

Executive – 19 July 2006

Present: Councillor Williams (Chairman)
Councillors Bishop, Mrs Bradley, Cavill, Clark, Hall, and Leighton

Officers: Ms J Wishlade (Strategic Director), Mr N T Noall (Head of Development) Mr R Willoughby-Foster (Forward Plan Manager), Mr J Lewis, (Civic Contingencies Manager), Mr M Western (Head of Housing) and Mr G P Dyke (Member Services Manager)

Also Present: Councillors Stuart-Thorn and Wedderkopp

(The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm)

57. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2006 were taken as read and were signed.

58. Funding to support the 2006 Westival

Reported that the Westival was a new Arts Festival which was being launched in Taunton this summer. It was being put on by the Brewhouse Theatre Taunton Music Trust and Taunton Town Centre Company together with others working in collaboration with each other. The aims were to establish Westival as an Annual Festival that would grow in size and prominence over the next three years and make Taunton a cultural destination, bringing increased tourism and wealth into the area.

Various other businesses and organisations had pledged their support and £8,500 had been raised in sponsorship so far. The Westival was working on the usual financial models for Annual Festivals and they expected to lose money in the first year, break even in the second and make a profit in the third year. The sponsorship money was being used to underwrite those events which would not pay for themselves but additional funding was required for the marketing which would be crucial to the success of the Westival and to the administration of bookings. The organisers had been actively seeking funding and although £8,500 had already been raised many had indicated that they would be willing to sponsor year two of the Westival which gave them more notice in allocating budgets. The Council had already contributed £500 from its Tourism Promotion Budget and £2,000 from the 2005/06 Arts Budget towards marketing.

However in order for the first year of the Westival to be a success the marketing needed to be significant. The higher the marketing spend the bigger the reach. The Westival organisers considered that the programme had national significance. It was therefore considered that this Council

provide a further contribution of £19,000 from reserves to add to the marketing budget and to support the efficient administration of the event.

RESOLVED that Council be recommended that a Supplementary Estimate of £19,000 be made from General Funds to provide a grant in support of the Westival 2006.

59. Taunton Parking Strategy

Consideration was given to the draft Taunton Parking Strategy. Parking was an important issue for the future prosperity of business in Taunton. The Parking Strategy was a key component of the land use and transport planning of the town. The majority of the land identified for regeneration in the Vision for Taunton was owned by the Council and was mostly surface parking. Clearly multi-storey car parks must be provided to enable the Vision to happen. This presented a considerable challenge to the Borough Council. The study undertaken confirmed the principles of the Urban Design Framework and identified a number of priorities for future action.

The draft Parking Strategy which was completed in May 2006 was the subject of a workshop for both the Borough and County Councillors. In addition a stakeholder workshop was held in May at County Hall. The Strategic Planning Transport and Economic Development Review Panel had considered and unanimously agreed the report and draft Strategy at its meeting on 29 June 2006. The County Council had taken the Strategy to its Environment Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 4 July where the principles were supported and it would also be submitted to the Somerset Strategic Planning Conference on 17 July 2006 and the County's Executive Board on 26 July 2006.

A copy of the draft Parking Strategy was submitted with the report.

RESOLVED that the Taunton Parking Strategy and the principles and priority actions set out in the report be agreed. It was recognised that the standards in relation to employment parking needed to be developed further. The requirement for any proposals to change the arrangements in relation to the operation of residents parking schemes would be the subject of full consultation.

60. Planning Obligations Strategy for Delivering the Taunton Vision and Local Development Framework

Reported that planning obligations from developers under Section 106 would be necessary in order to deliver the Taunton Vision and various other proposals that might be included in the forthcoming Local Development Framework.

A decision on the way forward was now needed to meet the timescales of both the Taunton Vision and the LDF. Consideration was given to the main issues that were arising and proposals for dealing with them. Initially the

proposals were aimed at developments in Taunton Town Centre but would need to be expanded to a borough wide approach when the LDF core strategy was prepared.

The report had been prepared in consultation with Somerset County Council, the Taunton Vision Delivery Team, the Environment Agency and SWRDA. These organisations were the Borough Council's partners in delivering the Taunton Vision. Consultation had also taken place with stakeholders in the LDF process.

In addition the report had been considered in detail by the Strategic Planning Transportation and Economic Development Review Panel at its meeting on 29 June 2006. The Review Panel had agreed the recommendations without amendment but Members had raised a number of specific issues details of which were submitted.

RESOLVED that the following measures be agreed:-

- (i) Incorporation of planning obligations for each Town Centre site in the Town Centre Area Action Plan on the basis of priorities agreed with the Taunton Vision Delivery Team to secure development;
- (ii) Incorporation of a hybrid approach to planning obligations in the LDF under which small schemes would pay a flat rate charge and larger schemes would be able to make equivalent payments in kind as an alternative;
- (iii) Further research be commissioned to establish what level of tariff may be affordable in Taunton Deane having regard to the viability of differing types of development;
- (iv) A project plan be established for completing the planning obligations strategy via the core strategy and SPD;
- (v) Continue to prioritise and refine costs of schemes where developer funding would be sought (and which would be included in the Local Development Framework);
- (vi) Maximise the availability of other sources of funding for particular projects;
- (vii) Review existing procedures for collecting and distributing payments received from developers;
- (viii) Continue to liaise with the Government Office for the South West on the proposed way forward in the light of LDF stakeholder response and the Taunton Vision requirements;

- (ix) Consult further on the emerging planning obligations strategy with LDF stakeholders at the “preferred option” stages of the TCAAP and the core strategy.

61. Promises to tenants should the Housing Stock Transfer to Deane Housing ?

Reported that the Council had decided to consult tenants about a possible Housing Stock Transfer. Part of this consultation had involved identifying the priorities that tenants would want to see delivered in the event of a stock transfer. The Council’s formal consultation document (the offer document) would need to make clear statements about what transfer meant for tenants. Where clear statements were made about improvements that would be delivered through stock transfer it was important that these reflected tenant’s priorities and that Deane Housing would have the financial resources to deliver these promises.

Consideration was given to a report which contained an overview of the priorities that had been identified as part of the consultation to date together with an assessment of the impact on the Council if these priorities for improvements were promised as part of the Council’s formal offer document to tenants.

In December 2005 it was reported that the anticipated tenanted market value of the housing stock would be £36.3 million. Since then the valuation had been updated to reflect the 2006/07 budgets. These budgets showed a reduction in service charge and supporting people income together with an increase in management costs. These budget changes reduced the tenanted market value to £35.4 million.

Details were submitted of the consultation promises that could be delivered within this valuation and also set out options for further consultation promises. These would have a cost impact on the valuation.

Further details were submitted of options for consultation promises within existing valuation. Further potential improvements to housing services had also been identified and these could be provided at additional cost. Details were submitted. The Executive were made aware of the impact on the tenanted market value and also the impact on the anticipated net capital receipt.

RESOLVED that

- (1) All the promises set out in paragraphs 4(a) and 4(b) of the report to the Executive be included in the informal consultation with tenants over the next few months and subject to support through that process in the formal offer document to tenants that would be submitted to Council for approval;

- (2) All the promises set out in paragraph 4(c) of the report to the Executive in relation to improvements in housing services be included in the informal consultation with tenants over the next few months and that they be funded through a reduced valuation.

(The meeting ended at 7.55p.m.)