

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Executive – 13 October 2010

Annual Review of the Task and Finish Reviews

Report of the Scrutiny Officer

(This matter is the responsibility of Councillor John Williams)

Executive Summary

A report on the Annual Review of the Task and Finish Reviews was presented to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 29 July 2010. A copy of this report is attached as an Appendix.

Although the report includes four recommendations, they were not formally accepted by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee.

Members expressed their disappointment with the outcome of some of the reviews which had been undertaken, even though they accepted that the "Task and Finish" way of working did have some merit. Dissatisfaction overall with the scrutiny processes operated by the Council was also expressed.

The general feeling held by Councillors was that they would prefer a return to the former Committee system of working – something the new Coalition Government had indicated might be possible in the future.

1. Although the Corporate Scrutiny Committee did not formally accept the recommendations contained in the report, Members did resolve the following:-

"That it be recommended to the Executive that the current scrutiny arrangements operated by the Council be replaced at the earliest possible opportunity by a new Committee system, to include Task and Finish working where this was considered appropriate."

2. The Corporate Management Team (CMT) have reviewed the report submitted to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee and have made the following comments:-

- CMT felt that it was important to keep track of the number of Task and Finish Reviews that were being done and their relevance. It is suggested that a criteria should be adopted for deciding whether a Task and Finish review should be done. For example, does it help with achieving our Corporate Aims? Specifically CMT questioned whether

The Wellington Cemetery review needed to be done as the issue is quite clear and there are very limited ways of dealing with it.

- The terms of reference should be very specific and relevant.
- There should be a system for dealing with the recommendations that come from Task and Finish Reviews and also for ensuring that any recommendations that are agreed are implemented.
- Recommendations should go to CMT before going to the Executive to ensure that recommendations are workable and also to double check their relevance.

In addition with regard to the recommendation that was made by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee the following points are relevant:-

- The bill that will incorporate the possible changes to the committee structure will be the Localism Bill and this will be issued in November 2010;
- The legislation is due to be given Royal Assent by November 2011; and
- Local consultation will be by way of public consultation or possibly a referendum.

A report proposing changes to the commissioning and framework of future Task and Finish Reviews is on the Community Scrutiny Committee's Forward Plan and is likely to be considered on 9 November 2010.

3. The Executive is therefore recommended:-

- 3.1 To note the recommendations which were included in the report that was considered by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 29 July 2010;
- 3.2 To note the comments of CMT and agree that there should be a new framework for commissioning and delivering Task and Finish Reviews in the future;
- 3.3 To agree that the Task and Finish Chairman should be empowered, with support from the Scrutiny Officer, to track agreed recommendations through to completion;
- 3.4 To agree that all of the outstanding recommendations from Task and Finish Reviews which have previously been agreed be reviewed by the appropriate Executive Councillors to decide what action now needs to be taken; and
- 3.5 Any debate on a return to the Committee Structure be put on hold until the Localism Bill is published by the Coalition Government.

4. Contact Details

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Appendix

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Corporate Scrutiny Committee

Annual Scrutiny Report of the Task and Finish Reviews

Report of the Scrutiny Officer

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor John Williams)

1. Executive Summary

It is recommended that the effectiveness of the Task and Finish reviews be considered. Additionally, recommendations should be made as to how they could be further improved and to ensure that all accepted recommendations are actioned; and where this has not been achieved, an explanation be provided or an action plan put into place.

2. Background

- 2.1 Our vision is to be a high performing Council, working in partnership to create a good quality of life for all Taunton Deane residents. Effective overview and scrutiny is integral to delivering our vision.
- 2.2 Scrutiny is a powerful tool. It can look into issues that are important to local people, question key decisions and recommend how the Council and partners can deliver services more effectively.
- 2.3 Scrutiny can consider any issue that has an effect on the people who live in, work in or visit Taunton Deane. This covers everything from how Council Tax is spent right down to issues that only affect a tiny corner of the district.
- 2.4 We want overview and scrutiny to improve accountability, strengthen the democratic process and help develop policy. Most importantly, it must address the concerns and needs of local people.
- 2.5 The Centre for Public Scrutiny model identifies four key components for effective scrutiny:-
 1. Providing **Critical Friend Challenge** to the Executive and external agencies;
 2. Reflecting the **voice and concerns** of local communities;

3. Taking the **lead and owning** the scrutiny process of behalf of the public; AND

4. Making an **impact on the delivery** of public services.

2.6 It also identifies the supporting infrastructure to deliver these components as:-

- Roles and relationships;
- Process and Practice; and
- Skills and support.

2.7 **Taunton Deane identifies its objectives as:-**

1. To ensure that the Council is publicly accountable for what it does;
2. To oversee Council performance and drive improvement;
3. To reflect the hopes and needs of local people; and
4. To challenge and examine the way things are done, and recommend improvements.

2.8 **Scrutiny at Taunton Deane looks at:-**

Issues Raised by Councillors

Scrutiny must be responsive to the needs and concerns of the public. As representatives of their constituents, Councillors are able to introduce topics that are of concern to the public.

Council Policy and Performance

Scrutiny Committees receive a wide range of performance management reports and information including,

- Performance Indicators;
- Reports on Council services;
- Reports that will go before the Executive or Full Council; and
- Any policy issues that the Executive will be asked to consider.

The Scrutiny Committees cannot work without proper and full information on the issues before them. The Scrutiny Forward Plan contains all the items that the Committees will consider.

Budget Scrutiny

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee also scrutinises the yearly Budget. It should receive regular updates on the Budget, and must review the Budget before it is approved by the Full Council.

Community Strategy and Local Area Agreements

The Committees are responsible for scrutinising the Community Strategy, to make sure it reflects the Local Area Agreement and meets Taunton Deane's needs.

“Well-being” Issues

The Scrutiny Committees have a wide remit to identify, discuss, understand and resolve problems that residents and stakeholders deal with. They can look at anything they feel is relevant to the lives and well-being of anyone who works in, lives in or visits Taunton Deane. This includes looking at the work of non-Council organisations that deliver public services.

- 2.9 Scrutiny at Taunton Deane Borough Council was restructured in 2007 which saw a “pilot project” replacing the five service specific Review Panels and a Review Board with an Overview and Scrutiny Board, which operated in a similar way to the Review Board but with some additional responsibilities and the Strategy and Performance Panel. In 2009 Scrutiny at Taunton Deane saw further changes designed to improve the function. The Overview and Scrutiny Board and the Strategy and Performance Panel were replaced by two Committees: The Corporate and the Community Scrutiny Committees.
- 2.10 A small number of Task and Finish Reviews were undertaken under the old system. However, the pilot project identified Task and Finish Groups as a significant part of the Scrutiny work concentrating on specific problems or issues identified by Councillors or the public.
- 2.11 Reviews are undertaken after approval by the relevant Scrutiny Committee. A small group of Members carry out a specific piece of work within a limited timescale.
- 2.12 A review may involve oral and written evidence from key stakeholders, consideration of current performance, research and notable and best practice by other service providers. It may also involve talking to policy makers, managers and consumers, looking at service delivery on the ground in order to develop recommendations for improvement.
- 2.13 When a review or task and finish report is completed, the appropriate Scrutiny Committee will discuss its conclusions and recommendations. The Committee may agree the recommendations or suggest amendments. The agreed report will then be presented to the Executive. This will request the Executive to respond to the issues raised in the report and either endorse or dismiss the recommendations.

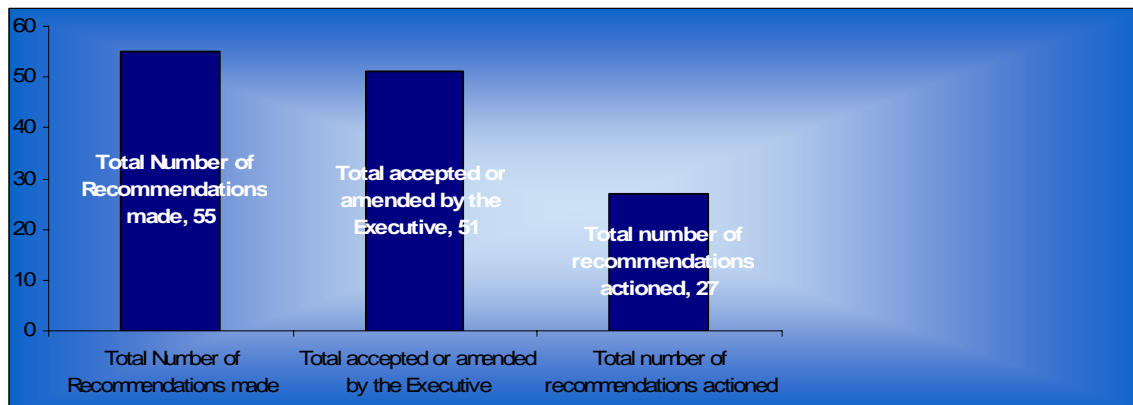
3. The Review of the work of the Task and Finish Groups

- 3.1 This report looks at ten of the reviews completed between 2006 and December 2009.

- A Review into Wellington Cemetery;
- A Review into Affordable Housing in Taunton Deane;
- A Review into Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency;
- A Review into Sustainable Transport;
- A Review into Rural Sustainability;
- A Review into how the Housing Service Tackles Anti-Social behaviour;
- A Review into the Planning Departments Role in Delivery Large Housing Schemes;
- A Review into the Co-ordination of Services for Older People;
- A Review into the funding of the Brewhouse Theatre; and
- A Review into Employment Land in Taunton Deane.

3.2 The attached appendices contain a detailed summary of each review, together with the recommendations made. The summary also advises whether following examination of the Group’s recommendations by the relevant Scrutiny Committee and the Executive, if the recommendations were accepted and whether they have been implemented.

3.3 From the ten reviews a total of 55 recommendations have been made by the Scrutiny Committees to the Executive. Of these recommendations, 52 have been accepted or amended by the Executive. Of the 52 accepted recommendations only 27 have been actioned, as shown below;



3.4 For the majority of recommendations that have not been followed up, the Core Council Review or budgetary restraints have been cited as the cause. The Core Council Review has led to a reduction in staff and resources available to implement the recommendations.

3.6 Recommendations 8 and 9 from “A Review into how the Planning Departments Role in Delivering Large Housing Schemes” (Appendix 7), were added by the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 13 October 2008. In terms of the figures above, these recommendations are

included in the total number made, but were not then passed onto the Executive for consideration. The additional recommendations were:-

- The Planning Department needs to be more adequately resourced to deliver large planning schemes more quickly; and
- A protocol regarding the involvement of Members in pre-application discussions on major applications should be developed as suggested by the Task and Finish Review.

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee should now consider whether these recommendations should go forward (at this relatively late stage) to the Executive.

- 3.7 In considering the numbers of recommendations shown above, it is also worth pointing out that in respect of Wellington Cemetery (Confidential Appendix 11), although all three of the recommendations were accepted by the Executive, recommendation 3 contained a ten point action plan. However, only four points have been actioned or implemented.
- 3.8 The Review into how the Housing Service Tackles Anti-Social Behaviour and the Review into the Co-ordination of Services for Elderly people have seen the least action taken in accordance with the recommendations.
- 3.9 The Review into Employment Land has been the most successful with action being taken in accordance with all five of the recommendations made by the Task and Finish Group.

4. Finance Comments

- 4.1 The cost of implementing recommendations needs to be taken into account.

5. Legal Comments

- 5.1 Members and Officers need to be mindful of any legal requirements when implementing recommendations.

6. Links to Corporate Aims

- 6.1 The Task and Finish Reviews link in with the Council's Corporate Aims.

7. Environmental and Community Safety Implications

- 7.1 The recommendations from the Review into Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency have implications in respect of Climate Change.

7.2 The Recommendations from the Review into How the Housing Service Tackles Anti-Social Behaviour has Community Safety implications.

8. Equalities Impact

8.1 Some of the reviews may have an implication.

9. Risk Management

9.1 Not applicable.

10. Recommendations

10.1 The Corporate Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider whether the two additional recommendations (detailed in paragraph 3.6 above) made by the Overview and Scrutiny Board in October 2008 in respect of the Review into How the Planning Service Delivers Large Housing Schemes should go forward to the Executive for approval.

10.2 The Corporate Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider whether the recommendations which have been accepted by the Executive, but where no action has been taken, should either be dismissed or referred to the relevant officers for action. A list of these recommendations, excluding those in confidential Appendix 11, can be found in Appendix 10.

10.3 The Corporate Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider if it would be appropriate for the Chairman of a Task and Finish Review, with support from the Scrutiny Officer, to be responsible for liaising with the relevant officers, three to six months after the final report has been presented to the Executive, to check on implementation progress.

10.4 The Corporate Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider how effective the Task and Finish Reviews have been and how the number of recommendations being actioned could be improved.

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Appendix 1

Review into Affordable Housing in Taunton Deane

This review was undertaken because there are more people in need of housing in Taunton Deane than the number of houses available. As a Housing Authority and Local Planning Authority, Taunton Deane has a duty to facilitate affordable housing delivery and provide social housing for those on its housing register. Recent housing needs assessments have demonstrated that supply of new affordable housing in Taunton Deane has not kept pace with demand.

The original membership of the review was:-

Councillor Ken Hayward (Chairman)
Councillor Bob Bowrah
Councillor David House
Councillor Chris Phillips
Councillor Alan Wedderkopp

Following the May 2007 elections, changes in the membership of the Council forced a change in the membership of this review as follows:-

Councillor Ken Hayward (Chairman)
Councillor Cliff Bishop
Councillor Bob Bowrah
Councillor Peter Critchard
Councillor Tony Floyd
Councillor David House

The Group originally agreed the following terms of reference:-

- (1) To Identify the issues and problems relating to the provision of affordable housing that require investigation; and
- (2) To make recommendations and policy suggestions to the Executive.

The Group expanded on the terms of reference laid down by the Strategic Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Panel and focused on eight themes:-

- Rural affordable housing, including,
 - Rural housing models; and
 - Community Land Trusts;
- The role of housing associations and the challenges they face;
- The role of, and challenges experienced by, private sector house-builders;
- Mortgages and mortgage provision;

- The role of the Planning Department;
- The role of the Housing Enabling team;
- The role of the Community Council;
- Examples of good practice in other local authorities;
- Land.

Self-build housing was omitted from the terms of reference due to a lack of available information.

What has happened?

The Task and Finish Group made the following eight recommendations:-

Recommendation 1

The Planning Department should look at the usefulness and feasibility of implementing a tariff approach to secure contributions from all housing developments.

Executive Decision

This was not feasible at the moment. It would require the development of a Special Planning Document which within the current timetable of delivery of the Local Development Framework (LDF) was not accounted for. It was also felt that it was not required. The Council had levels of development when provision of affordable housing “kicked in” and the flexibility to take either a cash contribution or the actual housing. The Section 106 Agreement Policy for the town centre was part of the LDF and this was well under way.

Action Taken

None.

Recommendation 2

The Housing Department should look at the usefulness and feasibility of pursuing a Community Land Trust (CLT) model in an appropriate area of Taunton Deane, bearing in mind that a CLT must exhibit the following key characteristics:-

- There needs to be a desire to pursue this from the community in question. This cannot be run “top-down” by local authorities;
- Any CLT must be owned, actually and figuratively, by the community;
- Public involvement and support from the beginning is essential;
- The district (and county) councils must genuinely support the aspirations and timetable of the community;
- CLT’s are not just about housing; they are about developing Communities;
- Needs dedicated, full time support; and
- It needs significant commitment from the community to be successful.

Executive Decision

There was no resource to support delivery of a CLT at this at this time. However the concept was agreed and it could be a valuable tool for delivering affordable housing in rural areas in the future. The Executive would bear this recommendation in mind until resources became available or an opportunity arose.

Action Taken

This option has been looked at in depth and has been ruled out as being very costly to the authority.

Recommendation 3

In acknowledging the work already done in developing the 'green' aspects of the new Regional Spatial Strategy, and following on from documents like the Taunton Protocol, the Council should redouble its efforts to promote energy efficiency and environmental sustainability in affordable housing developments, including working with developers.

Executive Decision

The Executive made no comment.

Action Taken

Yes this is being done. Taunton Deane currently delivers to Code Level 4 which exceeds the requirement of the current Building Regulations of Code Level 2. It is hoped that future dwellings will be constructed to an even higher code level.

Recommendation 4

The Housing Department should look again at the possibility of producing affordable housing on infill sites on its housing estates and other landholdings, which could include a pilot project to test the concept.

Executive Decision

This would be acceptable if there was the political will to do so. If not, it was still possible to look at brown-field sites on our housing estates on a case by case basis and reject the use of green land.

Action Taken

This is being done. Three schemes are going ahead for planning permission for redevelopment at Ruskin Close, Victoria Gate and behind Priorswood shops. In addition, the regeneration of part of the Halcon Estate, Taunton is actively being considered.

Recommendation 5

Homes delivered through the Affordable Housing programme must be managed effectively if they are to be a positive benefit for the community and residents. Therefore, the Housing Enabling Team should ensure it has an appropriate and effective working relationship with the Housing Management Teams of the local authority and its Housing Association partners, to ensure

that new affordable housing developments can be properly managed as well as meet our affordable housing need.

Executive Decision

The Executive made no comment.

Action Taken

This is of prime concern to the Housing Team. When considering a partnership, future management is a key factor in selection.

Recommendation 6

The Council, as lead partner in the development of affordable housing in Taunton Deane, keeps in mind the fact that mortgage companies are often put off mortgaging on complex financial models that may not be proven in the marketplace. Some models, however appropriate or useful to a developer or potential buyer, may make some tenures less accessible.

Executive Decision

The Executive made no comment.

Action Taken

That is still the case and the current economic downturn has worsened the situation. It is something that is always borne in mind.

Recommendation 7

That Taunton Deane should continue to be flexible when negotiating affordable housing allocations on housing schemes. For example, it is better to achieve one or two units rather than have a rigid protocol that is so strict it might stop a site being developed at all. This is particularly important where schemes are close to the Council's affordable housing threshold.

Executive Decision

This was not required. The Council needed a level when it could require the provision of affordable housing to “kick in” – it was helpful that this was based in policy (and in Government Planning Policy). Taunton Deane already had the flexibility to take less if a scheme was not financially viable to produce the target amount and cash could already be taken rather than bricks and mortar.

Action Taken

There is still not enough flexibility in the opinion of the Housing Enabling Manager.

Recommendation 8

Delivering Taunton Deane's affordable housing objectives can only be assured with continued and appropriate resourcing of the relevant parts of the Housing and Planning services.

Executive Decision

The Executive made no comment.

Action Taken

Resourcing still needs addressing especially in light of the recent Core Council Review.

Appendix 2

Task and Finish Review into Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency

This review was set up at around the time of the 2007/2008 Climate Change Bill when the 'green' agenda was becoming more prominent in the policies of all the major political parties. It was noted that environmental issues will have a major impact on Councils, communities and business.

The membership of the review was:-

Councillor Catherine Herbert (Chairman)
Councillor John Bone
Councillor Norman Cavill
Councillor Ken Hayward
Councillor Peter Smith
Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams
Councillor Phil Stone

The Overview and Scrutiny Board Commissioned this review on 4 October 2007 subject to the following terms of reference:-

- To understand the advantages and disadvantages of different types of renewable energy, and how they might be applied in Taunton Deane;
- To "case study" biomass as a renewable fuel. Biomass could offer a locally sourced renewable energy supply, with a specific positive effect on the local and rural economy;
- To propose a policy framework that will allow Taunton Deane to enable and facilitate sustained development of low and zero carbon energy production;
- To identify good and best practice that can be implemented in Taunton Deane;
- To find out what concerns exist about different renewable energy technologies, whether they are well founded, and what can be done to address those concerns; and
- To make recommendations on how Taunton Deane can anticipate, meet, and possibly exceed, renewable energy and low carbon obligations laid down by Central Government and other agencies.

At the first meeting of the Task and Finish Group, Members distilled the broad terms of reference into the following statement:-

'To understand the advantages and disadvantages of different types of renewable energy, their viability and funding and how that might be applied to Taunton Deane and promoted, especially with regard to:-

- Helping residents to embrace renewable energy;
- Helping developers to embrace renewable energy;
- What local authorities were able to go ahead and do'.

As the review progressed, it became apparent that energy efficiency was as important as renewable energy and the group consciously looked less closely at renewables and more closely at energy efficiency.

What has happened?

The Task and Finish Group made the following 11 recommendations. The response of the Executive to each recommendation is also shown.

Recommendation 1

The Review Group believes that the Council should encourage and be supportive of any efforts made to identify sites for viable commercial wind turbines.

Executive Decision

Wind turbines were not really feasible in Taunton Deane due to the lack of available and reliable wind speed and there were also planning constraints. It was not therefore really worth spending a lot of officer time on. The Executive did not wish to rule out the principle but no promises could be made.

Action Taken

None.

Recommendation 2

The Council should promote a trial of anaerobic digestion as a means of producing energy. A feasibility study should be carried out to determine the usefulness of commercial food waste for this purpose, which is currently land-filled.

Executive Decision

This was not the Council's responsibility except in Planning terms. There was no resource at this time to promote or pursue this recommendation. However, the Somerset Waste Partnership might have an interest and this recommendation should be flagged to the next meeting of the Somerset Waste Board (SWB). Any parties interested in this issue should also be directed to the SWB.

Recommendation not accepted.

Action Taken

Recommendation not accepted, therefore, no action taken other than referring to SWB.

Recommendation 3

The Council should look for and pursue opportunities to deliver viable biomass

power generation on future developments where the Council has the power to influence; this should include its own buildings and housing stock. The Review Group was particularly impressed by the potential of miscanthus as an energy crop. West Somerset District Council's recent work using waste

wood-chip could also be a worthwhile bio-mass fuel.

Executive Decision

No comments made by the Executive.

Action Taken

Work in connection with the Planning Policy Statement No 1: Delivering Sustainable Development has been commissioned which will look at the potential for bio-mass use (amongst others) within Taunton Deane, towards setting targets for renewable energy application in the Core Strategy. We are also aware of some potential interest in the private sector for such development.

Recommendation 4

Taunton Deane Borough Council should implement this scheme where all householders are encouraged to complete a Home Energy Efficiency Questionnaire in return for two free energy efficiency light bulbs and a customised energy efficiency report for their home] in association with the relevant local Energy Efficiency Advice Centre to encourage and enable households to save energy and reduce their carbon footprint.

Executive Decision

A good idea, subject to resource availability.

Action Taken

Scheme not implemented, though forms were distributed as part of event run by Bristol Energy Advice Centre.

Recommendation 5

The Planning Department should prepare and publish a Supplementary Planning document, or similar policy or best practice guide, requesting or requiring those who submit planning applications to extend dwellings, to complete energy efficiency improvements as a requirement of receiving planning permission -where possible and practical. This requirement / guidance should include, but not be limited to, the following:-

- Cavity, wall, loft and floor insulation;
- Replacement of boiler if over a certain age;
- Upgrade of heating controls;
- Hot water insulation package;
- Draught stripping; and
- Energy efficient lighting.

Executive Decision

There was no capacity to publish a Supplementary Planning Document – and it was questioned whether it was actually required. The Code for Sustainable Homes is being implemented by Government and this was mandatory. The South West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) was applying these mandatory targets in advance of Central Government – so Taunton Deane would be ahead of the game in any event (unless the Secretary of State disallowed this

aspect of the RSS).

The Council would not be able to require it through Planning without the policy framework. However, the Council did already have the Taunton Protocol which could be used as a persuasive tool with developers. The Council could also look at what advice we provided for domestic applications on energy efficiency measures beyond what was required, but at the moment Planning resources are tied up delivering the Local Development Framework. In time, the intention of the recommendation would come about but it was not deliverable at the moment. Recommendation not accepted.

Action Taken

Recommendation not accepted, therefore, no action taken.

Recommendation 6

The Council should work with the local Energy Efficiency Advice Centre to set up an energy efficiency open day, perhaps in the style of the successful Affordable Housing Open Day, to promote energy efficiency, renewable energy and energy saving as it affects residents and businesses in Taunton Deane. This open day should be specifically set up to provide practical assistance for residents and businesses as well as information on the Climate Change agenda. This event must be properly advertised and promoted.

Executive Decision

No comments made by the Executive.

Action Taken

None – although a low level event was run by the Bristol Energy Advice Centre.

Recommendation 7

Taunton Deane should explore the possibility of appointing a Climate Change Officer. This post should include the following responsibilities and be appropriately placed in the structure of the organization to have the greatest impact and influence:-

- To promote the Council's Corporate Objective on Climate Change, renewable energy and energy efficiency (Objective 17, 2008-11 Corporate Strategy);
- To lead Taunton Deane's input into meeting the Local Area Agreement targets relating to Climate Change;
- To lead on producing, implementing and monitoring documents relating to Climate Change, renewable energy and energy efficiency; such as the Carbon Management Plan and Climate Change Strategy; and
- Service the "Green Groups" and keep them informed – see Recommendations 10 and 11.

Executive Decision

This recommendation would be considered as part of budget setting and in the light of the current recruitment freeze and Core Council Review. The

Executive was open to the usefulness of the post but this was dependent on resources and re-organization.

Action Taken

A temporary post of Strategy Officer (Climate Change) has been created and work to date has included the production of the Council's Carbon Reduction Strategy.

Recommendation 8

Taunton Deane should create a webpage to promote energy efficiency, renewable energy and the wider climate change agenda, with a direct link placed on the www.tauntondeane.gov.uk front page. This webpage should contain information on energy efficiency, renewable energy, the Council's approach to Climate Change and a list of contact details for relevant organizations and funding authorities.

Executive Decision

No comments made by the Executive.

Action Taken

None to date.

Recommendation 9

A leaflet containing details on how householders can access grants and other assistance to make their homes more energy efficient should be compiled. It should be distributed with the annual Council Tax demand. The leaflet should direct householders to the Energy Savings Trust website, and provide contact information to help householders not only make their homes more environmentally friendly, but possibly save money by doing so.

This recommendation was made during the review as an interim recommendation. It was adopted by the portfolio holder for Planning and Transportation and the leaflet was distributed with the 2008/2009 Council Tax demand.

The Group believes that the leaflet should now be distributed to all Council offices and, where possible, to officers who have direct contact with the public. In particular, the leaflet could have a role in tackling fuel poverty, and in correspondence between the Planning Department and applicants.

Executive Decision

The leaflet has already been distributed with notable results.

Action Taken

No further action.

Recommendation 10

The Council should set up a small informal "green group" of interested Councillors who can promote the green agenda within the Council, amongst other Members, and in the community at large. It should also act as a mechanism for feeding back the views and attitudes of the public and be

given the opportunity – without prejudice to other methods of consultation – to give feedback on “green” strategies that the Council develops, such as the Climate Change Strategy. This green group should be linked to the role of the Climate Change Officer (if Recommendation 7 is adopted).

Executive Decision

Both these groups (Recommendations 10 and 11) were already being set up. Care needed to be taken to ensure that they worked in tandem and did not duplicate efforts.

Action Taken

Member and officer working groups established and merged into a joint group.

Recommendation 11

In light of the financial **and** environmental cost of the CO2 footprint of Taunton Deane Borough Council, the Council should set up an informal volunteer “green group” amongst officers to promote and champion energy saving and green awareness at the Council to create an environmentally sustainable working environment.

Executive Decision

Both these groups (Recommendations 10 and 11) were already being set up. Care needed to be taken to ensure that they worked in tandem and did not duplicate efforts.

Action Taken

Initial meeting of volunteer Green Champions held, but not progressed. Group re-established following Transition Town awareness training. Meeting arranged with prospective Green Champions (Members and officers) scheduled for October 2009 to determine roles, and action plans. This Group have now met on a number of occasions and the Council’s Carbon Reduction Strategy has been formulated as a result.

Appendix 3

Review into Sustainable Transport

This review was proposed by the Leader of the Council as it linked with the Council's Corporate Priorities on Transport and Environment and was one of the ruling groups manifesto pledges.

The membership of the review was as follows:-

Councillor John Meikle MBE (Chairman)
Councillor Louise James
Councillor Alan Paul
Councillor Peter Smith
Councillor Stuart-Thorn
Councillor Denise Webber
Councillor Mary Whitmarsh

The group agreed the Terms of Reference as:-

"To examine the problems being experienced regarding traffic congestion within Taunton Town Centre and discuss sustainable transport policies adopted by Somerset County Council"

For instance:-

1. Examine whether staggered school-opening times could make a difference to peoples habits and car usage;
2. Invite a representative from the Highways Department regarding congestion and congestion management. Examine whether the alteration of traffic light sequences and timings depending on the day (whether it was a Bank Holiday or weekend) and time of day could affect congested areas within Taunton Town Centre;
3. Identify practicable ways of improving access to transport within both Taunton Town Centre and rural areas. Examine the 'Wivey' Link and any available accounts involved with this service;
4. Discuss how community transport works and who it helps;
5. Look at developments in 'demand led' transport such as the 'Slinky' and 'Nippy' service, which are flexible around the user;
6. Identify how car usage could be reduced, and identify practicable ways of promoting or improving the use in other methods of transport; and
7. Make recommendations to the Executive for consideration.

What has happened?

Recommendation 1

The Council should allocate the £25,000 funding available in the budget for Sustainable Transport initiatives towards the setup costs for the three 3-year demand responsive bus services currently being tendered by the County Council, namely:-

- Blagdon – Staplehay – Taunton;
- West Monkton – Hestercombe – Taunton; and
- Curry Mallet – West Hatch – Taunton

Decision

The Leader of the Council at the time, Councillor Ross Henley, made the decision to allocate the funds as per the recommendation.

Action Taken

These services are now running and were featured in the performance summary of what has been achieved over the last 12 months in “Your Guide 2009/2010”.

Appendix 4

A Review into Rural Sustainability

This review linked to several Corporate Priorities: Economy, Transport and Environment.

Some rural villages are becoming dormitories rather than communities. Rural communities are losing businesses that are extremely important for many people- particularly those without the use of a car or access to the internet etc.

The membership of the review was as follows:-

Councillor David House (Chairman)
Councillor Sue Lees
Councillor Gerry Guerrier
Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams
Councillor John Thorne
Councillor Peter Watson

The Task and Finish Group agreed the following terms of reference:-

- To rename the Group 'Rural Sustainability Task and Finish Group';
- To understand the current situation in rural communities and how it affects different groups;
- To identify changes occurring in rural communities and why they are happening;
- To find out what rural communities want and to explore any alternative or innovative solutions to their problems;
- To identify who is best placed to deliver these solutions; and
- To discover how the Council and its partners could enable the delivery of improvements.

What has happened?

The Task and Finish Group met on a couple of occasions and realised that its terms of reference were not unique to Taunton Deane but related to other Somerset Districts too. The Group therefore made only one recommendation as follows:-

- This Task and Finish Review Group should end but the membership re-constitute as an informal sounding-board for development of cross-district economic development work between Taunton Deane and neighbouring local authorities.

Action Taken

There has been one joint meeting at the Williams Hall, Stoke St Gregory attended by Sedgemoor District Councillor Anne Fraser and officers from both Sedgemoor and South Somerset. In the past Sedgemoor had held local

village group meetings including the villages bordering Taunton Deane, particularly Burrowbridge and North Curry which had over boundary flooding problems. Following Steve Kendall's (a previous Economic Development Manager) departure nothing more has been done. If this is in any way carried forward it would best to contact the relevant staff in our adjoining Council's to hear their views.

Appendix 5

Review into how the Housing Service Tackles Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

This review was set up primarily in response to tenants approaching several Councillors who were frustrated about the Housing Officers being unable to put a stop to the nuisance and distress being caused to them as a result of anti-social behaviour in their area. The original purpose of this review is to examine how Taunton Deane's Housing Service deals with anti-social behaviour, specifically with regard to clauses in its tenancy agreements.

The membership of the review was as follows:-

Councillor Mary Whitmarsh (Chairman)
Councillor Bob Bowrah BEM
Councillor John Meikle
Councillor Tim Slattery
Councillor Nigel Stuart-Thorn
Councillor Nicola Wilson
Councillor Julie Wood

The Task and Finish Group agreed the following terms of reference:-

- To define anti-social behaviour and nuisance and to specifically focus on the role of the Housing Service;
- To identify ways of building confidence to help residents speak out, rather than tolerate the problems;
- To consider the current legal procedures and the length of time it can take to arrange an eviction and;
- To make recommendations to the Executive for consideration.

What has happened?

The Task and Finish Group made the following seven recommendations. The response of the Executive to each recommendation is also shown.

Recommendation 1

The Council should sign up to the 'Respect' Standard for Housing Management as soon as possible.

Executive Decision

Recommendation accepted.

Action Taken

The profile of the Standard is now far lower nationally but following the Task and Finish Group it was seen as connected to a new impetus stimulated by the

implementation of Recommendation 4 (below).

Recommendation 2

A skills audit of Estate Officers should be carried out to identify and meet any training needs in respect of dealing with anti-social behaviour.

Executive Decision

Recommendation accepted.

Action Taken

This was planned to coincide with the implementation of Recommendation 4 (below), in order to facilitate recruitment to a new ASB team. However, it was not feasible to undertake this during the Core Council Review, although proposals were submitted. It is still something that is being considered, but there are funding issues which would mean that creating two Specialist Anti-Social Behaviour Officer posts would mean reducing the Estate Officer posts from ten to eight. It also needs to be considered across the theme following the Core Council Review.

Recommendation 3

There should be a close and swift working liaison between the Council's Estate Officers and its Legal Team to tackle anti-social behaviour as soon as possible.

Executive Decision

Recommendation accepted.

Action Taken

It does exist. However, it could be improved by the Enforcement Solicitor becoming part of a specialist team.

Recommendation 4

As part of the Core Council Review, the Council should look at creating a dedicated Anti-Social Behaviour Team for Housing.

Executive Decision

Recommendation accepted.

Action Taken

See Recommendation 2.

Recommendation 5

To look at the feasibility of using Introductory Tenancies. This however, may be complicated by the imminent introduction of Choice Based Lettings.

Executive Decision

Recommendation accepted.

Action Taken

It is an option. However, the organisational set up following the Core Council Review is an obstacle which has not yet been addressed.

Recommendation 6

The Council should look at the usefulness and feasibility of introducing parental programmes that have been shown to impact on anti-social behaviour.

Executive Decision

Recommendation accepted.

Action Taken

See Recommendation 5.

Recommendation 7

The Council should continue to publicise its successes in dealing with specific cases of anti-social behaviour in its housing stock.

Executive Decision

Recommendation accepted.

Action Taken

This is already being done for more serious cases. Eviction is a rare occurrence but when there is an opportunity to publish punitive measures taken, the Council does take advantage.

Appendix 6

A Review into the Planning Departments Role in Delivering Large Housing Schemes

This review was set up in response to calls from several Councillors to investigate the role of the Council's Planning Department in realising large housing developments and what if anything could be done to improve or speed up the process.

The membership of the review was as follows:-

Councillor Bishop (Chairman)
Councillor O'Brien
Councillor Mrs Court-Stenning
Councillor Farbahi
Councillor Mrs Hill
Councillor House
Councillor P. Smith

The Group agreed the following terms of reference:

- Define 'large' housing schemes;
- Consider the difficulties being experienced under current practice;
- Identify practicable ways of improving the current system of operating;
and
- Make recommendations to the Executive for consideration.

What has happened?

The Task and Finish Group made the following nine recommendations. The response of the Executive to each recommendation is also shown.

Recommendation 1

The Council should seek advice from, and work with, the Advisory Team for Large Applications (ATLAS) on major housing or mixed use developments.

Executive Decision

Recommendation accepted.

Action Taken

We are working with ATLAS. However this is limited due to the number of developments coming forward.

Recommendation 2

The Council should enact the Large Application Charter suggested by ATLAS. The Charter should also be developed in consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Board and the appropriate Executive Councillor for later inclusion in the Statement of Community Involvement. A protocol should be developed to facilitate Member involvement in major planning applications at the pre-application stage.

Executive Decision

Recommendation accepted

Action Taken

The Planning Department has been looking at doing something similar in partnership with the other local authorities which is progressing.

Recommendation 3

Appropriate consultants should be used to support the needs of Taunton Deane Borough Council on viability issues.

Executive Decision

Recommendation accepted.

Action Taken

The Council no longer work with Sector. There has not been the need to use consultants recently due to the lack of developments being brought forward during the economic downturn.

Recommendation 4

Wherever possible, "Heads of Terms" for Planning Obligations should be agreed with the developer before a planning application is submitted.

Executive Decision

Recommendation accepted.

Action Taken

This does happen wherever possible and in the majority of cases for large developments.

Recommendation 5

The "clawback" process should be used in appropriate cases to protect Council interests where necessary. If such arrangements were made, benefits should accrue on the actual rather than the forecast returns.

Executive Decision

Recommendation accepted.

Action Taken

This has not had to be used yet.

Recommendation 6

The Overview and Scrutiny Board and the appropriate Executive Councillor should be consulted on the suggested Planning Obligations procedure to be incorporated in the Local Development Framework.

Executive Decision

Recommendation accepted

Action Taken

We have commissioned Three Dragons and Roger Tym to prepare a Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document for the Core Strategy, but work on this will start later this year following completion of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and be completed by next summer (2011).

Recommendation 7

The “open book” procedure will be mandatory as part of the guidelines.

Executive Decision

Recommendation accepted.

Action Taken

It is mandatory.

Recommendation 8 (this recommendation was added by the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 13 October 2008)

The Planning Department need to be more adequately resourced to deliver large planning schemes more quickly.

Action Taken

The Planning Department resource has been considered through the Core Council Review. This has meant a reduction in overall resource, although it is recognised that resources may need to be increased in the future should workloads increase as the economy recovers.

Recommendation 9 (this recommendation was added by the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 13 October 2008)

A protocol regarding the involvement of Members in pre-application discussions on major applications should be developed as suggested by the Task and Finish Review.

Action Taken

Traditionally the advice has always been that Members should avoid involvement in pre-application discussions. However, the Government’s advice is now changing that they should be involved - which poses the dilemma of how this should happen without the danger of accusations of pre-judgement and bias. A protocol would need to be put in place before Members could become involved at the pre-application stage.

Appendix 7

Review into the Co-ordination of Services for Older People

This review was set up as Members were keen to look at the current situation with regard to the co-ordination of services for older people and how changes over the next decade in the demographic will see an increased need for certain services.

The Review did not investigate the quality of services but looked at ways of improving the co-ordination between services and maximising take up.

The membership of the review was as follows:-

Councillor Danny Wedderkopp (Chairman)
Councillor Gloria Copley
Councillor Terry Hall
Councillor Sue Lees
Councillor Joanna Lewin-Harris
Councillor Elaine Waymouth

The Group met for the first time on 4 December 2007 and held 6 meetings in total.

The Group agreed the following terms of reference:-

The Review Group agreed to broadly define older people for the purposes of this review, as anyone over the age of 65, or over 55 if economically inactive. However, the Review Group was conscious that this definition may change as evidence was gathered, so chose to use it merely as a starting point.

The Review Group also defined “co-ordination” as:-

- Being best able to reach the target group whoever they are; and
- Effectively creating links between the target group and the organization providing the service.

The Review Group chose to focus purely on services for older people provided by the voluntary sector or Taunton Deane, but would speak to the wider statutory sector i.e. Somerset County Council.

The Review Group agreed that the review’s objectives should be:-

- To identify the current services for older people;
- To understand the challenges that lay ahead for the providers of services for older people in Taunton Deane;

- To investigate whether there was a problem with the co-ordination of services for older people and, if so, to recommend how those services could avoid duplication or gaps in provision.

What has happened?

The Task and Finish Group made the following seven recommendations. The response of the Executive to each recommendation is also shown.

Recommendation 1

This Task and Finish report should be presented to the Taunton Deane Local Strategic Partnership to demonstrate the importance of considering the needs of older people in its work.

Executive Decision

Recommendation accepted.

Action Taken

No action has been taken to date. However, the Strategy Lead would be happy to pick this up, but a scoping exercise would need to be undertaken first.

Recommendation 2

The Council recognises the potential of the voluntary sector to add value to the services provided by the statutory sector and will look at establishing better mechanisms for working with the voluntary sector and promoting and encouraging their work.

Executive Decision

Recommendation accepted.

Action Taken

This does not appear to have been progressed.

Recommendation 3

The Council will provide an officer representative to the Local Implementation Team.

Executive Decision

Recommendation accepted.

Action Taken

None to date.

Recommendation 4

The Council should ensure that Taunton Deane Neighbourhood Care continues to be appropriately and sufficiently funded to provide its service to all who need it, particularly those who cannot use the service without financial assistance.

Executive Decision

Continued funding for Neighbourhood Care would need to be considered through the forthcoming Budget Setting exercise.

Action Taken

The amount allocated in the budget for Neighbourhood Care is £10,000.

Recommendation 5

The Council should continue to respect the rights of elderly tenants to remain in their homes, even if they are under-occupying. Incentives rather than penalties should be used when attempting to persuade elderly tenants to downsize or move into sheltered housing.

Executive Decision

Recommendation accepted.

Action Taken

Financial incentives (not penalties) have always been offered and the Council does promote supporting elderly people to stay in their homes. However, the Sheltered Housing Manager would like to see more promotion of sheltered and extra care housing. The waiting list for sheltered housing is relatively short as the average tenancy is only two years.

Recommendation 6

The Council should support a Member Champion who will promote and represent the needs of older people, particularly those who are 'hard to reach'. This person must be someone who not only understands the issues relating to older people, but can also intelligently and effectively challenge projects, initiatives and day-to-day operations of the Council.

Executive Decision

Recommendation accepted.

Action Taken

Councillor Mrs Floyd took was nominated to do this. However, she no longer wishes to continue in this role.

Recommendation 7

The Review Group wishes to re-iterate the importance of equalities impact assessments that take account of the needs of older people and to provide training to officers and Councillors on older people's equalities issues, where appropriate.

Executive Decision

Recommendation accepted.

Action Taken

All Council Staff and Councillors should have received Equality and Diversity training as a matter of course. The Sheltered Housing Manager has advised

that staff often come across prejudicial behaviour from tenants. Staff have been advised to challenge this behaviour but further training is needed to help staff deal with this issue. The Sheltered Housing Manager also has concerns about some residents feeling socially isolated, in particular if they have been subjected to prejudicial behaviour from other tenants. The Voluntary Sheltered Housing Forum is not given enough recognition in the opinion of the Sheltered Housing Manager.

Appendix 8

A Review into the funding of The Brewhouse Theatre

This review was set up to address the substantial and serious budget gap that the Brewhouse was facing. Over the years the Brewhouse overheads have continually increased whilst funding has decreased. The situation could not continue if the Brewhouse was to survive.

The membership of the review was as follows:-

Councillor John Meikle (Chairman)
Councillor Anthony Beaven
Councillor Mrs Gloria Copley
Councillor Mrs Joanna Lewin-Harris
Councillor Miss Louise James
Councillor Mrs Mary Whitmarsh

The group agreed the following term of reference:-

- To recommend a sustainable future for the Brewhouse Theatre, with the role of amateur companies explored as one of the issues.

What has happened?

The Task and Finish Group made the following three recommendations:-

Recommendation 1

The Council should alter its grant to £200,000 per year, subject to the following conditions:-

- The Section 151 Officer was satisfied with the Business Plan;
- The Amateur Groups had a greater involvement (including choice of theatre dates);
- The Trustees moved towards further numbers of volunteers to assist in the reduction of staff costs; and
- The Tourist Information Centre be removed from the budget for the forthcoming year.

Recommendation 2

The Brewhouse Management engaged and actively worked with Taunton Deane and the community to encourage and provide new links to other cultural organisations.

Recommendation 3

The Board of the Brewhouse accepted the re-introduction of a Taunton Deane Monitoring Panel to meet with them monthly. Such information to be effectively transmitted to all Councillors.

Executive Decision

The Executive resolved that the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group as agreed by the Community Scrutiny Committee be amended and replaced with the following:-

1. An additional grant of £50,000 be provided in the current financial year to the Brewhouse Theatre funded from vacancy savings in Theme 1 of the Core Council Review (£10,000), unallocated Local Authority Business Growth Initiatives funding (£10,000) and an interest policy change (£30,000) and serious consideration is given in next years budget setting process to an additional allocation of £50,000 for 2010/2011 to the Brewhouse Theatre;
2. The management of the Brewhouse Theatre be required to engage and actively work with Taunton Deane to encourage and provide new links to other organisations;
3. In particular, the management of the Brewhouse Theatre be required to work with the Youth Service to find a potential solution within the building for joint location. An agreement to be in place by September 2009;
4. Works with Taunton Deane in connection with the joint location of the Tourist Information Centre (TIC) be progressed, together with works to enable Taunton Deane to formulate a robust business plan for the possible move by September 2009;
5. Arrangements be put in place to enable the amateur groups to have a greater involvement in the Brewhouse Theatre;
6. A plan for the further use of volunteers be developed;
7. A monthly reporting mechanism to Taunton Deane be agreed; and
8. The management of the Brewhouse Theatre be required to move the staff car parking off site permanently so that the works to the area to the side and at the front of the theatre could be upgraded; and
9. The Brewhouse should have more young people making use of the building.

Action Taken

- The additional grant of £50,000 was provided last financial year. The

Brewhouse were also successful in securing the Sustain funding of approximately £400,000.

- Possible links with other groups including the Youth Service have been explored. However, there is no funding to proceed further at this time.
- There are no current plans to re-locate the Tourist Information Centre in the near future.
- The Brewhouse Monitoring Group meet quarterly before the main meeting of the Board of Trustees. The Group was set up as one of the controls to monitor and update Taunton Deane on the Brewhouse's funding and financial position. Councillors Anthony Beaven and Alan Paul attend to observe. An annual Service Level Agreement has also been produced.
- The Staff car parking has now been permanently moved off site.

Appendix 9

Employment Land Task and Finish Review

This review was set up to identify sites for development of employment sites in the short, medium and long term. It is felt that the lack of available space has led to a number of missed opportunities for inward investment and companies have relocated.

The membership of the review was as follows:-

Councillor Norman Cavill (Chairman)
Councillor Habib Farbahi
Councillor Terry Murphy
Councillor Jayne O'Brien
Councillor Mrs Vivienne Stock-Williams
Councillor Mrs Mary Whitmarsh
Councillor John Williams

The Group agreed the following terms of reference:-

- Review the Strategic Employment Sites currently available and recommend whether they ought to remain in the Local Plan;
- Identify locations for alternative Strategic Employment Sites which could be more readily available for a wide range and types of businesses;
- Establish what could be achieved through the preparation of the current Local Development Framework (LDF) whilst considering how lengthy potential delays to land coming forward for development may be overcome;
- Undertake consultations with interested parties;
- To consider how we should work with statutory bodies such as the Highways Agency and others to enable any proposed sites to be brought forward; and
- Make recommendations to the Executive.

What has happened?

The Task and Finish Group made the following five recommendations. The response of the Executive is also shown.

Recommendation 1

In line with Circular 02/2009, the Council should initiate discussions with landowners and developers for the release of immediate short term employment land opportunities at Nerrols, Creech Heathfield and Walford Cross and other suitable sustainable sites for up to 5,000 square metres (around 2 hectares per site). Such discussions should aim to encourage the owners of land to release sites to businesses, wherever possible, on a freehold rather than a leasehold basis;

Executive Decision

Recommendation Accepted

Action Taken

Discussions have started but there are no outcomes as yet.

Recommendation 2

In line with Circular 02/2009, the threshold for out-of-centre office proposals for requiring a sequential assessment be raised to 1,000 square metres. This should enable additional windfall opportunities to come forward in the short term;

Executive Decision

Recommendation Accepted

Action Taken

Yes, some sites which would have previously been discounted may have now been accepted. See Confidential Appendix 11

Recommendation 3

A strategic employment site of about 25 hectares with good access to both the M5 Motorway and the A358 should be brought forward in the medium/long term, through the LDF. The Council recognise that it needed to collaborate closely with all relevant agencies if it wished to build in flexibility into the Core Strategy. The owners of any potential site identified should again be encouraged to release sites to businesses, wherever possible, on a freehold rather than a leasehold basis;

Executive Decision

Recommendation Accepted.

Action Taken

The junction is being considered within the Core Strategy.

Recommendation 4

To progress a strategic employment site it was also recommended that a Working Group be set up and led by the Strategic Director, involving Economic Development, Project Taunton and representatives of all relevant agencies, a Councillor representative and others as appropriate with the purpose of developing an evidence base and proposal for the LDF Core Strategy. Consideration should be given to a representative from Sedgemoor District Council being invited to sit on the Working Group. As part of this process there should be community engagement with the parishes that would be affected. It was recommended that the strategic employment site should provide opportunities for major inward investment and relocation of existing sites to Taunton. It was accepted development (non Class A1) would be necessary to fund the initial infrastructure to open up the site, but the total proportion of floor space for such uses should remain ancillary (around 10%)

and focus on medium sized office suites (300 – 1,000 square metres) in order to remain consistent with Government policy and to avoid undermining Firepool as the strategic office site for the Taunton Strategically Significant City and Town (SSCT). Such a Working Group should report back to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee within 4 months, with a progress report;

Executive Decision

Recommendation Accepted

Action Taken

There have been discussions between all relevant agencies and officers included in the first consultation of the Core Strategy. Urban Initiatives have been employed to look at all growth areas for Taunton. A specific working group has not been set up but discussions are ongoing. Deliverability is a key concern with the lack of public investment.

Recommendation 5

The Executive be requested to identify the specific partners for the Working Group which would be led by Taunton Deane with the process and reporting back arrangements (to ensure progress was measured) being led by the Strategic Director, Joy Wishlade.

Executive Decision

Recommendation Accepted.

Action Taken

No particular changes specified. However, the officer group looks at employment land, future growth of employment and land requirements as part of the Urban Initiatives work.

Appendix 10

List of approved recommendations where no action has been taken

Review into Affordable Housing

Recommendation 8

Delivering Taunton Deane's affordable housing objectives can only be assured with continued and appropriate resourcing of the relevant parts of the Housing and Planning services.

Review into Affordable Energy and Energy Efficiency

Recommendation 6

The Council should work with the local Energy Efficiency Advice Centre to set up an energy efficiency open day, perhaps in the style of the successful Affordable Housing Open Day, to promote energy efficiency, renewable energy and energy saving as it affects residents and businesses in Taunton Deane. This open day should be specifically set up to provide practical assistance for residents and businesses as well as information on the Climate Change agenda. This event must be properly advertised and promoted.

Recommendation 8

Taunton Deane should create a webpage to promote energy efficiency, renewable energy and the wider climate change agenda, with a direct link on the www.tauntondeane.gov.uk front page. This webpage should contain information on energy efficiency, renewable energy, the Council's approach to Climate Change and a list of contact details for relevant organizations and funding authorities.

Review into Rural Sustainability

Recommendation 1

This Task and Finish Review Group should end but the membership re-constitute as an informal sounding-board for development of cross-borough economic development work between Taunton Deane and neighbouring local authorities.

Review into How the Housing Service Tackles Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

Recommendation 2

A skills audit of Estate Officers should be carried out to identify and meet any training needs in respect of dealing with anti-social behaviour.

Recommendation 4

As part of the Core Council Review, the Council should look at creating a dedicated Anti-Social Behaviour Team for Housing.

Recommendation 5

To look at the feasibility of using Introductory Tenancies. This however, may be complicated by the imminent introduction of Choice Based Letting

Recommendation 6

The Council should look at the usefulness and feasibility of introducing parental programmes that have been shown to impact on anti-social behaviour.

A Review into the Planning Departments Role in Delivering Large Housing Schemes**Recommendation 3**

Appropriate Consultants should be used to support the needs of Taunton Deane Borough Council on viability issues.

Recommendation 5

The “clawback” process should be used in appropriate cases to protect Council interests where necessary. If such arrangements were made benefits should accrue on the actual rather than the forecast returns.

Review into the Co-ordination of Services for Older People**Recommendation 1**

This Task and Finish report should be presented to the Taunton Deane Local Strategic Partnership to demonstrate the importance of considering the needs of older people in its work.

Recommendation 2

The Council recognises the potential of the voluntary sector to add value to the services provided by the statutory sector, and will look at establishing better mechanisms for working with the voluntary sector and promoting and encouraging their work.

Recommendation 3

The Council will provide an officer representative to the Local Implementation Team.

Recommendation 6

The Council should support a Member Champion who will promote and represent the needs of older people, particularly those who are ‘hard to reach’. This person must be someone who not only understands the issues relating to older people, but can also intelligently and effectively challenge projects, initiatives and day-to-day operations of the council.

Recommendation 7

The Review Group wishes to re-iterate the importance of equalities impact assessments that take account of the needs of older people, and to provide

training to officers and Councillors on older people's equalities issues, where appropriate.

A Review into the funding of The Brewhouse Theatre

Recommendation 2

The management of the Brewhouse Theatre be required to engage and actively work with Taunton Deane to encourage and provide new links to other organisations;

Recommendation 5

Arrangements be put in place to enable the amateur groups to have a greater involvement in the Brewhouse Theatre;

Recommendation 6

A plan for the further use of volunteers be developed;

Recommendation 7

A monthly reporting mechanism to Taunton Deane be agreed.