

Executive – 22 September 2004

Present: Councillor Williams (Chairman)
Councillors Bishop, Mrs Bradley, Mrs Bryant, Cavill, Edwards, Garner, Hall and Mrs Lewin-Harris

Officers: Mrs P James (Chief Executive), Ms S Adam (Head of Finance), Mr P Carter (Financial Services Manager), Mr N T Noall (Head of Development), Mr A Priest (Senior Valuer), Mr D Greig (Parish Liaison Officer) and Mr G P Dyke (Member Services Manager)

Also Present: Councillors, Bowrah, Gill, Henley, Stone, Wedderkopp, Mrs Whitmarsh and Mrs Wilson

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm).

46. Apologies
Councillors Mrs Bradley, Edwards and Garner

47. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 25 August 2004 were taken as read and were signed.

48. Public Question Time

1. Councillor Henley, as a member of the public asked the following questions: -
a) With regard to the Housing Stock Option process, if tenants returned a “No” vote would it be ignored. If so, how much would it cost to keep re-running the ballot?

b) How does the Council expect motorists to be able to pay the proposed increased car park charges?

c) Although it was good to have received an “excellent” CPA rating, what was the cost of granting staff an extra day’s leave as a reward? It should also be remembered that the previous Liberal Democrat administration would have been instrumental in achieving this result.

d) Has Councillor Morrell been suspended? If so, why? If not, why has he been stopped from attending meetings?

The following replies were given:

a) Councillor Williams replied that he did not know what this cost would be. Any decision to re-run the ballot would be as directed by Government regulation and not the Council.

b) Councillor Bishop replied that the National Shared Transport Policy required all local authorities to provide sustainable transport. The agreed Transport Strategy

stated that a reduction in congestion could be brought about by changing people's habits.

c) Councillor Williams replied that he would provide a written answer. He reminded Councillor Henley that the CPA assessment was based on the Council's plans for the future and not what had happened in the past.

d) Councillor Williams informed Councillor Henley that Councillor Morrell was still a member of the Conservative Group. He would respond further at a later time.

2. Brian Burkitt, Mrs Wingfield and Mr Maggs, all residents of Dobree Park, Rockwell Green, Wellington asked questions and made statements in respect of the problems being experienced by them and other residents in relation to the use of the recently established playing field and pavilion which adjoined their property. The following problems were highlighted:

- Use of the facilities by teams that were not from Rockwell Green;
- Disturbance, intrusion and damage to property;
- Foul language, anti-social behaviour;
- Inadequate protective fencing for adjoining properties;
- Inadequate third party insurance.
- Need for CCTV installation;
- Lack of support from the Council.

Councillor Mrs. Wilson, as a member of the public, also drew attention to the inadequate protection for adjoining residents. Despite regular contact with the Parks Department the problem had still not been solved. This much needed facility was now becoming a problem and she asked what could be done to resolve these issues.

Councillor Williams replied that this facility was not necessarily totally restricted to Rockwell Green. He explained that it was the responsibility of the user clubs to ensure that they had adequate insurance cover. He undertook to look further into the problems of inappropriate use, unacceptable behaviour and inadequate protective fencing to see if these issues could be satisfactorily dealt with.

Councillor Williams pointed out that there might be a possibility of providing mobile CCTV coverage at some time in the future.

49. Capital Strategy 2004 to 2007

Reported that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister had recently removed the requirement for the Council to submit to Regional Government Offices the annual Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan. However it was considered to be good practice to continue to prepare an AMP and Capital Strategy annually.

The Capital Strategy was a summary of the Council's approach to capital investment including:

- Development and ongoing management of the Capital Programme
- Partnership working on capital projects

- Consultation
- Performance Measurement

The revised draft strategy for 2004-07 was submitted. It had been updated from the 2003 version by taking recent developments in the corporate strategy and other corporate developments and incorporating them into the revised document.

The Review Board had already considered the draft strategy and their comments had been taken into account.

RESOLVED that Council be recommended that the Draft Capital Strategy for 2004-2007 be agreed.

50. Asset Management Plan 2004

Reported that the Asset Management Plan for 2004-2005 had now been completed. The Plan had been updated from that submitted in July 2003 and indicated progress that had been made against objectives agreed at that time. It also showed how scarce resources had been used to their best advantage and how they had contributed to the Councils Corporate Priorities.

A change in the Strategy had been indicated in that the prime objective relating to properties in Taunton would be to ensure that those assets whether they be enhanced or sold contributed to the Vision for Taunton.

The Asset Management Plan was therefore consistent with the Council's corporate priorities.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

51. Public Rights of Way Agency Agreement

Reported that Somerset County Council as Highways Authority would normally be responsible for the maintenance of all public rights of way (Footpaths, Bridleways and RUPPs). Under an Agency Agreement the maintenance of unsurfaced public rights of way was carried out by Taunton Deane Borough Council. This Council currently contributed £54,160 per annum to this particular service and the County Council contributed £42,500. The Agreement could be terminated by either party on 31 March in any year providing notice was served on the other not less than six months in advance. Faced with the need for economies in the Council's budget all services were being reviewed in the light of the corporate priorities and statutory obligations. Consideration was therefore given as to whether this Council should inform the County Council that it intended to terminate the agreement on 31 March 2005.

The report contained details of the staffing implications of relinquishing the agency agreement together with budget implications and the result of consultations with Parish and Town Councils. The Rights of Way Service was a statutory function of

County Councils and there was no evidence to suggest that the level of service provided by the County Council would be less than under the Agency Agreement. By terminating the agency agreement the Borough Council would save £39,780 per annum at current prices. It was noted that the County Council had applied for increased funding for this service. If it were successful, this Council might seek to renegotiate the terms of the Agency Agreement and continue to provide the service in the event of the County Council agreeing to cover the full costs.

1) RESOLVED that the existing Rights of Way Agency Agreement with Somerset County Council be ended on 31 March 2005 and notice of such to be served on Somerset County Council.

2) Council be recommended to:-

- a) confirm the decision to serve notice on Somerset County Council;
- b) make the necessary amendments to the Council's base budget.
- c) maintain the existing Parish Grants budget to assist with the delivery of footpath maintenance.
- d) that any associated one off costs of termination are met within approved budgets of the Council
- e) consideration be given to renegotiation of the Agency Agreement in the event of the County Council being in a position to cover the full costs of the service.

52. Neroche Project

Reported that Forest Enterprise was co-coordinating the project bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the northern part of the Blackdown Hills. The Neroche Project as it was called would help to restore important historic landscapes, improve access to and interpretation of the wild life, landscape and culture of the area, provide training opportunities and apprenticeships in rural skills, and create an infrastructure to encourage visitors, benefiting local tourism operators and private land owners who wished to diversify.

This Council together with other partners was being asked to support the project in principle and to contribute towards its implementation over a five year period from 2006/07 – 2010/11.

A contribution of £73,500 was being sought by the Neroche Project from Taunton Deane Borough Council towards a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. The bid if successful would attract a grant of £2,000,000, which would be spent within the Blackdown Hills area nearest to Taunton and Wellington.

RESOLVED the Neroche Project be supported in principle and funding opportunities be pursued during the forth coming budget setting exercise.

53. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting for the item numbered 8 on the agenda because of the likelihood that exempt information would otherwise be disclosed relating to Clause 9 or Schedule 12 (a) of the Local Government Act 1972.

54. Proposed Industrial Development Scheme Frobisher Way off Bindon Road, Taunton.

Submitted report together with a detailed Capital Project Approval Report regarding a proposed development scheme, which would provide small light industrial units for use by starter up and young businesses in the Borough. It was anticipated that the scheme would be funded by the part retention and part sale of an existing Council owned property.

The report explained the detail of the proposed scheme and the benefits to the Council.

RESOLVED that the development scheme as detailed in the Capital Project Approval Report be agreed.

(The meeting ended at 8:40p.m)

Executive – 28 September 2004

Present: Councillor Williams (Chairman).
Councillors Bishop, Mrs Bryant, Edwards, Garner and
Mrs Lewin-Harris.

Officers: Mr N T Noall (Head of Development), Mr R Willoughby-Foster
(Forward Plan Manager) and Mr A Melhuish (Review Support
Officer).

Also Present: Councillor Hayward.

(The meeting commenced at 8.35pm.)

55. Apologies

Councillors Mrs Bradley and Cavill.

56. Taunton Deane Local Plan Modifications

(Councillor Mrs Lewin-Harris declared a personal interest in this item.)

Reported that at its meeting on 28 September 2004 the Strategic Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Review Panel had considered the proposed responses to the representations which had been received during the public consultation period for the Proposed Modifications to the Taunton Deane Local Plan.

After careful consideration, the Review Panel had recommended the Executive to agree the responses to the representations received and to recommend Council to adopt the Taunton Deane Local Plan.

RESOLVED that Council be recommended to adopt the Taunton Deane Local Plan.

57. Supplementary Planning Guidance for the Monkton Heathfield Major Development Site

(Councillor Williams declared a personal interest in this item.)

Reported that at its meeting on 28 September 2004 the Strategic Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Review Panel had considered the responses to consultation on the draft Development Guide for the Monkton Heathfield Major Development Site. The guide set out the Council's requirements to assist developers in formulating their proposals for the future development of the land at Monkton Heathfield which was to be allocated in the Taunton Deane Local Plan.

After careful consideration the Review Panel had agreed that the responses to the public consultation should be noted and that, following adoption of the Local Plan, the policy references in the guide be changed. It had also been

agreed to recommend the Executive to adopt the Monkton Heathfield Development Guide as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

RESOLVED that the Monkton Heathfield Development Guide be formally adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

(The meeting ended at 8.40pm.)