

COUNCIL MEETING – 15 OCTOBER 2002

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL
COUNCILLOR HORSLEY – LEADER OF THE EXECUTIVE

Crescent Car Park Development

The Executive have considered recent issues that have arisen in connection with the proposed development of the Crescent car park.

There is also an exempt report on this matter to be considered at agenda item 9.

The Executive have therefore RESOLVED that subject to a meeting taking place at which the Heads of Terms are agreed and the outstanding payment of costs to the Councils' external consultants being made Council be RECOMMENDED that:

1. subject to the Members Panel being satisfied that a partnership between Heritage Shopping Centres, Sovereign Land Ltd and Fortis Bank was available and feasible that that partnership be appointed as the developer of Crescent Car Park site on the terms and conditions originally approved by the Council in December 2001;
2. the Council take a positive proactive role in the promotion of the scheme and in the use of a Compulsory Purchase Order to assist with the land assembly necessary for the development to take place; and
3. work now commence to determine the cost of urgent repairs to the High Street.

Councillor Jefferson Horsley

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REPORT OF COUNCILLOR HORSLEY – LEADER OF THE EXECUTIVE

The pace has not lessened over the summer months which are traditionally quiet. The Council has been involved in many discussions which are ongoing and this note is an attempt to brief you on these projects and other things.

It would be wrong of me not to express sorrow at the death of Roy Squier. He was a man of principle and integrity, if not always the most comfortable of colleagues to be with because of his tenacity and persistence to get the answers he wanted. His devotion to his tasks will be sadly missed in this Council. My thoughts and prayers go out to his wife and family.

1. WELLSPRINGS CENTRE

This sorry story continues. The report commissioned by us from Symonds revealed defects in the building and the Wellsprings Panel felt obliged to cancel the full council meeting scheduled for 22 August. Our hopes of completing the building this year were dashed because of the remedial work and associated costs.

We have now extended the Panel to include members from Somerset County Council and Ladymead School. to help draw up plans which will a) fund the cost of the completion and b) ensure a proper process is carried out with full accountability and best value in mind. Members of the panel are now receiving a weekly update from the officers of progress in the negotiations. Sport England are working closely with us to help us bring the project to a successful conclusion.

The work by the District Auditor on the problems that this contract has caused us is to be welcomed and I hope it will enable us to identify any learning lessons.. It certainly should assist the Health and Leisure Panel in conducting its own review into the project.

2. FUTURE OF THE LIVESTOCK MARKET

A report will be available in the next 6 weeks or so on the negotiations that have been taking place on the creation of a Regional Agricultural Business Centre which will incorporate a livestock market. The consultants have been asked to look at the suitability of Junctions 23,24,25 and 26 in turn.

It is unlikely that any of the options will be able to be funded by the private sector alone bearing in mind the strict requirements now needed since the outbreak of foot and mouth disease. The RDA have funded the research into the feasibility of this exercise.

We very much hope that tourism and other economic goals will feature in the final outcome and recommendations which come before the council.

3. VISION FOR TAUNTON

This has been one of the most rewarding cross party and cross councils exercise I have ever taken part in. We have overcome the prejudice of those who thought that this might be just another form of land use planning. It was broad, expansive with plenty of thinking “outside the box”. We met 8 times, read over 150 submissions and listened to a number of excellent presentations given by a range of people from Chief Executives and Chairmen to a School boy.

The collaboration and unity of purpose shown in identifying what is best for Taunton has been extraordinary. My thanks to all that have made that possible.

It is important that this is now owned by the local people. This can be best achieved by asking the Taunton Deane Local Strategic Partnership to oversee a public consultation on the vision document and to be responsible for furthering progress on the projects that arise and monitoring its development. I would suggest that this can be best done by establishing a Reference Group within the TDLSPP to undertake the responsibility for overseeing the consultation and the progress. Clearly senior councillors will still be involved.

4. CRESCENT CAR PARK

We have lost a year as a result of our negotiations with our preferred developers and the likely completion date has been put back to 2006. There is a pink paper for further discussion on this topic tonight.

5. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

The next meeting of the Executive on 23 October will contain an up date on the Corporate Priorities for the future. The emphasis is on improving services and maintaining this council’s record of targetting resources at those who are most disadvantaged and excluded from the benefits which we often take for granted.

This will be the basis on which the Medium Term Financial Strategy will be taken forward and also lead onto the beginning of the budget process for 2003/4

We have an obligation to consult on the budget this year arising from the Local Government Act 2000 and I would be interested in any ideas on what sort of topics/spends that we should consult on from members.

6. LEISURE SERVICES

Negotiations are well under way about the future delivery of all our Leisure Services. Ross Henley will be bringing a paper to full Council in December on this topic. It suffices to say at this stage that the council is feeling the pressure of competition on all fronts. Now there is no longer CCT and we are driven by Best Value, it is

important that we look at all options for our achieving our corporate priorities in this area.

JEFFERSON HORSLEY

7 OCTOBER 2002