended the Executive to support the Taunton Town Centre Company in the development of a new BID submission.

Resolved that:-

- (1) The development of a new Business Improvement District (BID) Submission by the Taunton Town Centre Company (TTCC) be supported;
- (2) The future request for the Council to hold a ballot on behalf of TTCC be anticipated and that £5,000 be allocated from the Local Authority Business Growth Incentives budget to pay for the costs associated with the ballot;
- (3) Future provision for the collection of the annual levy and any liability for payment of the levy for its own hereditaments within the BID area under a second BID term be made by the Council; and
- (4) The possibility of making a contribution to the TTCC for the administration of the BID programme be considered by the Council as part of its annual budget setting process.

104. Proposal for Exemption to Contract Standing Order 13 for the Procurement of Development, Construction and related services from the Partner Panel set up by the Homes and Community Agency

Considered report previously circulated, concerning a proposal for a further exemption to Contract Standing Order 13 relating to Contracts above Threshold 3.

The Council had previously endorsed the use of the South West Regional

Development Agency's (SWERDA) consultant's list by Project Taunton. However SWERDA would cease to exist in March 2012. The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) had a similar list of contractors who had been through the European Procurement process and were available for Local Authorities to use.

It was proposed to make use of the HCA's list for a period of three years ending in December 2014.

Due to the size of the contracts handled by Project Taunton, some of the commissions were in excess of the Council's Standing Orders Threshold 2 and Threshold 3.

Usually all contracts that fell under paragraphs 13(c) and (d) in the Contract Standing Orders had to comply with the process laid down. However, for contracts under 13(c), there was an exemption in paragraph 14(e) as follows:-

"14(e) - the contract to be entered into is to be dealt with in a prescribed manner under agency arrangements entered into by the Council with another authority."

Unfortunately, this exemption did not also cover 13(d), which related to contracts above Threshold 3 in the Contract Standing Orders. A further exemption for such contracts was now requested.

The advantages of using this exemption, included the following:-

- The HCA had already complied with EU Regulations;
- The HCA's framework agreement was for three years with an option to extend by a year. The rates tendered represented the maximum rates that businesses on the panel could apply;
- The HCA Panel had been procured through a fully OJEU compliant process; and
- The attraction of a three year framework agreement should give businesses an incentive to offer suitable rates.

The only disadvantage reported was that the Council could be seen to be limiting its external consultancy to those on the framework. However, the Council could choose to go through the full procurement process if it so wished.

Resolved that Full Council be recommended to approve:-

- (1) The exemption to the Council's Standing Orders at paragraph 14(e) being extended to cover paragraph 13(d); and
- (2) The use of the Homes and Communities Agency Framework under exemption 14(e) to cover the three year period, 2011 – 2014.

(The Democratic Services Manager, Richard Bryant, declared a prejudicial interest in the

following item and stated that he would leave the meeting if there was any discussion concerning the proposals relating to the Democratic Services Unit.)

105. Theme 5 of Core Council Review (CCR) - Corporate Management Team (CMT), Project Taunton (PT), Economic Development, Growth, and Legal and Democratic Services

Considered report previously circulated, concerning Theme 5 (CMT, Legal and Democratic and the Personal Assistants) which was the remaining part of the Core Council Review (CCR) that needed to be completed.

CMT had last been reviewed by Members in 2008 when it had been reduced in size by one Director. Since then, it had been considered essential to maintain corporate capacity whilst the organisation had continued to manage its high level ambitions, good quality services and our change programme. The latter had been significant and had involved the CCR, the Deane DLO review and the creation of Southwest One.

It was however recognised that the Council's financial position dictated a need to further rationalise expenditure on staffing capacity to not only generate a saving for the 2012/2013 Budget, but to provide a Direction of Travel to meet the requirements of the Budget Review Project for the next three to four years.

Both Scrutiny and the Executive had previously agreed that the current Corporate Priorities should be maintained. This would require the continued resourcing of a comprehensive Growth and Regeneration delivery capacity in particular.

The Council had also agreed to retain Deane DLO and implement a comprehensive investment and savings plan that would deliver significant savings to the Council.

Taunton Deane therefore needed to continue to have the capacity and skills/experience to continue to:-

- Plan for, deliver and secure external funding for growth – physical, social and economic;
- Focus on securing and supporting our existing businesses and encourage and support further inward investment;
- Address levels of inequality in our communities, both social and economic;
- Support the delivery of affordable housing, through new innovative ways as public funding became increasingly squeezed;
- Focus on the “Green Agenda”, both in terms of our own performance as a business, and in terms of the community and the promotion of Taunton Deane as a place for green business and industry to flourish;
- Have capacity to appropriately support, develop and adequately manage our external partnerships and contracts;
- Ensure the Deane DLO transformation was a success and delivered the level of savings and quality promised;
- React to the Localism and Open Public Services White Paper; and
- Manage the increased pace of service transformation in response to unprecedented reductions in funding and future central Government policy developments.

In addition to these areas over which the Council had a degree of choice, there were some areas of work that had to be maintained. These related to the proper governance and safe stewardship of the organisation and included Financial Propriety, Risk Management and Health and Safety, Corporate Governance, Standards and Ethics and delivering statutory services to an 'adequate' level.

The Council also has three statutory roles that it had to maintain, which were:-

- Head of Paid Service – currently the Chief Executive (CEO)/Penny James;
- Section 151 Officer – currently Strategic Director/Shirlene Adam; and
- The Monitoring Officer – currently a Theme Manager/Tonya Meers.

Earlier in the year, the following options were considered by both the Corporate Scrutiny Committee and by the Political Groups:-

- To replace the CEO post with a Managing Director;
- To share the role of CEO with another Authority; or
- Maintain the status quo.

Three Groups had expressed a strong preference for retaining a dedicated CEO post for the purpose of this review and no further comment had been received from the formal consultation.

Accordingly it was proposed that the status quo option should be accepted with no impact on the current post holder from the review.

The following three options in respect of the Strategic Directors had also been considered by Corporate Scrutiny and the Political Groups:-

- To reduce the number of Strategic Directors;
- To refocus the roles on specific business areas such as Corporate, Services and Growth; or
- Maintain the status quo.

The Groups were all agreed that the number of Directors needed to be reduced by one. It was proposed that the Council should therefore have three Directors as set out below:-

- (1) Strategic Director – Corporate;
- (2) Strategic Director – Growth and Regeneration; and
- (3) Strategic Director – Services.

A consequence of this proposal was that one of the existing Strategic Directors would become redundant with a last day of service of 31 March 2012.

It was further agreed that the Section 151 Officer role should continue to be held by a Director who was a qualified accountant.

Reported that one of the Strategic Directors had also formally requested to reduce their hours by 2/5ths. The CEO had (in consultation with the Group Leaders) accepted

this request. The saving to the Council from this proposal would be £38,000 split 75:25 across the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

Noted that the Strategic Director - Growth and Regeneration post would be funded for three years from historic reserves to give a fixed term saving in the Revenue Budget of £102,000 per year for three years split 75:25 across the General Fund and HRA.

In total this proposal reduced capacity and costs from four Strategic Directors to 2.6 Directors.

The Strategic Director – Services would also spend two days per week at Deane DLO to ensure continued visible leadership of the approved transformation programme.

Overall the proposals for the Strategic Directors would save £175,000 to the General Fund and £59,000 to the HRA, a total of £234,000. The potential one off restructuring cost would be £103,000.

Further reported that the previous report to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee set out the three broad options that were considered by Corporate Scrutiny and informally by all of the Group Leaders and their Groups in relation to the Theme Managers.

These options were broadly:-

- To reduce the number of Theme Managers;
- To refocus the roles to map onto the retained Director roles; or
- Maintain the status quo.

The Groups were agreed that for year one purposes – if a significant change was made at CEO and/or Director level - then care should be made not to destabilise the operational management of the organisation by significantly changing the current arrangements at Theme Manager level.

The original reports proposed that the Theme Manager roles should not be changed at this stage with the exception of the Growth and Development Theme Manager post.

However, the formal consultation had one overwhelming message – that the Council needed to retain a senior planning resource to deliver its growth ambitions. This had come from Unison and from a wide range of staff and from senior Members across the political spectrum. It was therefore, recommended that this post be retained in the new structure.

Options for the Monitoring Officer role had also been considered. The Groups had no strong feeling as to where this role sat within the organisation and were broadly content with the current structural arrangements. It was therefore suggested that the Monitoring Officer role was retained as an integral part of the Theme Manager - Legal and Democratic Services post.

The previous reports to Corporate Scrutiny set out the current position and various options with respect to the Project Taunton Delivery Team. These were considered by

Corporate Scrutiny and informally by all of the Group Leaders and their Groups. They had now also been formally consulted upon.

It was important to remember that the Project Taunton Team was wholly funded by some residual Project Taunton partnership money and Growth Points and as such represented no direct cost to the General Fund of the Council. However, if a Project Taunton Team was important to the Council then the funding for this would have to be taken on going forward from 2012/2013.

The Groups were agreed that this proposal should look at the future of Project Taunton together with all of the growth, regeneration and economic development functions of the Council as a whole, as well as the function being brought “in house” with the posts going forward being Council ‘owned’ posts.

It was also agreed that historic reserves could be used to fund some of the posts required going forward for a three year period to minimise any continuing revenue impact on the General Fund and the size of the projected budget gaps shown in the Medium Term Financial Plan to 2015/2016.

It was proposed that a new Growth and Regeneration Team should be created to:-

- become the Council’s ‘shop window’ for inward investment purposes;
- act as the Council’s Property Client;
- take the lead in marketing Taunton and Taunton Deane; and
- provide a function for the entire district. It was recognised that within this the regeneration of Taunton Town Centre and the urban extension of Monkton Heathfield would remain priority projects.

The team would be directly managed by the post of Strategic Director – Growth and Regeneration and would comprise posts of Commercial Manager, for a fixed two year period, who would focus on the major regeneration projects in Taunton and lead on commercial and property negotiations and a Regeneration Manager who would focus on the delivery of wider regeneration, infrastructure and growth including schemes within Project Taunton. This latter post would replace the existing ‘Project Taunton Regeneration Manager’ on the establishment and would be funded for three years from historic reserves.

Further proposed that the Economic Development Team should report directly to an Economic Development Manager post that would also sit within the Growth and Regeneration Team. The current vacant Lead role in the Economic Development Team would be deleted with 50% of the cost retained to allow for more restructuring and 50% being returned to the General Fund.

Noted that the current workload associated with the Project Taunton Project Co-ordinator post and Project Taunton Office Manager post had reduced to the extent that both posts could be deleted from the establishment. The remaining elements of the posts could be subsumed within the Business Unit – Growth and Development as part of these proposals. Details of the anticipated redundancy costs and saving to the Growth Point fund were submitted.

Further reported that the proposals for the Growth and Regeneration Team had been the main focus of formal consultation responses. The principal concerns were:-

- The proposal to delete the Theme Manager-Growth and Development Post;
- The proposal to bring Project Taunton 'in house'; and
- The proposal to add functions to the existing Project Taunton Team.

As mentioned above, it was now proposed and recommended that the Theme Manager - Growth and Development Manager post should be reinstated.

In addition, it was also proposed to retain the original suggestion that the Economic Development Specialist should become the Economic Development Manager and that this post took on the responsibility for the Economic Development Team within the Growth and Development Team.

This would ensure that all of the Economic Development/Regeneration functions remained integrated in the new Growth and Regeneration Team. The proposal also freed up some capacity for the Theme Manager - Growth and Development to focus on the key functions set out in the report and would enable this post to remain responsible long term for:-

- Development Management;
- Conservation and Landscape; and
- Planning Enforcement.

It was felt that the Business Support function should remain line-managed by the Theme Manager - Growth and Development. Even though the bulk of work would still be for planning, the Business Support Lead would liaise with the Growth and Regeneration Team to ensure support requirements were known and planned in.

The Strategic Director - Growth and Regeneration would manage the Theme Manager - Growth and Development, Commercial Manager, Regeneration Manager, and Economic Development Manager to ensure they developed and operated as 'one' team.

Submitted for the information of Members the concerns of the Chairman of the Project Taunton Advisory Board and of key strategic delivery partners (in both the public and private sectors) as to the proposals set out in the report concerning the bringing of Project Taunton 'in house'.

As a consequence, the following future approach was suggested:-

- The wider Growth and Regeneration Team should work across Taunton Deane, with its functions as follows:-
 - The regeneration of Taunton Town Centre (and for this purpose, the Project Taunton brand and focus be retained);
 - The development and engagement of local businesses;
 - Inward investment;

- Retained property client (limited to provision of expertise and advice, not management of Southwest One);
 - Advocacy for business across the Council;
 - Employment and Skills;
 - TIC/Tourism/Town Centre Management;
 - Culture; and
 - Marketing of Taunton and Taunton Deane.
- The Theme Manager - Growth and Development would take the lead (with input and advice from the Growth and Regeneration Team) on:-
 - Delivery of employment land; and
 - Delivery of wider housing growth.
 - The Growth and Regeneration Team would 'hot desk' between The Deane House (to ensure appropriate integration into Corporate Management Teams, and the wider Council) and with a new upgraded facility at The Auction Room, which would be used to 'do business' with the private sector and developers.

It was also suggested that the Project Taunton Advisory Board should be retained and focus predominately on the regeneration of Taunton and consider and take account of the wider growth and regeneration agenda for Taunton.

Thought had been given to the creation of an Apprentice post to support the newly formed Growth and Regeneration Team. The new post holder would have the opportunity to work across the whole Growth and Development 'Directorate'. This post would help to mitigate the impact of the rationalisation of existing support posts and would align with the Council's approach to introducing Apprentices to the Council as part of the Deane DLO transformation programme.

Further reported that the previous reports to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee set out a number of options that were considered by the Committee and informally by all of the Group Leaders and their Groups. One of these options was for the proposed creation of a Corporate Support Unit.

Essentially, Theme 5 (CMT and Legal and Democratic) did not have a single support unit unlike all of the other Themes in the Council where a successful Business Support unit has been set up.

It was proposed that all of the posts within Democratic Services, the Personal Assistants and the two administrative posts within Theme 1 be part of a proposal to form a wider Corporate Support Team for Theme 5 and Theme 1 and the Leader of the Council.

It was proposed that the Theme Manager – Legal and Democratic Manager be tasked with the creation of the Corporate Support Unit with a budget saving of at least £50,000 and that a further report was brought forward to ensure that the Unit became live on the 1 April 2012.

The above proposals set out a way forward to achieve a saving in year one of approximately £360,000 (including a one-off saving of £55,000 - £73,000 Theme

Manager costs met from reserves (less £18,300 in year one to fund the total maximum cost of an Apprentice for two years)) if the proposals were accepted in full. The proposal achieved and went beyond the initial Core Council Review target of a 10% saving for CMT.

Submitted details of the consultations that had been undertaken with Members, staff and Unison.

Resolved that Full Council be recommended to agree that:-

- (a) The number of Strategic Director posts be reduced from four to 2.6 with the allocation of £103,000 from reserves (£62,000 General fund, £21,000 HRA, £20,000 CCR Earmarked Reserve) in 2011/2012 to fund the associated costs;
- (b) The creation on the establishment of the post of 'Commercial Manager' for a fixed two year period funded from historic reserves;
- (c) The change of the establishment post of 'Project Taunton Regeneration Manager' to 'Regeneration Manager' funded for three years from historic reserves;
- (d) The change of the establishment post of 'Economic Development Specialist' to 'Economic Development Manager';
- (e) The deletion of 0.5 FTE vacant Economic Development Lead;
- (f) The creation of an Apprentice post for the Growth and Regeneration Team for a two year period funded from the year one General Fund saving;
- (g) Minor changes to reporting arrangements as set out in the report;
- (h) The creation of a Corporate Business Support Unit delivering a minimum saving of £50,000 to the Council;
- (i) The deletion of the Project Taunton Officer and Project Taunton Office Manager posts from the establishment; and
- (j) The allocation of £55,000 from historic 'growth' reserves to fund the one-off costs of creating the Growth and Regeneration proposals, set out in the report.

106. 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 8.48 pm.)