

Executive – 23 August 2006

Present: Councillor Williams (Chairman)
Councillors Bishop, Mrs Bradley, N Cavill, Hall, Leighton and Mrs Lewin-Harris

Officers: Mrs J Wishlade (Strategic Director), Ms S Adam (Strategic Director), Mr R I Taylor (Chief Solicitor), Mr D Thompson (Chief Valuer) Mr M Green (Taunton Vision), Mr S Kendall (Economic Development and Regeneration Manager), Mr S Murphy (Principal Accountant) and Mr R Bryant (Review Support Manager)

Also Present: Councillors Mrs Allgrove, Mrs Biscoe, Croad, Govier, Hayward, House, Lisgo, Prior-Sankey, Stuart-Thorn and Wedderkopp

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

62. Apology

Councillor Garner.

63. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2006 were taken as read and were signed.

64. Declarations of interest

Councillor Prior-Sankey declared a personal interest in Agenda Item Nos 6 and 7 as both a member of Somerset County Council and the Wessex Regional Flood Defence Committee.

Councillor Govier declared a personal interest in Agenda Item Nos 6 and 7 as a member of Somerset County Council.

Councillor Mrs Biscoe declared a personal interest in Agenda Item Nos 6 and 7 as an employee of one of the legal firms mentioned in the reports.

65. Taunton Town Centre Management Company : Request for additional grant for Invest to Save purposes – Taunton Christmas Lights

Considered report previously circulated, concerning an application made by the Taunton Town Centre Management Company (TTCM Co) for support to carry out an Invest to Save project in replacing and improving the current Christmas lights.

In recent years, the responsibility for the upkeep and operation of the lights in Taunton had been passed to the TTCM Co who were keen that the standard, visibility and impact of the Christmas lights were improved.

It was proposed to replace the current Christmas Tree lights, which had been plagued by a number of minor issues last year, with modern energy saving LED lights which also required minimum maintenance.

Currently the TTCM Co lit 19 Christmas trees in the town centre with each tree consuming 9,000w of power. LED replacement lighting would consume only 65w per tree, which represented a total energy saving of approximately 170,000w.

Noted that during the first four years of operation, the new LED system would enable well over half a million watts of energy to be saved. At a time when energy costs were rising steeply, an investment in LED lights would produce significant efficiency and consumption cost savings whilst also contributing to the aim for “public agencies to reduce overall energy consumption”. Noted that the installation of LED lights would also make a significant contribution to service and income targets for the TTCM Co.

Further reported that the Council provided an annual grant of £52,350 to the TTCM Co. The cost of the replacement LED system was estimated at £14,250.00.

The TTCM Co did not have the resources to purchase the system directly and had therefore approached the Council for an additional grant. The Council’s Financial Strategy permitted the funding of Invest to Save initiatives, such as the one proposed, from the General Fund Reserve.

Reported that it was expected that the annual energy savings predicted would take approximately three years to fully repay the initial purchase cost of the new LED system. In order to repay the money taken from reserves, the annual grant to the TTCM Co would be reduced by £4,750 to £47,600 for three years.

In year four, the Council would see an overall reduction in its budget as a result of this investment.

RESOLVED that under the terms of the Council’s Financial Strategy, a supplementary estimate from the General Fund Reserve of £14,250 be approved as an additional grant to the Taunton Town Centre Management Company to enable the purchase of new LED Christmas lights, with repayment taking place as described above.

66. Exclusion of press and public

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the items covered by Minute Nos 67 and 68 below as they contained exempt information as defined in paragraphs 7 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A 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.

67. Firepool, Taunton – Disposal route and procurement of a Development Partner

Consideration was given to proposals put forward by the Vision Delivery Team to market the land referred to as Firepool, Taunton (the Priory Bridge Road Car Park and the Livestock Market), with a view to identifying a development partner.

RESOLVED that it be agreed:-

- (1) to market Firepool as recommended by the Vision Delivery Team and the external consultants identified in the report, in accordance with the selection process outlined and to instruct a firm of Valuation Surveyors accordingly; and
- (2) to instruct solicitors to check the Official Journal of the European Union Papers, prepare a draft Development Agreement and negotiate the agreement with the successful developer's solicitors up to its completion.

68. Appointment of external property advisers and external lawyers in connection with the disposal of the land at Firepool, Taunton

Consideration was given to the appointment of external advisers and lawyers in connection with the proposed disposal for development of the two sites comprising the land at Firepool, Taunton.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the appointment of the company recommended in the report, for all property and valuation advice in respect of the proposed disposal of the land at Firepool, Taunton, be agreed; and
- (2) the appointment of the firm of solicitors recommended in the report, to undertake the necessary legal work on the Council's behalf in relation to the land at Firepool, be also agreed.

(The meeting ended at 8.20 pm).