

## TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

### EXECUTIVE MEETING – 19 September 2007

#### REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF TAUNTON TOWN CENTRE COMPANY LTD

##### TAUNTON CHRISTMAS ICE RINK 2007

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Cllr Horsley)

#### **Purpose of Report**

To inform the Executive of the current plans to bring an ice rink to Taunton town centre for the 2007 Christmas period, to request the use of a portion of the Coal Orchard car park, *and to seek financial support.*

#### **Executive Summary**

Taunton Town Centre Co (TTCCo) has brought a very successful ice rink to Taunton for the past two years. Last year It was enjoyed by over 16,000 people. There is 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 will be unavailable this year as it will be in use as a compound for the contractors redeveloping the Somerset County Cricket site. The most practical alternative site is on the Coal Orchard car park.

As before, the costs of bringing this to Taunton are considerable. We are therefore requesting that Taunton Deane Borough Council should pledge £16,000 as a contribution to the rink, as last year and bear the consequential loss of the car parking revenue.

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Taunton is a thriving and dynamic town, which has, over the past few years, striven to find new and exciting ways to attract greater market share to the town centre.
- 1.2 For the past two years Taunton Town Centre Co has brought a real ice rink to Taunton over the Christmas period to attract new customers and to provide a facility for the local community.
- 1.3 A small temporary real ice rink was installed in Goodland Gardens in 2005 and open to the public from December 5<sup>th</sup> to January 2<sup>nd</sup>. During the period of operation over 12,000 people used the ice rink. In 2006 a larger rink was installed

in the staff car park at the Brewhouse Theatre. Despite exceptionally wet weather the rink saw an uplift in usage of over 25%. Many of the skaters had travelled many miles to Taunton to skate, but the majority of users were from within Taunton Deane.

- 1.4 There was a great deal of public demand for this facility to be available again this year.
- 1.5 Members will be aware that the new Princesshay shopping centre development in Exeter will be open by Christmas this year. This development poses a very severe threat to Taunton's retailers this year. We need to enhance the attraction of Taunton as a Christmas shopping destination; the ice rink will certainly help in that regard.

## **2. Proposal for 2007**

- 2.1 Taunton Town Centre Co agreed that there is still enough support for an ice rink in Taunton to make it worth bringing it back to the town again for a third year.
- 2.2 Ideally the rink should be the same size as last year 20m x 20m. This size was much appreciated by skaters last year and the increase in cost is proportionately less than for the smaller rink installed in 2005, which reduces the financial break-even point.
- 2.3 The site used last year on the Staff car park of the Brewhouse Theatre will not be available this year as it will be a compound for the contractors working on the Cricket Club site.
- 2.4 A suitable site has been identified on the Coal Orchard car park adjacent to St James St swimming pool and the rear of the solicitors' office. The proximity to the Brewhouse is sufficiently close to facilitate cross marketing of their Christmas production (A Christmas Carol) and the ice rink. It is also sufficiently close to the town centre for customers to make combined trips to the rink and the town via St James St.
- 2.5 The Parking & Civil Contingencies Manager has confirmed that, with the information available, the rink, viewing gallery and skate hire marquee can be accommodated in the area describe without affecting the operation of the remainder of the car park. The site will 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 has to be recognised, that with the loss of 56 spaces to the Cricket club development at the same time that parking over the Christmas period will be at a premium in this area.
- 2.6 The period of operation will be slightly longer than last year as the school term begins on 7 Jan viz 6 December to 6 January. In effect the rink will be operational for 28 days. The site will be required from 28 November to 11 January to allow for set up and dismantling.

## **3. Finances**

### 3.1 Budget Estimate for a 20m x 20m ice rink

## Expenditure ex VAT

Rink Hire	£69,200
Marketing	£14, 000
Staffing	£11,500
Fuel	£6,500
Security	£4, 500
Contingency	£1, 000
Total	<b>£106,700</b>

## Income

Tickets priced at:

£5 children and concessions/. £6 adults

£20 family (2 adults + 2children / 1 adult + 3 children)

Total sessions for period of operation	319 sessions
Total capacity @ 120 skaters per session	38,280 skaters
Average ticket price <b>ex VAT</b>	£ 4. 68p
Total possible income (max. predicted)	<b>£179182.97</b>

**Please note that previous experience indicates that achieving anywhere close to maximum capacity is very unlikely.**

- 3.2 In order to 'break even' at £106,700 with no additional financial support, 22799 skaters @ £4.68 over the period would be required, an increase of 6700 on last year.
- 3.3 Sponsorship has been secured from the Taunton Park and Ride of £5000. This contribution reduces break even to £101,700, requiring 21,730 skaters @ £4.68 over the period, an increase of 5000 skaters on last year.
- 3.4 Financial support from Taunton Deane Borough Council of £10,000 would make the task of achieving break even much easier. Such a contribution would reduce break even to £91,700, requiring 19594 skaters @ £4.68p over the period, an increase of c 3000 on last year.
- 3.5 Other sponsorship and commercial opportunities are being sought to close the gap. This year Taunton BID would underwrite any loss.

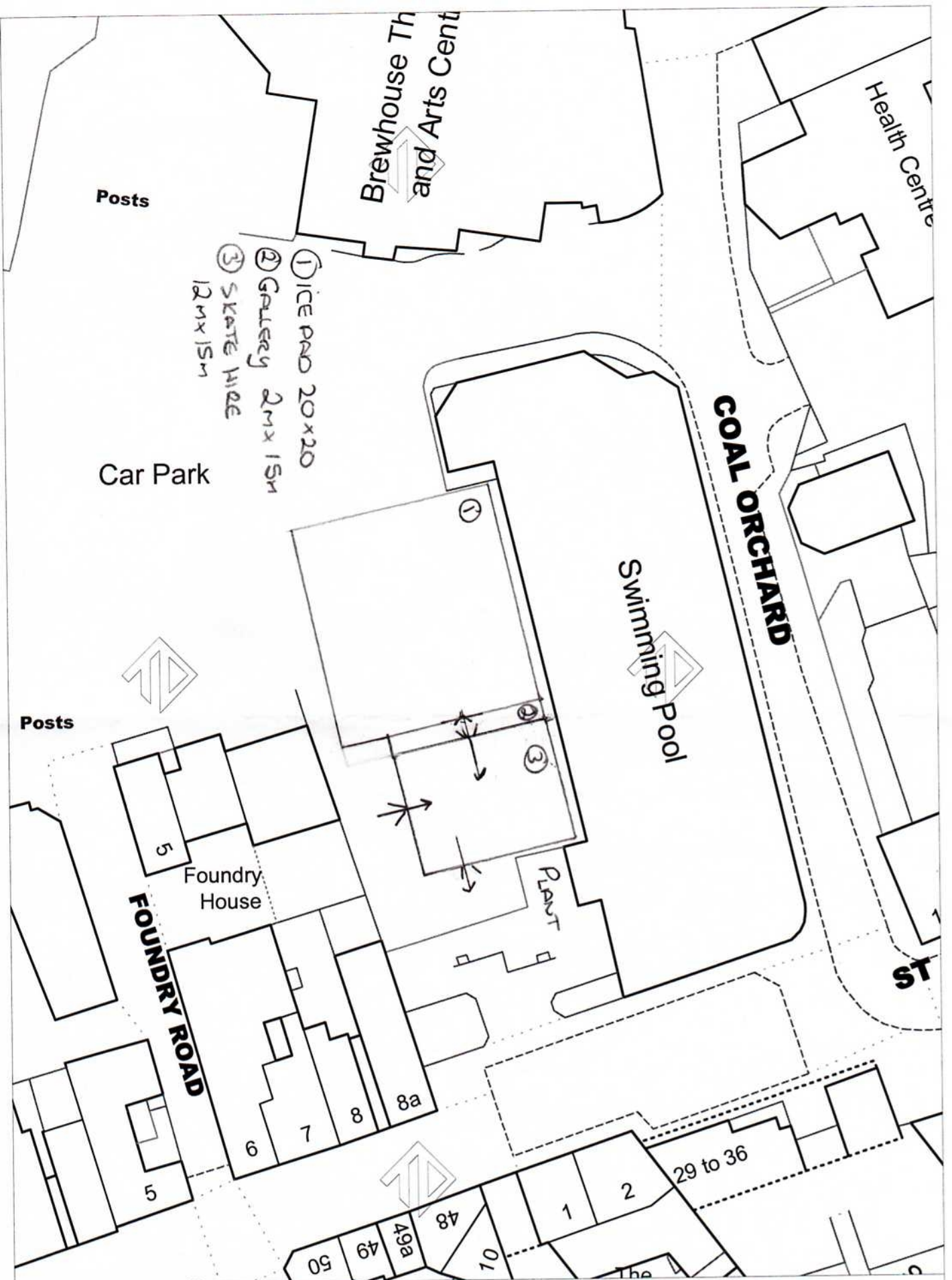
## 4. Recommendation

4.1 Taunton Town Centre Co requests that TDBC should commit 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.

4.2 This will be funded by a virement of £22,500 from the existing budget for Leisure Services

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**Coal Orchard Car Park, TAUNTON**

Date: 21/08/2007 Scale 1: 500

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 Taunton Deane Borough Council 100019499 (2007)

