

Executive – 19 September 2007

Present: Councillor Henley (Chairman).
Councillors Coles, Horsley, R Lees, Mullins, Prior-Sankey and Mrs Smith.

Officers: Ms J Wishlade (Strategic Director), Mr B Cleere, (Strategic Director).
Ms J Hunt (Assistant Town Centre Manager) and Greg Dyke (Democratic Services Manager)

Also Present: Councillors Ms Brockwell, Leighton, Morrell and Williams.

(The meeting commenced at 6:15 pm).

93. Apologies

Councillors Brooks and A Wedderkopp.

94. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 18 and 19 July 2007, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and were signed.

95. Public Question Time

Messrs Brian Haimes, Ann Perry, Nicholas Clark, Will Shakespeare and Edmund Bailhache all spoke, made points and asked questions in connection with the proposed ice rink. As traders operating in the area they felt that there would be disadvantages to their businesses if the ice rink were to go ahead in the proposed location. Their view was that trade would be adversely affected as users of the rink would not necessarily be shoppers. Also, at a time when parking space would be at a premium, it would not be appropriate to remove parking spaces, especially as spaces were already being lost to the County Cricket Club development. There was also a perceived problem of noise from the operation of the ice rink.

Councillor Henley thanked the speakers for their comments and explained that their views would be taken into consideration when this matter was considered later in the meeting.

Councillor Williams, as a member of the public, asked why the question of the appointment of this Council's representatives on the Somerset Waste Board had not been included on the agenda.

Councillor Henley replied that he had consulted his Executive colleagues on this matter and they were not minded to revisit it. He felt that this Council would be ably represented by the councillors already appointed.

(Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey declared a personal interest in this matter as a member of Somerset County Council).

96. **Taunton Christmas Ice Rink 2007**

Submitted report, previously circulated which gave details of the current plans to bring an ice rink to Taunton town centre for the 2007 Christmas period. The report requested the use of a portion of the Coal Orchard car park, and sought financial support.

Taunton Town Centre Co (TTCCo) had brought a very successful ice rink to Taunton for the past two years. Last year it was enjoyed by over 16,000 people. There was popular demand to bring a larger rink back to the town again this year.

TTCCo would combine with APR Media in the management and responsibility for this initiative using contractor Cousins Entertainment.

Last year the rink was sited on the Brewhouse staff car park. This area would be unavailable this year as it would be in use as a compound for the contractors redeveloping the Somerset County Cricket site. The most practical alternative site was on the Coal Orchard car park.

As before, the costs of bringing this to Taunton were considerable. The Council were therefore being asked to pledge £16,000 as a contribution to the rink, as last year and bear the consequential loss of the car parking revenue.

Taunton Town Centre Co felt that there was still enough support for an ice rink in Taunton to make it worth bringing it back to the town again for a third year.

A suitable site had been identified on the Coal Orchard car park adjacent to St James St swimming pool. It was sufficiently close to the Brewhouse to facilitate cross marketing of their Christmas production (A Christmas Carol) and the ice rink. It was also sufficiently close to the town centre for customers to make combined trips to the rink and the town via St James St.

The Parking and Civil Contingencies Manager had confirmed that, with the information available, the rink, viewing gallery and skate hire marquee could be accommodated in the area described without affecting the operation of the remainder of the car park. The site would take 43 car park spaces out of use for approximately six weeks. The maximum consequential loss would be approximately £12,500. Some vehicles would obviously park elsewhere, but it was recognised, that with the loss of 56 spaces to the Cricket club development at the same time that parking over the Christmas period would be at a premium in this area.

Sponsorship had been secured from the Taunton Park and Ride of £5000. Financial support from Taunton Deane Borough Council of £10,000 would make the task of achieving break even much easier.

Other sponsorship and commercial opportunities were being sought to close the gap. This year Taunton BID would underwrite any loss.

RESOLVED that

1. the Council agree to contribute £10,000 sponsorship to the 2007 ice rink and, to bear the consequential loss of car parking revenue (maximum £12,500) for the period of installation, operation and dismantling of the ice rink;
2. a sum of £400 be agreed to cover the cost of carbon off setting;
3. £22,500 be vired from the existing budget for Leisure Services to fund this proposal.

97. **Exclusion of the press and public**

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item because of the likelihood that exempt information would otherwise be disclosed relating to clause 7 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

98. **Resources for Somerset Square**

At the meeting of the Executive on the 4 April 2007 it was agreed that the amount received for the sale of the portion of Coal Orchard land to the Somerset County Cricket Club would be retained for Project Taunton schemes and that in principle a contribution of this amount would be made to the completion of the area currently referred to as Somerset Square, subject to a further report. Submitted report which recommended the allocation of up to a maximum of £300k towards the scheme

RESOLVED that a maximum of £300k be allocated from the proceeds of the sale of Coal Orchard land for the completion of the works of the area currently referred to as Somerset Square.

(Councillor Coles declared a personal interest in this item as a member of the Somerset County Cricket Club).

(The meeting ended at 7:20 pm).