

Council Meeting – 22 February 2011

Report of Councillor John Williams – Leader of the Council

1. Notable Events

- 1.1 A huge vote of confidence was given to our regeneration plans for Taunton from the Government by confirmation of the award of funding for the Northern Inner Distributor Road (NIDR). A clear recognition of the value for money that £15 m grant funding will open up £270 m of investment from the private sector creating space for thousands of jobs and hundreds of homes. I believe we can rightly take reassurance from this that we are promoting an excellent strategic development site which will prove of great benefit to Taunton.
- 1.2 Confirmation that our development Partners on Firepool, St Modwen have secured their first pre-let of 25,000 sq ft of offices is also great news. To have secured Viridor, a well-known national company, will surely act as a catalyst for others to follow as the benefits of this strategically placed development site become obvious. St Modwen are presently applying for approval of reserved matters and hope to commence work on site around early June this year. There is sufficient space to maintain adequate public parking space on the remainder of the car park whilst this development takes place.
- 1.3 Work is now well advanced on the affordable housing on the old East Goods Yard, a development of 108 dwellings by Knightstone Housing and made possible by a mixture of Homes and Community Agency grant funding for the dwellings and Taunton Deane Growth Points funding to provide the access road, which forms part of the NIDR. Completion is due during March 2012 but I am due a site visit shortly and, if before Full Council, I will provide a verbal update at the meeting.
- 1.4 We have secured a purchaser for the old Nursery site at Mount Street, Taunton subject to Contract and planning consent for the purchaser's proposals. The sale of this site is long overdue and I am pleased it is at last moving forwards with the prospect of providing a much needed capital receipt to assist in delivering our Corporate Aims.
- 1.5 This Council has now taken the decision to proceed with the planning of the much needed refurbishment and enhancement of the High Street, Taunton with a view to implementing works in an incremental manner as funds allow. This is on the basis that retail development behind the Orchard Centre is likely to be some years off and we have waited long enough to try and implement works to the High Street in conjunction with the retail development. Pedestrianisation of the street was carried out in the 1970s so has lasted well but is now tired and in

need of improvement. This is a positive step and showing confidence in our town centre which can only be good in these difficult economic times for traders and retailers. Full consultation will be carried out with the owners/occupiers of premises in High Street, the Town Centre Company and the wider community to ensure the final scheme delivers what is wanted.

2. Core Strategy

- 2.1 The detail of this will be covered by my colleague, Mark Edwards, in his report, however, I am aware of the huge effort that has been put in by many to compile this document with the enormous amount of supporting evidence behind it. My sincere thanks to all involved and although it must be disappointing that further consideration is now delayed because of the forthcoming elections, please be assured it is not wasted effort. We are attempting to set a masterplan for the next 15 years and my gratitude to all for all the efforts to date, it is no mean task we have been set!
- 2.2 There is a lot of concern from some in the private sector that insufficient work has been done on the infrastructure that will be required to support new development. Also insufficient employment land allocated. I believe this is a misconception and lack of understanding of the detail supporting the draft Core Strategy and we have promised to work with the private sector to try and allay these fears.
- 2.3 In respect of future employment land requirements, it is interesting to note that our consultants forecast that in excess of 70% of the 11,000 new jobs being projected will be in retail, medical, care and services generally, so not requiring allocation of traditional employment land for the whole 11,000 new jobs. This is at the root of one of the concerns of the private sector that we have not allowed sufficient employment land.

3. Hinkley Point

- 3.1 I am pleased to report that at long last we have been allowed to attend the SNEG meetings (Somerset Nuclear Energy Group) albeit as “observers” which is an important meeting of Somerset County, West Somerset District and Sedgemoor District Councils with EDF to deal with planning, community and technical issues. By our attendance we gain first hand knowledge of what is happening on this very important project that is, after all, on our doorstep.
- 3.2 Penny James, Joy Wislade and I continue to meet with senior representatives of EDF so we are able to promote the resources and benefits of Taunton direct. Here I would like to extend my thanks to

Councillor Mullins for using his good offices by keeping us informed of the relevant people to meet.

- 3.3 We see Taunton as a strategic location for some of the many businesses that will be set up to service such a huge project, which is almost certain to happen. It is important we ensure the likely decision/influence makers are fully briefed on what we have available. We continue to actively pursue this.

4. Superfast Broadband

- 4.1 At last this is becoming reality for Taunton. BT have now agreed to update the whole of Taunton with fibre optic cabling giving 80 to 100 Mbps for in excess of 90% of Taunton town. Work is being planned to commence imminently and be complete between September to November this year, 2011, dependent on any installation problems.
- 4.2 We have had a very constructive and informative meeting with BT and they have given advance warning that inevitably some disruption will occur but they will work with us to keep everybody fully informed and minimise disruption.
- 4.3 In parallel with this, Somerset County Council are working up a bid for funding from Government to extend superfast broadband throughout Somerset which in Taunton Deane will include our villages, settlements and large rural areas. BT have said it is easy to upgrade and enable rural telephone exchanges once Taunton is enabled by extending out from the centre. This has to be great news for Taunton and the wider Borough. Subject to securing the necessary funding the County Council is projecting county-wide superfast Broadband over the next three to four years.

5. Regeneration of Taunton

- 5.1 As noted above, funding has been secured for the NIDR and Somerset County Council will be finalising the design and seeking tenders in readiness for a start on site circa April 2012 when funding is made available. In the meantime, efforts can be redoubled by our development partners to try and secure occupiers for new buildings because we are now secure in the knowledge that new road access will be provided. This also opens up the East Goods Yard which has lain derelict for many, many years.
- 5.2 More good news is the construction of the Third Way which, although delayed by the recent cold weather, is scheduled for completion during June this year. This is a very important link that will remove large numbers of through vehicles from the town centre and open up yet

more development land that has remained derelict or under used for many years.

- 5.3 The Project Taunton Steering Group recently received a presentation on the potential development of student accommodation for 210 students sited on some of our car parks. It was an innovative, elevated scheme thus retaining the greater proportion of the parking spaces underneath for public use. We await further information on this interesting scheme.
- 5.4 The proposed design for retail development behind the Orchard Centre has been designed on a preliminary basis and is undergoing viability testing. This should be complete late February/early March and is crucial to our plans for maintaining a vibrant and attractive town centre. Making it all the more important that we ensure we proceed with our plans to refurbish and enhance the High Street.
- 5.5 Another important improvement is the alterations to the Town Bridge allowing a continuous riverside walk from Firepool through to Tangier. This is a crucial part of improving access along the riverbank for pedestrians and ensuring it is also disabled friendly.
- 5.6 Longrun Meadow, this great country park on the edge of town now boasts a completed Green Oak framed barn for educational use, social gatherings or just picnics! Work on the Green Cathedral is under way and this structure of living Willow will be a "first" for the United Kingdom and I am sure it will generate a huge amount of interest nationally when complete.
- 5.7 Exploratory meetings with the Somerset Wildlife Trust regarding their wish to discuss the possibility of a Management Agreement with Taunton Deane relating to Longrun and all the other public spaces along the river corridor have been held and we continue to pursue these with interest.

6. The Council Budget 2011/2012

- 6.1 The budget setting is part of tonight's business but it is worth reflecting on the difficulties that have been overcome because of the parlous economic situation nationally. Firstly, we have set a zero% Council Tax increase, our budget remains the same for another year, we continue to provide all of our services to our community for a Band D equivalent of £2.59 per week. This despite having received a 13.2% cut in our finance settlement for 2011/2012 and an announced cut of 12% for 2012/2013, both years well in excess of the 10% we had provisionally budgeted for.

- 6.2 Before I am reminded that we have received extra funding from the Government to enable us to set a zero% Council Tax increase let us look at what has been given and taken!

Extra Government payment for Council Tax freeze	+ 136,000
Cut in national grant settlement (from last year)	- 909,000
Housing Benefit and Council Tax admin grant cut	-91,000
Recharge errors and Deane Helpline loss	<u>- 304,000</u>
Total loss from that anticipated	-1,471,000

Despite this huge unexpected loss of almost £1.5 million we have maintained a zero% increase in tax, minimised the use of reserves, maintained essential front line services and still managed to bring in new initiatives.

- 6.3 The above is our GF Revenue account, but we also suffered enormous cuts to our capital budget totalling £1,082,000 being the loss of Housing Capital Grant and Supported Borrowing which has had to be dealt with in the budget setting process.
- 6.4 I would take this opportunity of extending sincere thanks to all officers and my colleagues involved in what has been an extremely difficult budget setting process with at least two false starts of a balanced budget! Then we were forced to go back to the drawing board when unexpected bad news was received. Thank you for your patience and fortitude.

7. And finally.....

- 7.1 I was invited to Mr Miles Tea Shop in High Street, Taunton to discuss our proposals for refurbishment of High Street of which they were very supportive. Whilst there I was shown around and I was very impressed by the quality of the establishment - it was welcoming with a wide ranging choice of food and beverages.
- 7.2 Truly a great success story starting with 15 employees about a year ago and now nearly double that, and achieved in the teeth of a recession. What enterprise has been shown and I applaud its success. May we have many more enterprises following to show that Taunton is a great place to do business.

Councillor John Williams

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Report of Councillor Mrs Catherine Herbert – Sport, Parks and Leisure

1. Parks

- 1.1 The Parks Teams are drawing up the planting schemes for all the parks and bedding areas in preparation of what will be a year of Royal celebrations.
- 1.2 The new allotment site at Holly Close, Taunton has moved a step closer to digging its first plot with the new Committee now in place and working with Allan Cavill (National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners) who is bringing a wealth of knowledge and advice to help them as they get the site set up.

2. Community Leisure and Play

- 2.1 I think we should be proud of how many communities we are able to support in renewing and installing play equipment across Taunton Deane. We should also give a great deal of respect to all the parish councils, village hall committees and local community groups who put so much time and effort into making these schemes happen for the benefit of their young people.
- 2.2 I was pleased to attend the official opening of the Bishops Lydeard Play Area which has some great new equipment to cater for all ages.
- 2.3 The Vivary Play Area extension was officially opened by the Mayor on 18 February 2011. It really is a most exciting place for children now with new and interactive equipment to make play really fun.
- 2.4 Cotford St Luke, Lyngford and Taunton Green Play Areas/pavillion are on site and on target for completion by the end of March 2011.
- 2.5 Greenway Recreation Ground, Taunton is out to tender on a construct only basis with a target completion date of the end of March 2011.
- 2.6 The Baldwin Road and ASDA site, Taunton are just going to tender.

3. Tone (Taunton Deane) Limited Activities

Community, Sports and Health Development

- 3.1 Tone continues to work hard to develop a number of community outreach programmes including:-
 - **FANS - Free Access for National Sportspeople**

The FANS scheme assists elite sportspeople to achieve their full potential by reducing the financial burden of training costs by giving them free access to Tone's fitness and swimming facilities. There are currently 11 people on its Taunton scheme in the sports of fencing, octopush, athletics, triathlon, swimming, shooting and tennis.

To be eligible you must be: a resident for the majority of the year in the district of Taunton Deane (full time students whose parents/guardians reside in Taunton Deane are eligible) and a current member of a national team or squad in a sport recognised by Sport England and/or currently listed in the top 10 of any age group ranking in a sport recognised by Sport England. A list of eligible sports can be found at www.sportengland.org.uk.

- **Feel Good Factory Working in Partnership with Slimming World**

Tone Leisure has successfully arranged a 12 week trial which started on Thursday, 3 February 2011 consisting of 12 ladies entering into a combined Slimming World and exercise regime at the Blackbrook Pavilion Feel Good Factory.

The trial consists of measurements being taken before, after 6 weeks and at the end of the 12 week programme. This inch loss will then be compared against a separate set of 12 ladies who only completed the 12 weeks of Slimming World. At the end it is hoped to prove that coupling exercise with healthy eating gains better results.

- **Vibe Programme**

Various meetings have now taken place and there is a clear plan that, if the funding is secured, the Youth Leisure Nights will be re-launched during April 2011. The hope is to appoint a new Co-ordinator to assist in bringing back the popular themed nights.

Facility News

- 3.2. **Vivary Golf Course** - The weather really took its grip during December which meant Vivary Golf Course was closed for business for over two weeks. Fortunately when the thaw came the course did not see a flood, which has been a common event in previous years.
- 3.3 **Wellington Sports Centre** - Badminton Network for Wellington has taken the next step to recruit a Board of Volunteers to take over the initial set up group in order to set up a Badminton League for Wellington, working with Court Fields Community School and Badminton England.
- 3.4 Z3's first birthday was a great success, with over 200 visits in the week offered at no cost to existing users. The team is working in partnership with local schools and regular bookings for daytime activities are being made.

- 3.5 The team should be congratulated as the number of fitness members at Wellington continues to go from strength to strength. The membership was at its highest ever in December 2010, with a record number of members joining the centre - despite the treacherous weather conditions.
- 3.6 **Wellsprings Leisure Centre** – Thanks to the hard work of the Wellsprings team the Christmas Party Nights still went off with a real bang although numbers were down slightly due to the weather and new competition from the cricket club.
- 3.7 The events programme for 2011 is really starting to take shape, with a whole host of comedy, dance, sporting and cultural events confirmed. These will truly enhance the reputation of Wellsprings as one of the top leisure venues within the South West that has the ability and desire to host top national names.
- 3.8 **Blackbrook Pavilion** - On 4 January, 2011 the Feel Good Factory completed a very successful first year in operation. The area has had many great success stories of people losing over 40 inches and members becoming far more active. Again, the weather had a massive impact on member usage at the Feel Good Factory during December, dropping from over 2,000 visits per month to just 700.
- 3.9 January saw the introduction of a number of new classes: Kettlercise and Zumba, which have become very popular across the country. With these new, lively and innovative classes Tone hopes to exceed its regular weekly attendances.
- 3.10 An action packed programme for the Christmas Holiday Camps meant that Tone had more children than ever before, exceeding both the income and utilisations targets.

4. Environmental Issues

- 4.1 Sunbeds - Due to the increase in medical concerns and the ever increasing bad publicity that sunbeds receive Tone took the decision that sunbeds should no longer be provided. As from 31 December, 2010 the sunbeds were withdrawn from operation and have now been removed.
- 4.2 The Somar lighting at Wellington is a fantastic addition to the centre. The new lights have transformed the appearance of the Sports Hall and make the area lighter and brighter. The LUX levels have improved considerably, allowing Tone to host sporting events in the future at a national level.

Overall I would like to congratulate Tone for maintaining operations through very difficult weather conditions and maintaining safe, warm facilities for customers to use.

Councillor Catherine Herbert.

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Report of Councillor Mrs Jean Adkins – Housing Services

1. Housing Property Services Review

- 1.1 Interviews have now been held for the three surveyor posts and successful candidates will be taking up their posts in the near future.

2. Affordable Housing

- 2.1 An update will be provided under separate cover prior to the meeting.

3. Regeneration of Halcon, Taunton

- 3.1 Alison North has taken on the role of Project Manager.
- 3.2 Leslie Webb has resumed her “surgeries” for the residents of Halcon North. Communication with the people of Halcon will be a vital part of this Project.
- 3.3 The Priority Areas Strategy consultation has been launched and we look forward to the insights gathered which will inform the Project.
- 3.4 A firm decision if demolitions are to take place will need to be made as soon as possible as this will impact on the proposed settlement under Self-Financing.

4. Estates Team and Anti-social Behaviour

- 4.1 The recent appointment of two new Estates Officers with responsibility for anti-social behaviour has led to a successful operation in which the Estates Team worked closely with Avon and Somerset Police at Leycroft Grove, Taunton.
- 4.2 This work is being reinforced by a new Lettings Policy for Leycroft Grove to ensure that no tenancy is given to those with a recent history of anti-social behaviour.

5. Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership

- 5.1 The Partnership has produced its first Newsletter, which has been circulated to all Councillors and partner organisations and includes useful contacts such as: Empty Homes Hotline **0845 241 7243** or customer.services@sedgemoor.gov.uk.

It also includes success stories, such as the work in Taunton Deane with the owner of an empty home to bring the home onto the market.

- 5.2 A Landlords' Forum will be held on Tuesday March 8th 6-9pm at the County Cricket Ground to enable the Partnership to engage with the private sector.

6. Consultation: Local decisions: a fairer future for social housing

- 6.1 We have responded to the the Department for Communities and Local Government's consultation on proposed changes to tenure.

- 6.2 A "Tenant Event" was held prior to the response being finalised to ensure tenants' views were reflected. This led to qualified approval for the new flexible tenancies. We welcomed the retention of secure tenancies for existing tenants.

7. Self-Financing

- 7.1 Self-Financing is likely to come into force. Arrangements have been included in the Localism Bill now before Parliament. The Local Government Association is continuing to lobby on behalf of Councils with retained stock to ensure we get the best possible outcome.

- 7.2 Form B1 will be issued by the Government in June 2011 as usual but will require additional information, including amongst other data, information on planned demolitions. This information will be used to calculate the final settlement.

- 7.3 We still believe and trust that Taunton Deane will benefit from the new arrangements. Further information can be found using the following link : <http://www.communities.gov.uk/corporate/publications/all/>

8. A Housing, Health Care and Support Strategy for Older People in Somerset

- 8.1 I attended a seminar on this topic with representatives of partner organisations on 31 January 2011 at which some thought-provoking

statistics were provided. Whilst Somerset County Council is the lead authority, obviously there will be implications for Taunton Deane.

Taunton Deane	2010	2020	2030
Population over 65 years	22300	28500	35600
Population over 85 years	3600	4400	7500

- 8.2 In the Taunton Deane Housing Market Area, which covers the same area as the Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership, the number of older people is expected to rise by 41% over the next 20 years, whilst the working age population is projected to rise by a mere 1%.
- 8.3 As 75% of older people are owner-occupiers there may well be a problem with maintenance which will impact on Private Sector Renewal Grants. I shall be attending a follow-up session in March.

9. Tenants' Forum

9.1 The Tenants' Forum has recently agreed to fund a number of projects:-

- North Taunton Partnership = £1,500
 - Fuse and Streetjam = £3,000
 - North Taunton Youth Club = £4,000
 - Holway LAT Youth Activities = £1,500
 - VIBE = £2,500
 - Halcon Youth Club = £2,000
- Total = £14,500

9.2 I am sorry to have to inform you that Ken Marshall has resigned as Chairman of the Tenant's Forum due to ill health. I am sure you will join me in offering him our thanks and best wishes for the future.

Councillor Mrs Jean Adkins

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Report of Councillor Terry Hall - Corporate Resources

1. Revenues and Benefits

- 1.1 So far this year the times taken to process Housing and Council Tax Benefits claims is well inside targets.
- 1.2 The percentage of net collectable Council Tax debit collected in this year is expected, to marginally exceed the target of 98%. The electronic payment take up has also slightly increased to almost 75%.
- 1.3 However, it is possible that collection of National Non Domestic Rates may fall just short of the targeted figure of 98.3%. The electronic payment take up has decreased so far this year to 68% no doubt reflecting the current financial position of the local economy.
- 1.4 Over 92% of calls to the Benefit Advice Team have been answered in less than 20 seconds so far this year.

2. South West One

- 2.1 Southwest One has recently awarded BT a contract to bring a new high-speed fibre-optic broadband network to Somerset Schools and Council Offices, at no additional cost to those with existing connections. This is one of the most significant projects Southwest One will deliver in 2011 and will have major benefits for the whole of Somerset.
- 2.2 The new fibre-optic network will provide Somerset Schools (and a number of County and Taunton Deane buildings) with data connection speeds of 100MB/sec – over ten times today's average speed. For Council Offices this will mean faster and more efficient use of online and back office applications, reduced congestion when sending and receiving email and greater opportunities for mobile and flexible working.
- 2.3 For Taunton Deane, both The Deane House and Wellington Community Office will be connected to this new network. For schools, this will mean faster access to online educational materials, enhanced online links with parents or carers, improved distance learning and remote submission of work. Network upgrades are currently being carried out and will be mostly completed by the end of March 2011.
- 2.4 Southwest One is beginning to attract some national interest in respect of its shared services operations, and its Strategic Procurement function. In

particular, there is a growing interest in the Customer Contact centre, which continues to perform well and consequently a set of PR material has been produced for wider national and local distribution.

Contact Centre

- 2.5 Southwest One Customer Contact has successfully been trialling a virtual join network in an effort to join the two teams working in The Deane House (Taunton Deane and SCC non Children's and Adults).
- 2.6 This joining of networks provides the ability for the Contact Centre to be more resilient and deliver to the customer, based on need, rather than numbers of individually trained staff available. The success of this was proved during the bad weather at the end of 2010 when resources were seamlessly moved by adjusting the telephone system rather than having physically to move people.
- 2.7 The service is continuing to gain attention externally and recently LGTV recorded an article on the Contact Centre and Radio Somerset also visited and recorded an interview with Sam Pike, Head of Service, and Councillor John Williams.
- 2.8 Following a decision to move to working for IBM direct on another account, Sam Pike left the service on 28 January 2011 and Claire Olohan-Bramley is currently Acting Head of Service pending a full review of the Contact Centre.
- 2.9 Service delivery continues to be excellent as shown by the management information below:-

Statistical Information:

Service Line	Reporting Authority	KPI No	Performance Measure	Frequency of Reporting	2010/2011 Target	Nov-10	Dec-10	Jan-11
Customer Contact	TDBC	1	% of calls answered in 20 secs	Monthly	80%	87%	85%	81%
Customer Contact	TDBC	2	% of calls resolved at first point of contact	Monthly	88%	100%	100%	98%
Customer Contact	TDBC	3	% of external customers rating the Customer Contact service as Very Good/Good	Annually (monitored quarterly)	70.0%		95.0%	
Customer Contact	TDBC	4	Abandoned call rate - less than 5%	Monthly	<5%	3.6%	4.0%	4.8%
Customer Contact	TDBC	5	Measure of quality required: standards, courtesy, speed, accuracy	Quarterly	50-70%	68.00%	72.30%	72.10%

- 2.10 A total of 8,536 enquiries have been dealt with at The Deane House main, Housing and Planning Receptions in addition to over 6,000 requests for signposting and visitors for meetings and 3,986 people visited Wellington

Community Office. We have dealt with 388 letter and email enquiries during this time.

- 2.11 The service is continuing to look at the implementation of an automated payment system to provide the authority with 24/7 coverage for accepting payments which could also potentially increase the ability to deliver other self service offerings through an access point other than the telephone. This requirement has been included in our future plans for telephony delivery in the coming year.

Procurement Savings Progress

- 2.12 Southwest One procurement savings of Council's spending is still behind target. Members may recall that SWOne are required to save £10m over the 10 years of the contract. Early savings are required to repay the cost of the SAP computer system.
- 2.13 Spend analysis software is being tested to produce the detailed spend analysis reports needed. Discussions are continuing with Southwest One on the scope of the Deane DLO Category Plan.

3. Legal and Democratic Services

- 3.1 Our website is now conforming to Government Standards with regard to publication of expenditure over £500. No identifiable extra cost was incurred in providing this information.
- 3.2 The e-petition module is now up and running and can be accessed through the Council's website. None, so far, have been received.

Borough and Parish Elections and the Referendum on 5 May 2011

- 3.3 Preparations are taking place to administer the Borough and Parish Elections along with the Referendum on whether Parliament should be elected using the Alternative Voting system on 5 May 2011. All 26 Borough Wards electing 56 Councillors along with 42 Parishes electing 345 Councillors will be up for election.
- 3.4 Nomination forms are available from Craig Morse. I am disappointed to report that so far Craig has had only two responses to the Deane Dispatch article inviting possible candidates to contact him.
- 3.5 The referendum taking place on the same day will be the first UK National Referendum since 1975 when the UK voted "yes" to stay in the Common Market as the EU was then known.
- 3.6 Therefore the voter, in some places will have three ballot papers to contend with on the day – with one having only a "yes" or "no" box on it.

Legal and Democratic Services Partnership

- 3.7 I reported to last Council that discussions were in progress with the other Somerset Councils to establish a Legal and Democratic Services Partnership on similar lines to the SW Audit partnership.
- 3.8 The decision whether to proceed has been deferred until March 2011 to allow Kerry Richards, Sedgemoor's Chief Executive who is leading on this, as project sponsor, to acquire further information for the business case.

Localism Bill

- 3.9 We can feed into the Localism Bill and all comments need to be made by the 10 March 2011 at the latest. Therefore, officers will be working with Group Leaders, Portfolio Holders and their Shadows to formulate responses to various aspects of the Bill. All responses will then go to the Corporate Governance Committee in early March for final ratification.

Ethical Governance

- 3.10 The Localism Bill contains a chapter on Standards and there is still a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct, disclosure and registration of Members' interests. A new criminal offence has been created for failure to disclose and register interests. The abolition of Standards for England will be contained in the Public Bodies Bill which is also going through the legislative process.
- 3.11 The Standards Committee has sent a response to the Parliamentary Committee regarding their views on the proposals set out in the Localism Bill. This response will also be sent to Group Leaders.

4. Performance and Client Team

- 4.1 The Client Team have continued to closely monitor performance of the authorities key partnerships (Southwest One, Tone and the Waste Partnership) with no significant issues being reported. We are developing a suite of Key Performance Indicators for measuring Tone's performance which will be reported to Members in the near future.
- 4.2 Somerset County Council is in discussion with Southwest One regarding the effect on Southwest One, of the reductions in county spending. We are watching this closely in case it has an impact on Taunton Deane.
- 4.3 The quarterly performance monitoring report for Quarter 3 will go to the Executive and Corporate Scrutiny in March.

Councillor Terry Hall

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Report of Councillor Mark Edwards - Planning and Transportation

This has been an extremely busy period across the Planning and Transportation Portfolio with some notable successes for Taunton Deane including the progression of the Third Way and the excellent news about the Northern Inner Distributor Road (NIDR) both covered by the Leader of the Council. The news with regard to the NIDR is significant for the whole community and will not only open up a great deal of land towards the development of the town but will have a truly positive impact across the whole district.

These are certainly challenging times ahead, but there are signs that the construction industry is positioning itself for the upturn in development and I remain cautiously optimistic about the future development of our district and am determined that we challenge and develop in a way that continues the theme set over many years of making Taunton Deane a wonderful place to live.

1. Core Strategy

- 1.1 The Core Strategy has now been written in draft and approved by the Local Development Framework (LDF) Steering Group. It sets out the planning framework for the sustainable delivery of 16,000 homes and 11,000 jobs between now and 2027 and can be viewed on our website.
- 1.2 The next stages are approval through Scrutiny, Executive and Full Council, followed by 'Regulation 27' publication. However due to the consultative elements of 'Regulation 27' conflicting with "purdah" regulations, these stages will take place in June 2011. This will require extending the Plan period and evidence base from 2027 to 2028 and we are evaluating the costs and risks to find the best way to achieve this to ensure the Core Strategy is still 'sound'.
- 1.3 The draft Core Strategy has been a culmination of more than two years of hard work by the Strategy Unit, bringing together a comprehensive evidence base to support findings and engaging with communities across Taunton Deane. The next stages of the Core Strategy will lead to inspection and hopefully adoption and then detailed master planning of the strategic sites with close community involvement will begin.
- 1.4 The timetable is now:-

- Scrutiny, Executive and Full Council - (June 2011)
- Regulation 27 publication (July/August 2011)
- Submit to Secretary of State (October 2011)
- Examination (February 2012)
- Inspectors Report (May 2012)
- Adoption (July 2012)

- 1.5 There is a Members Briefing to discuss the content of the Core Strategy on the 28 February 2011 and I encourage all Members to attend. In addition to reviewing the Core Strategy, the Council's Solicitor will be available to give advice and guidance on the rules surrounding purdah.
- 1.6 I do wish to show my appreciation of all the hard work done by officers over very many months in producing the Core Strategy. I am sure it is of frustration to them that at this time we have had to postpone the process however I want the Council, through my report, to show their appreciation for the work that has been prepared.

2. Maidenbrook, Taunton Appeal

- 2.1 Officers from the Strategy Unit and Development Management are currently engaged in a planning appeal against a proposed public house and residential development for 233 properties at Maidenbrook.
- 2.2 Our planning policy opposes development on the grounds that the site is unsustainable, undermines future planned growth and removes a valuable green wedge between Taunton and Monkton Heathfield.
- 2.3 The decision on this appeal will be heard during the week commencing 14 February 2011 and the Inspectors decision will be received around April 2011.

3. Consultation on overhaul of Planning Application Fees

- 3.1 The Government published a consultation on changes to planning application fees in November 2010 and the LDF Steering Group reviewed this so that we could return our thoughts to them within the consultation period, which ended in early January.
- 3.2 The Government intends on decentralizing the planning fee so that authorities can charge more for the services they offer and most importantly at least cover the costs of handling, administering and deciding the application.
- 3.3 It is expected that we will be able to start to set fees from April 2011 with the present fees regime finishing on the 1 September 2011 by which time we will need to have adopted new fees.

4. Review of Planning process

- 4.1 The project began in October 2010 with Roger Cooper from ValueAdding.com meeting the Development Management and Business Support Staff. His task was to gather information on resource usage and value for the customer, setting this information against national Local Planning Authority data. Process maps were created and workshops set up with staff to review outcomes. Our Planning Agent's Forum has also contributed, with information gathered from both our December and February meetings.
- 4.2 We have identified three initial priority areas to concentrate on process change:-
- Validation – to release professional staff resource and to speed up the registration process;
 - Conditions monitoring – to focus monitoring on the most significant conditions and to ensure that all conditions imposed are necessary and enforceable; and
 - Electronic distribution and storage of information – reduction of hardcopy storage space and potential loss of information.
- 4.3 These work streams will enable us to improve efficiency and to focus resources in areas, which are significant Customer contact points for the service. The priority stage of this project will be implemented from April 2011.
- 4.4 Valueadding.com are also assisting us in identifying costs to assist with fee setting in light of the Government's proposal to allow Local Planning Authorities to set their own fees based upon reasonable costs of providing the service.

5. Firepool, Taunton

- 5.1 The Firepool development is one of the largest town centre regeneration projects in the South West of England.
- 5.2 It will provide around 500,000 sq feet of office space and up to 4000 new jobs and more than 400 apartments and town houses with retail and leisure facilities.
- 5.3 Firepool's development is central to the success of the outcomes of the Core Strategy and the new jobs led philosophy, which has been central to the development of the Strategy in recent months.
- 5.4 Therefore the recent announcement that Viridor are going to relocate their offices as part of the first phase of the development at Firepool is excellent news for the development of the entire site and is a clear signal that the potential for this development is more than an aspiration.

Councillor Mark Edwards

Council Meeting – 22 February 2011

Report of Councillor Joanna Lewin-Harris – Community Leadership and Communications

1. Taunton Deane Partnership

- 1.1 The Local Strategic Partnership has changed its name to the Taunton Deane Partnership (TDP). It has a revised set of priorities for 2011/2012:-
 - Priority Areas: working collectively to improve urban and rural areas of high need;
 - Promoting Taunton Deane: celebrating achievements and raising the sense of pride through public events and good communications; and
 - Planning cycles: improve value for money and effectiveness by aligning planning and budget cycles.
- 1.2 These priorities will be the focus of the partnership this coming year. In addition, the Taunton Deane Partnership has set up a group to look at funding opportunities, joint bids for funding between partners and sharing data for funding bids. Climate Change and Housing will also be tackled by dedicated sub-groups.
- 1.3 The Taunton Deane Partnership will be on the agenda of the Community Scrutiny Committee on 8 March 2011, when these issues can be discussed in more depth.
- 1.4 Total Somerset is a Total Place programme for Somerset that was approved by the Somerset Strategic Partnership. Total Place seeks to improve community outcomes, transform service delivery and deliver efficiencies.
- 1.5 One element of the Transforming Customer Contact project focussed on Priorswood, Taunton and looked at how residents access services and whether this can be achieved both more efficiently and more conveniently for them. Because of the strong links between this project and our Priority Areas work, it has now been agreed that Somerset County Council's Lead Officer on this project, Jonny Woodthorpe, will join Taunton Deane's Strategy Team until at least the end of May this year. This gives a very useful extra resource to the team and will link the customer contact work into the Priority Area Strategy.
- 1.6 Public consultation on the Priority Area Strategy for North and East Taunton was launched by the Mayor on 25 January 2011. The consultation will be based on questionnaires completed during 1 to 1 interviews with residents – with the aim of getting a minimum of 200 completed questionnaires by the end of the consultation on 31 March 2011. Each resident that completes a

questionnaire will be able to enter a prize draw to win shopping vouchers. Volunteers from the Community Centres, PCSO's, staff at the children's centres and schools are all helping with this.

- 1.7 Following this, work will begin on the preparation of the Vision and Action Plan. Further engagement is programmed for October 2011. The Action Plan will be agreed in December and will contain a range of multi-agency projects (some big, some small).
- 1.8 Rural Priority Area Strategy Project Management Group, chaired by Katherine Armstrong from the Community Council, is currently working on data collection and analysis. There is very little capacity within Taunton Deane to carry out this work at the moment. Fortunately, the County Council has made some funding available to help with the Customer Access project and some of this is being used to employ some extra help for three months until the end of May 2011. The Group is currently looking at the whole parished area of Taunton Deane. When this is done, decisions will need to be made about the focus of the Strategy. This could mean a focus on certain geographical areas, or possibly a focus on particular topics.
- 1.9 Finally, the TDP pages of the website have been updated and you can see agendas and minutes there. We will also be circulating a brief update after each board meeting, to raise awareness of the work of the TDP, and to give maximum notice of projects and events so that interested parties can get involved.

2. Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP)

- 2.1 The merger of the East and West Somerset CDRP's will go ahead from 1 April 2011. This group will become the CDRP for Somerset and will be known as the Community Safety Partnership. This merger was agreed by Full Council in October 2010. The County Council plus the five districts will be members along with the Police, Police Authority, Fire Service, NHS Somerset, Probation, Exmoor National Park, the Drugs and Alcohol team and the Youth Offending Team. The elected member representative for Taunton Deane will be the relevant portfolio holder.
- 2.2 Underneath the Somerset wide Community Safety Partnership, the two east and west groups will continue to meet as tactical groups. It remains to be seen what value they have and how local issues are kept on the agenda.
- 2.3 It is important that effective scrutiny arrangements for this new body are developed as a matter of urgency.

3. Health White Paper

- 3.1 The Government's recently published Health White Paper "Healthy Lives,

Healthy People” proposes transferring local health improvement functions to local authorities. A new body - Public Health England – will be responsible for setting the overall outcomes framework for public health and national resilience against health threats such as flu pandemics. Directors of Public Health will be employed by upper tier/unitary local authorities and jointly appointed by Public Health England. There will be Statutory Health and Wellbeing Boards for upper tier/unitary Councils on which district councils are likely to have some representation.

- 3.2 We are invited to comment on the Health White Paper to Somerset County Council, where our comments will be included in their response. We can also respond independently. Given the relatively short time scale, it is proposed that officers prepare a response which will be circulated to the Executive, Shadow Executive and Group Leaders. Provided all are happy, I will sign off the response which will then be circulated to all Members.

4. Communications

- 4.1 Press releases this cycle have covered some very good news items such as: confirmation of Government funding for the Northern Inner Distributor Road, Taunton’s success in the AA Street Watch survey, the new play area in Vivary Park and new allotments. We also covered consultation events in North and East Taunton, advice on street parties, healthy food choices for children. A press release also gave well-earned recognition to the hard work of those involved in waste collection over the very difficult Christmas/New Year period.
- 4.2 A media briefing on the budget last month, attended by the Leader, Shirlene and Paul Fitzgerald, attracted our three main media channels – the Gazette, Western Daily Press and BBC. It was appreciated by the media who said it had been valuable for them.
- 4.3 Members Portal: Quite a bit of work has been done on the Members Portal since my last report. It is much improved and I think the information is easier to find. However, Members’ suggestions are still very much welcomed.

5. Community Hub at St Augustine’s, Taunton

- 5.1 This project has not moved as fast as we originally hoped because the focus for the new Taunton Academy has, understandably, been in establishing the new school. However, we are assured that the school remains committed to the project and will now give some time to dealing with the outstanding issues associated with the building. A ‘worst case scenario’ deadline of Easter has been set to complete the works.

Council Meeting - 22 February 2011

Report of Councillor Cavill - Economic Development, Asset Management, Arts and Tourism

1. Keeping Members informed

Economic Development Delivery Plan - The team has now finalised and printed its Delivery Plan for 2011 and 2012.

- 1.1 Copies have been circulated to all Members, and presentations on it given to the Taunton Deane Agents Forum, Taunton Chamber of Commerce Executive, and individual businesses. 200 copies will be sent out shortly to businesses and partner agencies.
- 1.2 The Delivery Plan sets out how the Council will support the economy, with activities falling into three themes:-
 - Stimulating Business Growth and Investment;
 - Ensuring a Skilled and Entrepreneurial workforce; and
 - Creating an attractive business environment.

Taunton Deane Economy Bulletin – The team circulated to Members in January 2011 the first Taunton Deane Economy Bulletin.

- 1.3 This presented a summary of recent economic statistics and new Government policy changes relating to Taunton Deane. The Bulletin is intended to become quarterly. Feedback from Members would be welcomed on the usefulness of the document.

2. Theme 1 - Stimulating Business Growth and Investment

2.1 Business Liaison

The team has started a proactive programme of visits to local businesses, investors and their agents, with the aim of assisting businesses to realise their growth and investment plans. The team intends to visit 100 businesses per year.

Organisations visited recently and currently being supported include:-

- West Somerset Railway, Bishops Lydeard;
- Tarmac, Henlade;
- Exmoor Plastics, Taunton;
- Somerset County Cricket Club, Taunton;
- Forward Space Ltd, Taunton;
- Castle Hotel, Taunton;
- Silver Street Autos, Taunton;
- Somerfield Distribution, Wellington;
- EDF Energy, re Hinkley Point;
- IDN Limited;
- Relyon, Wellington;
- Waitrose, Wellington;
- Exchange House, Taunton;
- Metron Technology, Taunton;
- J&K Aquatics, Bathpool.

2.2 **Regional Growth Fund Bid**

During January 2011, the team worked closely with Forward Space Limited, the owner of the Collar Factory (aka Barnicotts), St Augustine Street, Taunton on the submission of a bid to the new Regional Growth Fund (RGF). The bid, proposes the refurbishment of the property to create an incubation and business centre, was the only bid forthcoming to the RGF from Somerset.

2.3 **Rural Post Offices**

Hattie Winter is working with Councillor Cliff Bishop to lend support to Oake Post Office to devise a strategy to prevent the village Post Office from being a service lost from the village. The team is also looking at the wider issue of rural Post Office closures, and coordinating the support available to those businesses.

2.4 **Leader's Dinner**

The team is currently organising a 'Leader's Dinner' for the Leader and the Chief Executive in early March to meet eight local business leaders and to discuss with them their issues and plans.

2.5 **DLO Nursery**

The team is lending its support to the DLO Nursery in its aim to generate more commercial income streams.

2.6 **Shop Front Grants for Wellington and Wiveliscombe - Retailers in Wellington and Wiveliscombe can take advantage of a scheme designed to make the towns an even more attractive place to shop.**

The team has walked the High Streets of Wellington and Wiveliscombe to promote the funds amongst businesses. Significant interest was shown by the businesses.

The Shop Front Enhancement Scheme aims to encourage new and existing retail businesses to refurbish or re-instate traditional shop fronts or replace unsympathetic shop fronts improving the look of the town for both residents and visitors while encouraging economic development. Businesses can apply for a grant of up to £500, or 50% - whichever is the lower figure - for the cost of eligible works to enhance their shop fronts.

2.7 Support for Rural Business Projects - A small grant fund is available from Taunton Deane for rural projects and innovative Renewable Energy projects.

The team is currently assisting a new wood recycling business that is looking for premises to establish a community interest company.

3. Theme 2 - Ensuring a Skilled and Entrepreneurial Workforce

3.1 Halcon Regeneration Project

The team plays an active role in the Halcon regeneration project, particularly the generation of employment and training opportunities for residents. Officers are currently organising a business forum for local businesses to consider the opportunities for apprenticeships and local work placements.

3.2 Redundancy Support

A handful of businesses and public sector agencies have announced in recent months in Taunton Deane that they will shortly be making significant redundancies – these have included Tarmac Construction at Henlade, The Cooperative Distribution Depot at Chelston, ROK Construction on Blackbrook Business Park, Connaught, Somerset County Council, Musgrove Park Hospital, and Somerset College. The Economic Development Team has responded proactively, offering support alongside Job Centre Plus, where requested.

3.3 Job Clubs for long term unemployed people

The Wellington Job Club has recently seen more visitors and an increase in the number of beneficiaries subsequently gaining employment. The

team is working with Job Centre Plus to encourage Job Centre Advisors to start referring their job seekers to the Job Clubs.

3.4 Fredericks Somerset - The team is currently liaising with the Fredericks Foundation to support the extension of Fredericks Somerset, offering loans to people to start up or enhance their business.

The opportunity to start a business has particular relevance during the current climate of redundancies and business closures and provides a route out of deprivation and benefit dependency for many people. A report proposing support will be considered by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 24 February 2011, followed by the Executive the following month.

4. Theme 3 - Creating an Attractive Business Environment

4.1 Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

Since November 2010 work has been underway to design a LEP covering Somerset, Devon, Plymouth and Torbay. The drafting is being led by the County and Unitary Authorities covering that area as well as business representative organisations (including the Somerset Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses).

A consultation Draft has been issued by the bid Steering Group, and stakeholders are encouraged to submit representation on the document before 25 February 2011. Members should contact David Evans for a copy of the Consultation Draft.

Over the past month the Council has submitted its views on emerging drafts through the Somerset County Council. For the District Councils throughout Somerset and Devon it is important to ensure that:-

1. District Councils are fully engaged in the drafting in order to give the LEP a local flavour and local relevance;
2. The LEP is dynamic, ambitious and innovative and is led by business;
3. The LEP is encouraging and welcoming of business engagement; and
4. Businesses of whatever size and type are able to engage in the LEP.

4.2 Taunton Cultural Partnership

The Taunton Cultural Partnership brings together the key agencies involved in stimulating and providing cultural activities in the town, coordinated by the District Council. The Partnership agreed at its meeting

in January that it will add value to a series of events proposed in the town centre in 2012 through theming and joint branding.

4.3 Cycling Tour of Britain

The team is also liaising with the Cycling Tour of Britain and Somerset County Council over Taunton hosting one of the stages of the event in September 2011.

4.4 Hinkley Point Nuclear Proposal

Ongoing work to ensure that Taunton Deane businesses are in a position to supply to EDF's proposed Nuclear Power Station.

4.5 Taunton Academy Community Hub

Matt Parr has been working extensively with the Taunton Academy, to offer a redundant Art Building to voluntary and community organisations in Taunton. Working with the Strategy Team, four groups have been identified, space has been allocated, and a hire agreement completed. A deadline of Easter has been proposed for the completion of the hire agreement.

5. Asset Management

Sale of land at Bindon Road, Taunton : 0.8acres - After a very good offer we are now at the final stage of exchanging contracts.

Three tenders were received for the old Nursery site at Mount Street, Taunton showing great interest in an excellent site. The best tender has been accepted, and I am sure everyone looks forward to working with the company to achieve satisfactory development for this area.

Taunton Youth and Community Centre site : In this case we only have a percentage share, with the site at Tangier. This is a site long overdue for redevelopment for the benefit of all concerned. The other two parties are in agreement that it should be sold. Assessment and consultation is now being done as to how to ensure best value.

Councillor Norman Cavill

Council Meeting – 22 February 2011

Report of Councillor Ken Hayward – Environmental Services and Climate Change

1. Environmental Health Teams

Fly-tipping will not be tolerated

- 1.1 Members will be aware that a Wellington man has been prosecuted for environmental crime with fines and costs totalling £1,170 after dumping rubbish at a beauty spot on the Blackdown Hills, close to the Wellington Monument rather than taking it to the tip.
- 1.2 People must not be tempted into taking short-cuts when dealing with rubbish. Fly-tipping is an offence and the Council, which brought the case at Taunton Deane Magistrates on Thursday, 6 January 2011 will not hesitate to prosecute to protect the environment from harm. Everyone has a duty to protect the countryside - not just the Council. That means that people must dispose of their rubbish responsibly.
- 1.3 My message, and that of the Environmental Health Team, is clear: we take environmental crime seriously and will prosecute. I thank the Police for working closely with the Council. Proof, if needed, of the value of close partnership working.

Food Safety

- 1.4 Our officers work closely with local businesses to provide advice and support to make sure food hygiene standards are not only maintained but improved. However, the Council has a prime duty to protect the public and will take action against those who persistently fail to take up the advice or put right failings that are found.
- 1.5 That was the case in the prosecution brought by the Council against Roadhouse Diners Limited in Shuttern, Taunton, which resulted in the business being ordered to pay more than £6,500 in fines and costs after pleading guilty to food hygiene offences.
- 1.6 In a prosecution at Taunton Magistrates Court on Thursday, 6 January 2011 brought by the Borough Council, the company pleaded guilty to three food hygiene offences which were found at a routine hygiene inspection in February 2010. The pub ceased trading in August 2010, but due to the seriousness of the issues found, and the failure to respond to advice and address them in subsequent visits it was felt formal action was warranted.
- 1.7 The premises did not comply with the informal warnings given throughout 2009 and 2010, and the standards had deteriorated leaving us no option but to take formal enforcement action. Members should remember that the primary aim of

inspections is to protect the health of consumers. Prosecution is always a last resort. Our Officers always follow a graduated approach to enforcement, preferring help and advice in the first instance.

The work continues

- 1.8 A joint operation with the Health and Safety Executive is planned to take place in the next couple of weeks where a number of businesses in a specific (undisclosed!) location will be visited, given advice initially and where significant problems are found, action may be taken in line with our Enforcement Policy to secure improvements.
- 1.9 The Drinking Water Inspectorate has received our first annual submission under the new Private Water Supplies legislation.

2. Street Cleansing

National Recognition

- 2.1 I am delighted to report that Taunton has come out top in a national survey aimed at finding the country's best and worst neighbourhoods for litter, blocked drains, potholes, dog fouling and other street scene blights. The town is rated best in an AA survey carried out by "Street Watch" volunteers. Taunton emerged as one of the cleanest and best maintained areas along with Berwick in the Borders and Ipswich in East Anglia
- 2.2 We have just completed the most recent NI195 inspections and I am pleased to report to Members that we recorded results above the national average against three of the four assessable criteria.
- 2.3 It seems that we might just have escaped a repeat of the severe weather conditions we suffered from just before Christmas, and those days are but a memory. However I would like to add my personal thanks to that of our Leader, Councillor John Williams, Chris Hall (Highways and Cleansing Manager), and Richard Hopkins (Cleansing Supervisor) to Taunton Deane DLO staff for going the extra mile during the snow fall that we experienced.
- 2.4 Whilst the Council has received some bad press concerning the removal of snow within the town centre it is important to remember that we offered this support to the Somerset County Council utilising staff who would otherwise have been unable to work.

Eco-friendly street sweeper

- 2.5 We have just taken delivery of a new Hako street sweeping machine which we believe to be the best in its class. The vehicle's green credentials were of particular interest to us and as it happened we were able to procure this for a lower price than the alternatives, so a winning situation all around.

- 2.6 The machine has 'Euro 5' engine fitted as standard ensuring low emissions and an extremely low noise level. It also has the lowest fuel consumption in its class and the lowest 'on contract' running costs of any other sweepers of this nature.

To wee or not to wee...?

- 2.7 Following an extended consultation period, Wellington Town Council has now fed their views back to us on the Rockwell Green Toilets. Members will recall that they have been closed for some time due to continued vandalism and anti-social behaviour. I am informed that the local Chamber of Trade has indicated that they would like to see the facility remain open but with restricted opening hours during the day. I will be shortly speaking to officers on the matter to consider our options.
- 2.8 Vandals have also struck in North Street Wellington, where the public toilet doors have been irreparably damaged. Officers have worked with Property Services (Southwest One) to find a supplier able to manufacture replacement doors and protection, and have now placed an order for the necessary works to be carried out and should have these back in operation very soon.

3. Crematorium

- 3.1 Preparation work continues with architectural support from Southwest One on the new crematoria with the mercury filtration, with detailed plans being drawn and planning applications being processed.
- 3.2 Concerns previously reported regarding the installation of the new Music System at the Crematorium now seem to have been resolved, and local clergy on the whole now join local funeral directors in their support of the system.
- 3.3 The Crematorium office has started selling plants grown at the DLO Nursery. The plants are reasonably priced and good quality.

4. Climate Change / Carbon Management

- 4.1 The Climate Change website for Taunton Deane residents will be on stream from March 2011. The website includes sections on: 'What the Council does' (Carbon Management Plan, 10%Less Campaign, etc); renewable energy; energy efficiency measures and saving tips (advice, grants); resources for businesses (funding).
- 4.2 The voltage optimiser unit installed at The Deane House in July 2010, is producing annual savings of 8.4% on building's electricity usage. This equates to annual savings of 31 tonnes of CO₂ or £4,850. The cost of the unit was about £23,000 - payback at current energy prices in just under 5 years.

- 4.3 Good progress has been made on the implementation of carbon reduction actions from the Carbon Management Plan. By January 2011, 36 of 69 actions had been implemented; 23 actions were in progress of implementation; and 10 actions had been abandoned or postponed.
- 4.4 If fully implemented, quantifiable actions from the Carbon Management Plan for 2010/2011 (including Tone) will result in annual carbon savings of more than 300 tonnes CO₂. This equates to financial savings of £61,000 per year against total costs of about £120,000. Therefore, the payback period on actions is just over two years.

Deane Energy Saver Scheme

- 4.5 The Deane Energy Saver Scheme – 11 community volunteers trained up by the Council to undertake basic energy surveys for residents – is now fully operational. During the period October to January, about 30 surveys were carried out. I have put my name forward for an energy survey as I know other Members have. I will let you know how I get on.
- 4.6 The Car-club car based at The Deane House is now available for staff and residents. This will encourage more staff to use the club car for work related travel. There is the further opportunity to make carbon savings if used instead of 'bigger' personal cars.

Climate Change Strategy

- 4.7 Justification and key areas for a Climate Change Strategy have been presented to the Taunton Deane Partnership (formerly LSP). The TDP agreed the setting up of a working group to drive and coordinate further development of the Strategy. Membership of the group is to be agreed in summer 2011. The Strategy and accompanying Action Plan will hopefully be completed by December 2013.

5. Waste Management

Household Waste Recycling Centre's (HWRC) to be mothballed?

- 5.1 Discussion took place at the Somerset Waste Board on Friday, 11 February, 2011 on the Somerset Waste Partnership's (SWP) Business Plan. The potential closure of four recycling centres – at Coleford, Crewkerne, Dulverton and Middlezoy took up most of the air-time, with representations from several members of public from the areas directly affected. SWP Officers continue to work hard to find an alternative to the closures and essentially asked the Board for some more time to do just that.
- 5.2 This was granted in the Board's recommendations. As one of Taunton Deane's representatives on the Board I ensured that should it finally come to it, the sites in question be 'mothballed' rather than merely 'closed', in the hope that as long as there is a continued need for them, they may at some time in the future be

reopened. I also secured the assurance of the Portfolio Holder, County Councillor David Hall that sites would not be disposed of, at least for the next twelve months.

Wake-up call

- 5.3 We continue to benefit from Sort It +. All three national indicators on Waste Management show positive trends (i.e. continued improvement), and residual tonnage to landfill continues to go down.
- 5.4 At best the above referred threatened mothballing and potential closure of HWRC's elsewhere in the County has served as a wake-up call. I am therefore pressing officers at the Somerset Waste Partnership to explore even more avenues for reducing and recycling household waste. Hopefully there will be more on this soon.

Ground-breaking deal

- 5.5 As I write this, we approach the first anniversary of SWP's ground-breaking deal with Marks and Spencer (M&S). Under proposals announced last February, M&S declared its intention to increase the amount of dry recyclables collected at the kerbside by 60,000 tonnes-a-year by 2015. This would be equivalent to the amount of packaging M&S produces annually.
- 5.6 The SWP was the first waste authority to agree to the deal and will receive £1.25 million from M&S over the next five years. The deal enabled the SWP to purchase new collection vehicles to allow it to collect plastic bottles and cardboard from the kerbside.

.....and finally

- 5.7 Despite the fact that crews worked extremely hard during the recent severe weather, it is recognised by all that there is room for improvement.
- 5.8 I have therefore volunteered to serve on a sub-group of the SWP Board to review arrangements for coping with severe weather (or other similar eventualities). The plan being to be better prepared next time around.

Councillor Ken Hayward