

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Council Meeting – 9 December 2008

Part 1

To deal with written questions to and receive recommendations to the Council from the Executive.

(i) Councillor Henley

Minimum Revenue Provision

The Government has introduced amended legislation to deal with the statutory requirement for authorities to make an annual provision from revenue, for the repayment of borrowing undertaken for the purposes of financing capital expenditure. This annual provision, known as Minimum Revenue Provision is a largely technical calculation.

Rather than prescribe an approach, the Government has offered the following four options - two for situations where borrowing is undertaken with support from Central Government and a further two options where borrowing is undertaken without this support:-

- For supported borrowing Councils can choose between **Option 1**, the technically demanding and cumbersome method in current use, or **Option 2**, a simple 4% on outstanding debt.
- For unsupported borrowing however, the options are **Option 3**, the Asset Life Method which is debt associated with assets purchased / created, divided by the expected life of the asset or **Option 4**, use depreciation as a proxy for the provision to be made.

When the Executive considered this matter back in October 2008, Options 2 and 3 were selected as the most appropriate methods for Taunton Deane given that they were the simplest to understand and calculate and that there would be no material impact on the Council's 'bottom line'.

It is **recommended** that with regard to the Minimum Revenue Provision, Options 2 and 3 (detailed above) be adopted.

(ii) Councillor Coles

(a) Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan and Design Code Supplementary Planning Document

Members will recall that they agreed to adopt the Action Plan, which will help to deliver Project Taunton and the Design Code Supplementary Planning Document at the last meeting of the Council on 7 October 2008.

Due to an administrative error, a key date to formally advertise the adoption of these documents has been missed.

Rather than risk a legal challenge at a later date on the grounds that the procedure laid down by legislation has not been followed by Taunton Deane, the Council is requested to re-adopt the Action Plan and the Supplementary Planning Guidance. This will allow the formal advertisement to be placed within the required time limit.

It is therefore **recommended** that:-

- (1) the Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan; and
- (2) the Taunton Town Centre Design Code Supplementary Planning Document,

be both re-adopted.

(b) Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document

This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been commissioned to provide guidance for securing contributions from developers towards the major town centre development proposals in Taunton.

Although a detailed policy on planning obligations is being developed in connection with the Taunton Deane Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, the adoption of this Strategy is a couple of years away. In the meantime, particularly now that the Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan (TTCAAP) has been adopted, the SPD is required to amplify what the Council expects from developers by way of contributions towards the infrastructure and services needed to support new development in the town.

The draft SPD document was published earlier in the year and was the subject of a six week statutory consultation period in June – July 2008.

A substantial number of replies were received during this consultation period. However, the issues raised fell under a number of main headings which were detailed in a report to the Executive together with the Council's responses thereto.

When the report was considered on 12 November 2008, the Executive agreed that many of the issues could be addressed by making suitable amendments to the SPD to enable it to proceed to adoption.

A copy of the SPD document, with all the amendments included, will be

circulated to all Members before the meeting of Full Council.

It is therefore **recommended** that the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document, as amended, be formally adopted.