

# **Council Meeting – 10 April 2012**

## **Report of Councillor John Williams – Leader of the Council**

### **1. All Change**

- 1.1 The start of the new financial year sees tremendous change, with reductions in our Corporate Management Team and the Corporate Support Unit. This is a reduction of capacity at the very head of our organisation which has been necessary to meet the challenges of a shrinking budget. It does mean that as Members we have to consider the capacity of our Management Team and be clear in our priorities. This means that some issues will have to take their place in the queue or we have to agree not to pursue something through lack of capacity to deal with as the first priority must be delivering our statutory duties.
- 1.2 Whilst on this subject I would like to take the opportunity to record my sincere thanks to those that have left us and for the hard work and commitment they have given this Council over many years. On behalf of the Council my best wishes for the future and every success whatever you choose to do.
- 1.3 I have recognised above that as Members we must accept that life will have to change and expectations adjusted to suit the resources we now have. But, we also need to express our thanks to our officers that remain who have helped and guided us through the difficult process of restructuring and who, no doubt, will have to carry an increased load if we are to achieve our ambitious plans for Taunton Deane.

### **2. Taunton BID Process**

- 2.1 At the time of writing this the ballot of town centre businesses has closed but I am not aware of the result. I can only remain hopeful that it will be positive because, as reported at earlier meetings, the trading conditions in Taunton remain better than many other locations, this has to be the place for what it has to offer.
- 2.2 Retailers and the Town Centre Company are an important part of this offer to attract visitors to the town and maintain its vibrancy. If the BID initiative is rejected by business, unfortunately as a Council we are in no position to step in and replace the resources or the finance to promote Taunton thus helping it maintain its pre-eminent position as a place to visit and shop.

### **3. Southwest One**

- 3.1 The accounts for the Company have recently been published which show a substantial loss but I would like to reassure all Members this does not impact upon the taxpayers of Taunton Deane and that SW1 still continues to deliver its services and contracted savings for the benefit of the community we serve. Without the savings derived from this service our budget setting process would have been even more difficult than it was.
- 3.2 It is public knowledge that anticipated procurement savings have not been achieved and this is of concern. Useful procurement savings are being achieved but not at the level anticipated.
- 3.3 The Board of SW1 has taken a long hard look at its operations and has developed a new business model to improve the trading deficit and wipe it out over a number of years. We have supported them in the implementation of this plan and wish them well in its success as it is certainly in the interests of all partners that their plans are delivered.
- 3.4 I also take this opportunity of extending the thanks of this Council to our representative on the Board, Councillor Bruce Nottrodt, who I know has worked long and hard with his colleagues to deliver a satisfactory and, most importantly, a deliverable plan for improvement. Your commitment and hard work is appreciated.

### **4. Broadband Enhancement**

- 4.1 By now work should have been completed on the installation of fibre optic cable across Taunton to provide a "Superfast" service to businesses and homes on the Taunton Exchange. I am awaiting a report on progress from BT and hopefully will be able to update Members at the meeting.
- 4.2 At the last meeting I made an appeal for the community and businesses to sign up to a campaign "Keep up to Speed: Get Connected". This is to show potential private sector investors the likely level of support so, if not already done, I urge everybody to sign up and circulate to all your friends and associates. Registration can be on line [www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk](http://www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk) or by telephone 0844 463887. The deadline for this has been extended - please do not wait, register your interest now - it is non-binding so only an expression of interest.
- 4.3 In respect of "Connecting Devon and Somerset" I set out again for ease of reference the key dates for the future:-
  - National Broadband Suppliers Framework established May 2012;

- Award of Devon and Somerset Broadband Contract - September 2012;
  - Work to start and schedule of works announced January/February 2013; and
  - Superfast Broadband to 85% of the area by 2015.
- 4.4 So by next January/February if the above timetable is kept we should be in a position to inform our communities when they may expect an enhanced service in their area.

## **5. Northern Inner Distributor Road (NIDR) and other road issues**

- 5.1 The date for the Inquiry into the Compulsory Purchase Order process has now been fixed for 15 May 2012 for four days. However an Inquiry in May will not allow the works to commence in July unless Somerset County Council get a very quick response from the Inspector.
- 5.2 From past experience it is normally anything up to six months before an Inspectors report is issued and the Department for Transport (DfT) conclude whether to confirm the orders. This makes September as probably the earliest we are likely to be able to commence but could potentially bring this forward if DfT conclude the process earlier than anticipated.
- 5.3 The importance of this road cannot be overstated as it opens up the enormous development sites of Firepool for mainly employment and the old East Goods Yard for residential. It should also open the way for construction of the new Boulevard from the railway station down to the riverside providing that all important direct link to the riverside footpath leading to the town centre.
- 5.3 Somerset County Council's initiative to gain Central Government funding/support for upgrade of A303/A30/A358 and joint meetings with other Highways Authorities along its route and Government Ministers to make the case.
- 5.4 A response from the County Council to my question on progress has recently been received:-

“MPs attended a meeting in London and were broadly supportive although there was some concern from Wiltshire about potential detrimental impacts on communities if more traffic is generated by the improvements, and also regarding impacts during construction. Most MPs felt that the environmentally sensitive areas at Stonehenge and the Blackdown Hills would remain challenging issues and this was a helpful reminder that there will be many challenges to be overcome in seeking to promote a scheme. Nonetheless most agreed the time is absolutely right to be seeking to make a case for the scheme again. The budget statement references to new approaches to private

financing for strategic road schemes are very timely as you have noted, and when we see the Minister we will be floating the idea of a joint feasibility study into private financing options for the A303 improvements. We are thinking of pitching this as a national pilot so it will be interesting to see the response as the Government clearly wants to do some work on this issue in the next few months.”

- 5.5 I regard it as crucial that we support the County Council in any way we are able to promote the second route into the West Country as it must include improvements to the A358 and Junction 25 of the M5 which, as we are all aware, is critical to the future economy of Taunton Deane.

## **6. Core Strategy**

- 6.1 I will leave it to my colleague, Mark Edwards, to go into detail on this in his later report but I offer my congratulations to all those involved in what appears to have been a successful plan preparation and presentation. We now have the Inspectors Draft Report following the Examination in February and the issues raised are not crucial and in no way alter or impact upon the general thrust of the plan. The items raised are already out for six weeks public consultation so all being well we are well on track for adoption of this key plan by July 2012 at the latest.

- 6.2 Why is this plan so critical for the Borough? It defines where planned development should take place and so protects all other areas from unwanted development in unsustainable locations. We will all have seen details of publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which places great importance on the protection offered by an Adopted Local Plan. This should provide our communities with that protection now as a material consideration and eventually as the adopted Local Plan.

## **7. Housing - Reinvigorating Right to Buy and One for One Replacement**

- 7.1 During March 2012 the Department for Communities and Local Government published an information paper on the above containing information for Local Authorities as to how the above is to be implemented. Subject to Parliament these changes take effect as from the 2 April 2012.

- 7.2 I will be asking for a briefing paper on this from officers which I will ask to be circulated but from my understanding the discount rates remain the same but the cap on discount has been raised to £75,000. We can then use up to 30% of the net receipt from sales to fund a one for one “new home for affordable rent”. The implications of these changes will have to be carefully considered as although they require replacement housing it will bring opportunities but also many challenges!

- 7.3 There are complex rules governing what can or cannot be set against the “right to buy” receipt so arriving at the calculation for “net receipt” but as I see it by limiting the use of the right to buy receipts to 30% funding of the replacement property, the balance is then made up by borrowing funds against the affordable rent income stream or the injection of Council funds or assets such as land value.

## **8. Economic Development, Taunton Deane**

- 8.1 It was the wish of Councillors that we did not continue subscribing to In2 Somerset but that we should ensure we, as an authority, take an active role in promoting the whole of Taunton Deane.
- 8.2 Work has commenced on this with a paper considered by the Project Taunton Steering Group about how the Project Taunton Team with our Economic Development Team can best promote us on a much wider scale and use/incorporate the interested parties in the private sector to maximise this promotion. It is recognised we must promote Taunton Deane holistically as a great place to live, work and play and that this must be to a national and international audience.
- 8.3 As part of this initiative we have re-engaged Fresh, a PR and Communications company and Members may recall that they were responsible for the earlier successful branding / promotion of Project Taunton. They are now commissioned to assist in developing a programme of promotion that will reach out to would be investors with a view to at least getting Taunton on the “list” of would be locations for investment. We need to capture a slice of all that business that is travelling up and down the motorway that at present is not giving sufficient weight to Taunton Deane as being the great place to re-locate that we are.
- 8.4 As these promotional plans develop they will be brought to Members for information and comment and it is our aim to achieve a “go live” date of the end of May 2012. We do recognize that we are in the midst of a national and international recession and that we must do all possible to attract whatever business is looking to expand or re-locate to Taunton Deane and our emerging Core Strategy together with the Firepool site and Junction 26 should now provide us with the choice of sites that has hitherto been missing.
- 8.5 This will also enable us to focus on inward investment associated with the proposed enormous development at Hinkley Point, the ready availability of suitable employment land and an ample supply of quality housing has to be a major plus point when talking to businesses seeking a base.

Councillor John Williams

# **Council Meeting – 10 April 2012**

## **Report of Councillor Mrs Jean Adkins – Housing Services**

### **1. Housing Property Services**

- 1.1 I am happy to report that the Gas Servicing and Maintenance contract has been awarded to Ahlco and commences on 2 April 2012. Contact numbers for tenants requiring repairs remain the same for the present.
- 1.2 The Air Source Heat Pump installations have commenced and are expected to be completed in three months.
- 1.3 Seddons have been awarded the contract for new bathrooms and fitting will start on 16 April 2012.
- 1.4 We are currently sending out questionnaires to tenants who do not have gas central heating, starting with those still on solid fuel. We aim to install approximately 200 new systems this year and will prioritise larger 4/5 bed homes and then 3 bed family homes. Tenants where gas is not available will be asked for their preference to remain on solid fuel or switch to other alternatives.
- 1.5 Following a restructure, Tim Haynes is taking up the post of Property Manager (Contracts) and will therefore manage the above and we are recruiting to the post of Property Manager (Maintenance). The closing date is 10 April 2012.

### **2. Affordable Housing Development Partnership**

- 2.1 The Council received some strong expressions of interest from six potential partners.
- 2.2 One of the potential partners has since withdrawn their interest and it has therefore been decided to appoint the remaining five organisations, who all meet the required criteria, as approved development partners.
- 2.3 The names of the development partners will be announced shortly.

### **3. Affordable Housing Target**

- 3.1 This years target of 200 homes looks likely to be exceeded, which is extremely good news since we shall benefit from the additional New Homes Bonus as well as providing homes.

- 3.2 The target for 2012/2013 will again be 200 homes based on pipeline schemes and anticipated completion dates. We aim to set higher targets in future years based on projected housebuilding at a rate of 25% affordable housing.

#### **4. Estates Team and Anti-social Behaviour**

- 4.1 A long-standing case at Rockwell Green has recently been resolved.
- 4.2 Stephen Clark will shortly be moving from the Anti-Social Behaviour Team to join the Tenant Empowerment Team. I wish him well in his new post.

#### **5. Homelessness and Rough- Sleeping**

- 5.1 Sadly, but in line with national trends, there has been an upward trend in numbers. This is reflected in the monthly statistics which Members receive from Homefinder Somerset. We continue to work very closely with Taunton Association for the Homeless.
- 5.2 We are working across the County with the other districts to produce the new Homelessness Strategy. We have also, as part of a larger region, including the rest of Somerset, North Somerset, Bath and North East Somerset and Bristol attracted significant funding to have a more consistent approach across the County to focus on reducing the number of rough sleepers in the area.

#### **6. Jubilee gardens, Priorswood Place**

- 6.1 A licence has been granted to the North Taunton Partnership to establish a garden with grant funding from an outside source. Work is about to commence on this community project and I wish them every success.

#### **7. Self-Financing**

- 7.1 The final settlement was made on 28 March 2012, as previously reported. Happily the interest rate on the Public Works Loan Board financing which we took up with advice from our Treasury Management advisers was at a slightly lower interest rate than forecast.

#### **8. Social Housing Fraud Consultation**

- 8.1 The Tenant Services Management Board recently considered a draft response to this consultation and were highly supportive of a tough stance being taken, as am I.

8.2 The legislation, if passed, will criminalise tenancy fraud allowing us to take criminal proceedings against those who make fraudulent applications or sub-let for profit as well as civil proceedings.

Councillor Jean Adkins



# Council Meeting - 10 April 2012

## Report of Councillor Mrs Vivienne Stock-Williams - Corporate Resources

### 1. Customer Contact Centre

#### Customer Service

- 1.1 Southwest One (SW1) Customer Contact Centre maintained its successful service delivery during February 2012 with KPIs being delivered in excess of requirements. Customer satisfaction, whilst not reported within this quarter, continues to remain high with levels for the year to date running at 96.94% - the final annual figure will be provided in the March 2012 client report.
- 1.2 In addition, the team started to pilot a customer satisfaction programme for face-to-face services in January 2012. For the period January and February, there were a total of 27 cards returned with an overall satisfaction rating of 96.23%. The telephony process for TDBC is still a manual survey, but analysis work has shown that this method actually produces a higher return rate than the automated process. SW1 Contact Centre is currently liaising with the Taunton Deane Client Team to determine how this work can be moved forward on a permanent basis.

#### Service Delivery

##### *Statistical Information:*

| Service Line     | Reporting Authority | KPI No | Performance Measure   | Frequency of Reporting         | 2011/2012 Target | Feb-12 |
|------------------|---------------------|--------|---|--------------------------------|------------------|--------|
| Customer Contact | TDBC                | 1      | % of calls answered in 20 secs  | Monthly                        | 80%              | 83%    |
| Customer Contact | TDBC                | 2      | % of calls resolved at first point of contact                                 | Monthly                        | 91%              | 95%    |
| Customer Contact | TDBC                | 3      | % of external customers rating the Customer Contact service as Very Good/Good | Annually (monitored quarterly) | 73.5%            |        |
| Customer Contact | TDBC                | 4      | Abandoned call rate - less than 5%  | Monthly                        | <5%              | 4.22%  |

- 1.3 A total of 3,295 enquiries have been dealt with at The Deane House Main, Housing and Planning Receptions during February 2012 and 1,913 people visited Wellington Community Office – 1,247 to make enquiries including TIC

and 666 to make a payment through the kiosk. The team dealt with 323 letter and email enquiries during this period in addition to more than 1900 garden waste renewal applications. There were no complaints about the service.

- 1.4 The team continues to liaise with ICT to determine the Contact Centre's telephony requirements for the future and it is anticipated this work will be finalised by the end of May 2012.

## **2. Legal and Democratic Services**

### **2.1 Corporate Support Unit**

- 2.1.1 The recruitment process is now under way. Several internal applicants will be interviewed during the week commencing 9 April 2012. It is hoped that the posts will be filled very soon and the Unit will be fully operational quite quickly.

### **2.2 Changes to the Standards Regime**

- 2.2.1 Regulations on this part of the Localism Act are still awaited. At this stage, it is still anticipated that the changes will take effect on 1 July 2012. It will, therefore, be necessary for a great deal of work to be done in a short space of time in order to bring the changes into effect.

## **3. Performance and Client Team**

### **3.1 Client Team**

- 3.1.1 We are approaching the start of the new financial year. Consequently, the priority for the Client Team has been around agreeing new performance targets for SW1 for 2012/2013 and Service Development Plans for each service area. Target setting is now complete across most service lines, although there are some issues to resolve with HR, which the Retained HR Officer is taking forward. There is an agreed approach and understanding with SW1 with regard to Service Development Plans and, with the exception of ICT, these are now in their final draft waiting for sign off.
- 3.1.2 In general, services within SW1 continue to function well. However, the Client Team are continuing to work with SW1 to progress service improvements in the ICT and Finance services.
- 3.1.3 A more flexible solution has been developed to overcome the problems some Members are experiencing with accessing their e-mails. For most Members, this will require a minor change to the way they access their e-mail. These changes will be rolled out in the early summer with a full explanation.
- 3.1.4 Somerset County Council (SCC) is in the process of implementing the changes it has agreed with SW1 to its contract. This will involve the return to SCC of the Design and Print service and the HR and Finance Advisory Services. SW1 have met with the Client Team to explain in detail how they will be restructuring to accommodate these changes and have outlined how

they will continue to deliver these services to the Council. We should see no detrimental impact on service delivery.

- 3.1.5 The team continue to work closely with Tone Leisure to monitor service delivery and to progress individual issues. The work to maintain and improve the lifts at Station Road Pool is now complete. The maintenance plan for the new financial year has been agreed with Tone Leisure. Members will be asked to make a decision at Full Council in April 2012 with regard to a loan provision by Taunton Deane for a High Ropes scheme in Vivary Park. Briefing sessions are being held in advance of the meeting.

## **3.2 Corporate Performance**

- 3.2.1 The Quarter 3 performance report has recently been through the Corporate Scrutiny and Executive cycle.
- 3.2.2 The Corporate Governance Committee undertook an exercise at their meeting on 12 March 2012 to identify key strategic risks. These will be considered by Corporate Management Team in the next review and update of the Corporate Risk Register and will be taken to the next Corporate Governance Committee.
- 3.2.3 Service Planning for 2012/2013 continues in each Theme, and Theme Managers will be discussing the key priorities for their service areas with Portfolio Holders.
- 3.2.4 The Corporate Performance Lead will be working with the Project Taunton Team from April 2012 to provide support with Performance, Risk and Project Management

## **3.3 Private Sector Housing Partnership**

- 3.3.1 From April 2012, the Performance and Client Team will take over responsibility from the Strategy Team for the client monitoring of the Private Sector Housing Partnership. A detailed handover process is currently being undertaken.

## **3.4 Retained Finance and Corporate Insurance**

- 3.4.1 The Retained Finance Officer continues to focus on maintaining the day-to-day delivery of the retained finance functions and in providing support to the S151 Officer.
- 3.4.2 The Council's new Corporate Debt Management Policy has now been agreed by Members and is in the process of being rolled out across the Authority.
- 3.4.3 The Retained Finance Officer is overseeing the borrowing of funds totalling £86,000,000 to fund the Housing Revenue Account reform.
- 3.4.4 The insurance function is currently being provided for us by Somerset County Council's insurance team, as our Insurance Officer is on maternity leave. This arrangement continues to work well.

### **3.5 Retained HR**

- 3.5.1 The retained HR function continues to support CMT and Theme Managers with the remaining elements of the Theme 5 restructure, the restructure of the Housing Service and the 2012/2013 Budget proposals.
- 3.5.2 Recent amendments to the Appeals Policy have been approved by the Executive, in addition to the Pay Policy Statement being approved by Council. This latter document has been published in accordance with the Local Government Transparency Regulations.

## **4. Revenues and Benefits**

### **4.1 Council Tax and Business Rates**

- 4.1.1 Annual billing of Council Tax and Business Rates and the up-rating of benefit calculations took place during March 2012. 49,620 Council Tax bills were despatched to the value of nearly £59,000,000 and 3,730 Business Rate bills totalling £49,500,000.
- 4.1.2 At the time of writing, in-year collection of Council Tax stands at 98.19% and Business Rate collection is 99.19% - meaning that annual targets have been exceeded. It is hoped the final results at 31 March 2012 will exceed what was achieved last year. The team's speed of processing benefit claims, currently standing at 9.21 days, is also set to exceed the target for 2011/2012.
- 4.1.3 A benefit recipient was prosecuted in March 2012 for her failure to declare a change in her circumstances. We argued our case successfully and the Court imposed a community order of 120 hours unpaid work and awarded £100 towards costs.

### **4.2 Council Tax Support**

- 4.2.1 The Revenues and Benefits Service is engaging with other Somerset authorities in planning for localised Council Tax Support to be introduced in April 2013. We hope to provide a briefing session for Members on the changes that will result from Welfare Reform in the next few weeks.

## **5. Southwest One (SW1)**

### **5.1 Procurement**

- 5.1.1 The shortfall in delivered savings through the Procurement Transformation project remains a significant concern and issue for the Authority. However, we are monitoring the position closely and ensuring that regular reports are being made to Members by the Strategic Procurement Service (SPS).
- 5.1.2 Progress is, however, being made. The gas servicing contract has recently been re-let, which should deliver significant savings. Work is ongoing in

respect of DLO stores, and planned and routine property maintenance, in addition to other initiatives.

## **5.2 SAP Re-launch and Patching**

- 5.2.1 The key elements of the system have been launched and are working.
- 5.2.2 The performance review (PREDS) functionality has been piloted within part of the Council. This has identified the need to make two changes to the system, which are currently with SW1 IT service to resolve. Once these changes have been made, in order to make the process more user-friendly, we will be in a position to roll out SAP PRED across the organisation.
- 5.2.3 This leaves the sickness, E-recruitment, overtime, leave and some aspects of Business Intelligence Reporting elements of the system which are not currently in use. Work is ongoing with SW1 and our partners to change the way E-recruitment and Sickness functions operate and until these changes are made we will not launch. Overtime is delayed until Taunton Deane reviews its overtime policy as part of the budget savings project, as our rules will need to be programmed into SAP.

## **6. Shadow Health And Wellbeing Board**

### **6.1 Health and Wellbeing Event**

- 6.1.1 This event took place on 1 March 2012 in Taunton and brought together a range of partners and agencies with an interest in Health and Wellbeing and included representatives from the GP Federation, patient participation groups, NHS Somerset, Children Centres, officers and Councillors from both the District and County Council as well as representatives from a range of other agencies. The event was designed both to inform people of the major changes taking place as a result of the Health and Social Care Bill and also to offer the opportunity to influence the emerging Somerset Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- 6.1.2 Feedback from this well attended event was passed on to the Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board (SHWB) to help influence their Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Another positive outcome was the commitment for follow-up events that would focus on closer working between agencies to tackle health issues in Taunton Deane communities.
- 6.1.3 Interest has subsequently been invited from attendees to become involved in an ongoing health and wellbeing group to help co-ordinate activities in Taunton Deane and align services to address health and wellbeing issues where possible.

### **6.2 Public Health Transition Plan**

- 6.2.1 At its recent meeting, members of the SHWB considered a comprehensive report on the Somerset Public Health Transition Plan. This was well received

and the recommendations supported.

#### 6.2.2 Key proposed changes are:-

- a) Responsibility for strategic planning and commissioning of NHS services to transfer to the NHS Commissioning Board and Clinical Commissioning Group.
- b) Local authorities are to be given a statutory duty and a ring fenced budget to improve and protect the health and wellbeing of their populations.

#### 6.2.3 There are a number of critical tasks for the Primary Care Trust cluster and the local authority to undertake to ensure a robust transition. These include the need:-

- a) to ensure maintenance of an effective delivery of the Public Health function during 2012/2013;
- b) establish ongoing robust arrangements from 2013/2014, within the local authority and other receiver organisations.

### **6.3 Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy**

6.3.1 The meeting also endorsed the three emerging priorities: outcome 1) Support people to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing; outcome 2) Families and communities are resilient; outcome 3) Somerset people are able to live independently. These emerging priorities were discussed in depth at stakeholder consultation events held in all five districts.

### **6.4 Troubled Families**

6.4.1 The HWB Officers Group met again in March 2012 and is considering how the work of the SHWB could be aligned with Troubled Families work. This work is aimed at tackling the 2% of families who have the highest levels of contact with a range of public sector bodies. At the subsequent SHWB meeting, members signed up to further work planned in relation to troubled families, as this is clearly a priority area for all public agencies.

### **6.5 Future direction**

6.5.1 It was agreed that the SHWB Chairman would write to all five districts to confirm full membership status for each with immediate effect.

Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams

# **Full Council – 10 April 2012**

## **Report of Councillor Mark Edwards - Planning, Transportation and Communications**

I wanted to start my report by highlighting the retirement of Ralph Willoughby-Foster. Ralph retired from his post as Planning Policy Advisor on Friday, 30 March 2012. He has been with the Borough Council since 1980 in a variety of roles with responsibility for preparing a range of Planning policy documents not least his central role in steering the Core Strategy to the stage it is now in. We wish him well in his retirement and thank him for all his good work over the past 30 plus years.

### **1. Core Strategy**

- 1.1 Following the Core Strategy Examination in February, the Inspector has published a list of recommended 'main changes' to the Plan, which are currently advertised for additional representations. The closing date for representations (comments) from interested parties is 25 April 2012. He will consider responses prior to either reopening the Examination or recommending adoption of the Core Strategy.
- 1.2 Officers consider it highly unlikely that the Examination will be reopened as there were no significant changes, so it is hoped that the Core Strategy will be adopted by Full Council in July 2012, as originally intended.
- 1.3 The Government published the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on 30 March 2012, which favours a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' as a starting point.
- 1.4 It is vital therefore that an authority has 'up to date' plans to guide sustainable development otherwise planning permissions may be granted in otherwise poor locations where plans are absent or out of date. The adoption of the Core Strategy will be of invaluable assistance in this regard.

### **2. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

- 2.1 On 27 March 2012, the Government released the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in its final form. This document will be used to guide planning policy and decision making across the country. It replaces all previous Planning Policy Guidance/Statements into a single document of under 60 pages.
- 2.2 The Government took on board (all or in part) 30 of the 35

recommendations made at the draft stage by the Commons Communities and Local Government Select Committee, reaffirming the primacy of the 'Plan led' approach to decision making.

- 2.3 This confirms the position I have held throughout and that I have just eluded to previously that it was vital we continued with the Core Strategy and despite some authorities either halting theirs due to the abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategy the NPPF has given the clearest steer with regards the future of local plan making.
- 2.4 Whilst strongly supporting sustainable economic growth, the published version strikes a more balanced approach towards growth alongside environmental and social considerations. In particular, through reintroducing reference to the intrinsic value of all the countryside, a major concern raised by national bodies such as the National Trust and CPRE at the draft stage.

### **3. Neighbourhood Planning**

- 3.1 We were successful in the bids for front-runner funding to assist with Neighbourhood Planning. The initial areas that have been successful are Wiviliscombe, Wellington and Trull (in relation to its Broad Location for growth status within the Core Strategy) for which we have been awarded £60,000 of central Government Funding.
- 3.2 The funding will assist us in working with the communities to prepare these plans, which include a referendum and examination by an Inspector. We are presently assessing the best way forward for these plans and as other areas have indicated an interest in preparing their own plans we need to make sure that we learn from these front runners and prepare the plans in a relevant and economically sustainable way. Members will get more details as the processes are progressed.

### **4. Community Infrastructure Levy**

- 4.1 We are well advanced with the initial charging fees and will be bringing a paper to Scrutiny in May, with the charging schedule then going for consultation and examination.
- 4.2 This is quite a complex process, which needs to be carefully balanced making an assessment of viability versus the need for infrastructure for future growth.
- 4.3 We are on track to get the Community Infrastructure Levy in place by the year-end although we do have our interim policy in place if required.

### **5. Heritage**

#### **Tone Works**



- 5.1 The Planning Committee has resolved to grant planning permission and listed building consent (subject to a Section 106 Agreement), which will secure partial regeneration of the Grade 2\* listed complex of mill buildings, north of the River Tone, in Wellington.
- 5.2 This is a significant move forward in finding sustainable reuse of the buildings, which have been largely unoccupied and at risk since 2000. Of particular note is the fact that Fox Brothers will be returning part of its weaving operation to the site, which otherwise would have been located to the north of the country.

### **Sandhill Park**

- 5.3 Following the devastating fire, a fully sheeted scaffold over the main part of the house, should be erected within the next six weeks. This will enable a more detailed and safe inspection of the fabric to be undertaken and the implementation of works to help dry the structure out. A comprehensive set of measures to protect the building from further unauthorised access/ vandalism has been drawn up and these will be implemented at the appropriate time.
- 5.4 Since the fire, relevant parties have been in close and frequent contact, with a view to revisiting and progressing a scheme which will secure the long-term future of this important Grade 2 \* listed building.

### **6. Landscape Team**

- 6.1 The Landscape Team has continued to deal with a high level of planning consultations with landscape responses running at 21 per month and nature conservation responses running at about 10 per month taking an average of 5 days per consultation.
- 6.2 The team has dealt with 138 tree applications and notifications and served six Tree Preservation Orders. David Galley, Landscape Support Officer, has been working at Mid Devon District Council covering their tree officer during maternity leave as well as helping West Somerset District Council on tree matters when required.
- 6.3 Partnerships with the two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the Quantock and Blackdown Hills as well as the Somerset Waterways Advisory Committee and Somerset Environment Records Centre continue to provide great value for money in maintaining and enhancing their landscape, heritage and wildlife features.
- 6.4 The Higher Level Stewardship grant (nearly £30,000 over ten years) granted in 2011 for management work at Ash Common Local Nature Reserve (LNR) has allowed the team to carry out significant enhancements such as cutting back of birch trees encroaching on the open areas, management of woodland, as well as improvements to access and the car parks.

- 6.5 Working with the Crown Estate, plans are now in place to help manage habitats and access at Gadds Valley one of our newer Local Nature Reserves (LNR).
- 6.6 The old boardwalk at the Wellington Basins has been revamped along with some habitat management. A peppercorn lease agreement has now been agreed with the Environment Agency for the new Westford Community Woodland near Rockwell Green. Access to the community woodland will be improved over the next few months.

## **7. Parking County-wide Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) Project**

- 7.1 In my last report to Council I advised that tenders had been received for this project. I can now say that Somerset County Council has awarded the contract to NSL. This company is already providing enforcement and notice processing services in a number of Local Authority areas including Oxfordshire, Hertfordshire, Brighton and Hove, Salford, Enfield and Ealing. Work has started in earnest to have the new service ready for implementation on 11 June 2012.
- 7.2 I am pleased to say that Jon Pallett, our Parking Services Manager, has been appointed to that role at the County Council. I take this in no small way as a reflection on the way this Council has operated CPE since 2001.
- 7.3 I would also take this opportunity to remind Members that we continue to own our car parks and receive the revenue from them. All decisions about tariffs remain with us.

## **8. Communications**

- 8.1 The Olympic Torch Relay in May continues to demand time as the event draws nearer and the amount of information to disseminate grows greater.
- 8.2 The route has been announced, along with our Council-nominated Torchbearers – Police Sergeant Andy Murphy and Judy Gaden.
- 8.3 Communications is working closely with LOCOG and with neighbouring authorities hosting the Torch.
- 8.4 The major announcements on 19 March 2012 saw regional and local coverage on TV, radio, online and in the print media. Thanks are due to the Torchbearers and Paralympian Deb Criddle for their time and close co-operation.

- 8.5 Deane Dispatch's April edition is about to go to press and will look at issues around fly-tipping while the May edition will concentrate on the Torch Relay – local events, arrangements and the evening celebration.
- 8.6 Recent news releases have ranged from the exciting archaeological finds at Castle Green to the Council's planned house-building programme with the establishment of the development fund, food scores and, of course, the Torch Relay.

Councillor Mark Edwards

# **Council Meeting – 10 April 2012**

## **Report of Councillor Mrs Jane Warmington – Community Leadership**

### **1. Police and Crime Panel**

- 1.1 The Joint Select Committee of Local Authority Council Leaders is meeting on 23 April 2012 at Portishead to establish a Shadow Police and Crime Panel (PCP) by this summer which, in the first instance, can only comprise ten elected Members, one from each local authority in the area. It is this group of ten that will then decide the wider co-opted membership of the PCP up to a maximum of twenty.
- 1.2 The Select Committee may also advise the Shadow PCP on co-opting further Members, the term of office of Members, resignation and removal of Members, any re-appointments and support arrangements for the Panel.

### **2. Community Policing Awards**

- 2.1 The Portfolio Holder attended this award ceremony on behalf of the Leader of Council to see Taunton pick up five of the six awards from the Somerset West Policing District in the Avon and Somerset Community Policing Awards. A photograph appeared in the Somerset County Gazette.

### **3. Health**

- 3.1 Following NHS Somerset production of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for the County (further details can be found on the SINE website: <http://www.sine.org.uk/isna-2022/>), the Strategy Manager and the NHS Trust organised a Health and Wellbeing event which all Councillors and a range of organisations were invited to on 1 March 2012.
- 3.2 This event updated people on the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board, the health issues in Taunton Deane and projects that are currently in place to address these. These were well presented and well received. Seventy five attended and those who were there were able to contribute and influence the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

### **4. Priority Areas Strategy**

**Taunton East and North Taunton**

- 4.1 Work on the action plans is continuing with partners refining the ideas (over 500 gathered throughout the consultation process) into a manageable and deliverable set of working projects which they will then lead on.
- 4.2 These fall into three categories: Strategic Projects which have an impact beyond North Taunton and Taunton East such as the Troubled Families Programme.
- 4.3 Local Major Projects which focus on North Taunton and/or Taunton East such as those relating to education, enterprise and development, volunteering.
- 4.4 Quick Win Projects which are smaller scale where an activity can start soon such as reducing litter, providing a needle exchange and tackling dog mess.
- 4.5 There has been some slippage in the Action Plans coming before Community Scrutiny due to staff absence. This is now expected in early May. Their feedback will be used to refine the plans which will then be considered for approval during summer 2012.

### **Troubled Families**

- 4.6 This has moved on from the initial joint Somerset County Council/ Taunton Deane bid (under Community Budgets) as the Government wants to roll out a programme across the whole country.
- 4.7 A report has been produced to go before the Taunton Deane Partnership for approval, looking at scope, model, identification of families, setting up of a working group, governance and outcomes. There is a support grant of £20,000 to help with this. The Lead Officer is Vikki Hearn.

### **Tell Us Once**

- 4.8 This service is already making a difference. As a rule of thumb, the next of kin would ordinarily need to tell seven different public sector organisations about a death. Therefore we can estimate that this reduces the number of contacts and has a significant cost saving to the public sector. [www.somerset.gov.uk/tellusonce](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/tellusonce). Housing has been added and should now 'be live' (requested from customer feedback).
- 4.9 Work is ongoing to see if we are able to inform other District and County Council services (Wiltshire has achieved this). It is likely to be more challenging in Somerset with the two tier system and outsourced customer contact, but still worth pursuing.

## **5. Community Development Team**

## **New Youth Club**

- 5.1 The new Taunton North Youth and Sports Club is holding an open evening on 13 April 2012 (Community Hall, Selworthy Road, Priorswood, Taunton) with its first session on 17 April (Youth Club on Wednesday and Friday evenings, Boxing Club on Tuesday and Thursday evenings).
- 5.2 The refurbishment has been supported by our Community Development Team, Somerset County Council Youth and Community Team and the local Policing Team.

## **Viridor Green Community Park, Taunton**

- 5.3 This large play park (next to ASDA) opened in early in March. It is incredible. Future activities are planned on site. It is already very popular. Huge thanks again to all those involved in transforming this piece of rough ground into this wonderful community asset.

## **New Holiday Breakfast Club**

- 5.4 Residents and agencies in Halcon have joined together to create a new holiday breakfast club for local families. At present the breakfast clubs run through the local schools during term-time, leaving a gap the new club hopes to fill.
- 5.5 Starting over Easter, the club will operate at the Baptist Church Hall in Crossways on 2 April and 13 initially from 8.30 to 9.30am (though there is some thought this may be a little early!). It will offer 40 places to children and parents and will try and match demand.
- 5.6 During the summer it expects to run every Monday and Friday morning, giving people the chance to have a healthy breakfast as well as being able to read, play games or take part in quizzes.
- 5.7 The project has been supported by grants from ASDA, Vista and Somerset Primary Care Trust, whilst Taunton Deane, Halcon Baptist Church, the Link Partnership, Circles Nursery, Halcon Primary School and Somerset County Council Out of School Hours Team have been part of the steering group with local residents.

## **Jubilee Garden, Priorswood**

- 5.8 Work has started on the Jubilee Garden for the North Taunton Partnership which is on schedule to open over the Jubilee weekend in June.

## **Holiday Activity Days**

- 5.9 Both the Link Partnership (Thursdays) and the North Taunton Partnership (Tuesdays) have organised their holiday activity days (one day a week across Easter and the summer holidays) with a host of different things to do for local families. Details may be found from both centres, posters or on their websites.

## **6. Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Panel**

- 6.1 The setting up of the new Grants Panel is coming before the Community Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 3 April 2012 and onto the Executive on 11 April 2012.
- 6.2 As the majority of youth and community activities happen over the summer and early autumn, waiting to use the grant panel process and allocating funds towards the end of the year would be too late for most of the projects.
- 6.3 Therefore, the existing process will need to be used for the forthcoming financial year.
- 6.4 The Youth Improvement Fund (YIF) and the VCS small grants fund will be advertised from 1 April 2012 for a six week period.

Councillor Jane Warmington

# **Council Meeting – 10 April 2012**

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

### **1. Theme 1 Stimulating Business Growth and Investment**

#### **1.1 Business Liaison**

The team undertakes a proactive programme of visits to larger local businesses with the aim of assisting businesses to realise their growth and investment plans. During the year to date the team has visited around 30 businesses.

New organisations met on a 1:1 basis during the past two months and currently being supported include:

- Porter Dodson
- Lewtec, Taunton
- Taunton School
- Foxmoor Business Park, Wellington
- On Yer Bike, Wellington
- Sainsburys, Taunton
- Morrisons Taunton
- 7 Cycles, Taunton
- Olio & Farina, Taunton
- Virgin Active Health Clubs, Taunton
- South West Internet
- West Somerset Railway
- Somerset Tourism Association

#### **1.2 Rural Post Offices**

Website for rural retailers

Slow on uptake for www's for rural retailers. Have re-sent a letter and followed up with calls. Have four booked to receive the training which will be run on the 10 April 2012 in the computer suite at Oake Village Hall. Disappointing but many, despite best efforts, do not see the value!

#### **1.3 Business Events**

##### **Wellington Business Event**

Very successful event, delivered alongside Wellington Chamber of Commerce on 23 February 2012. 25 stands by business support agencies. £650 sponsorship secured from Porter Dodson. Approximately 80 businesses attended. Will work with Federation of Small Businesses to repeat the event in Taunton over the Summer.



## **Taunton Deane Tourism Conference**

Held at the Tacchi Morris Arts Centre on the morning of 22 February. Conference, networking and information/brochure exchange. Well attended by local visitor attractions. Highlighted the need for additional signage as many of these accommodations were also tourist attractions in their own right. A successful event – intend to repeat on an annual basis at different venues.

### **1.4 Support for Rural Business Projects**

**LARC (Local Action for Rural Communities):** Levels and Moors and Western areas LARC open for new applications for business projects; Blackdown Hills fully committed. Applications that have been received so far are being appraised. Through discussions with the LARC Managers none of the applications really impact on the Taunton Deane area too much.

### **1.5 Small Business Grant**

Three further applications have been received asking for funding, which will shortly be considered.

### **1.6 Stimulating Enterprise amongst Young People**

The Council has contracted once again with BIS – Business Initiative in Schools – to offer learning and support to young people in Taunton schools to create new businesses. Members will recall that last year the initiative gave Taunton the accolade of being the Regional Winner of the UK Enterprising Town Competition.

## **2. Theme 2 Ensuring a Skilled and Entrepreneurial workforce**

### **2.1 Support for major Redundancy Announcements**

Working with Job Centre Plus (JCP) and other Somerset Districts to agree a protocol for interface with organizations that have announced a major redundancy programme. Providing a unified interface with the organization we can offer:-

- Support for job seekers (through JCP). Preparing a flyer that sets out all the different sources of support available to job seekers in Taunton Deane, including Job Clubs;
- Advice to the company on property disposal; and

- Coordination with the company on media interface and keeping Members informed.

## **2.2 Fredericks Somerset**

One application from Taunton Deane went to the panel at the February meeting. It was felt by the Board that the applicant could do with some training in the field before they felt ready to invest funding into the business but all felt it was definitely a worthwhile project. Contact will be made as to the possibility of the Council helping through the business passport we will be offering.

## **3. Theme 3 Creating an Attractive Business Environment**

### **3.1 Taunton Town Centre Company and BID Programme**

The Council, at Member and officer level through the Economic Development Team, is an active member of the Town Centre Company (TTCCo), working closely on specific events (such as the Tour of Britain and the Olympic Torch Relay) as well as coordinating the provision of town centre services.

The ballot closed on 31 March 2012, and it is to be hoped that the result is positive. The continued success of the TTCCo is essential to the continued well-being of town centre businesses.

Town centre signage: the finger posts should be ready for collection by mid-April and the monoliths approximately 1 week later. They will then be ready for installation, which is being done by RJ Spiller.

### **3.2 Floodlighting**

The Executive resolved in October to transfer floodlighting on third party properties, mostly churches, to the property owner. Officers have written to those owners inviting them to take ownership of the installations from 1 April 2012.

To the end of March 33 of the 38 Churches have either signed up to the transfer, or agreed to discuss it. Two have declined.

### **3.3 Portas Pilot bids**

Officers have been working with separate Town Teams in Taunton and Wellington to draft and submit bids to the new Mary Portas Programme. The Taunton bid focuses on the High Street, looking to increase year round activities

and to encourage footfall all the way along the street. The Wellington bid focuses on the opportunity to regenerate the Corn Hill and to reassert Wellington as a Food Town.

#### **4. Taunton Tourist Information, Ticket and Travel Centre (TIC) update**

##### **(i) Visitor numbers and spend**

There has been a slight decrease in the number of customers coming through the door but it is hoped that this will improve as we move in to the main summer season.

##### **(ii) Promotional activities**

The TIC and events web pages continue to be among the most popular Council web pages visited and used. The TIC team have now completed their spring-clean and have refreshed the office adding all of the new 2012 promotional material. An updated Taunton Heritage Trail leaflet and a new simple accommodation listing for Taunton Deane have been produced for the season ahead.

##### **(iii) New activities planned**

The Tourist Information Lead is working with the Civic Officer to promote and raise the profile of Diamond Jubilee events taking place in the area and has created a page on the main website for the DLO Parks Department listing all the events taking place within our parks.

The TIC will be the main public contact point for the Olympic Torch Relay events taking place in town and will be the distribution/collection point for the evening celebration tickets. There will be a mobile TIC in the town on Monday, 21 May 2012.

A new accessible kiosk pc has just been installed within the TIC for the general public which will allow customers to view planning applications, relevant tourism sites and other pages from our website.

##### **(iv) Hestercombe Gardens**

Hestercombe Gardens Trust will be taking over Hestercombe House - a fantastic opportunity to further improve what is one of our major tourist attractions. Whilst this will give the Trust a serious capital asset, there is also a considerable amount of work to be done. The first part of renovation is expected to cost in the order of £3.6million, a lottery application is being

prepared. If successful, plus the existing funds, there will be a shortfall of £400,000.

The total scheme when completed is expected to include a number of small business units at the rear of the property.

The TIC Team continue to work closely with the Economic Development Unit, Taunton Town Centre Company and other organisations to raise the profile of Taunton Deane.

## **5. Asset Management**

- 5.1 Agreement has been reached on the split of proceeds from the sale of the Taunton Youth and Community Centre site. The sale of this property can now proceed.
- 5.2 River Tone and COACH have been awarded a £40,000 capital grant by Taunton Deane. This will enable them to seek full planning consent with the necessary reports.
- 5.3 Mount Street Nursery Site: The flooding issues have been addressed in a way to enable development to take place with a smaller number of units, without significant reduction in value.
- 5.4 The team has been working with the DLO group on possible relocation sites, and will be meeting again shortly. It does however look as though the Frobisher Way site will not be suitable, which should mean we will be able to put it back on the market.
- 5.5 The removal of the Chestnut Tree in the Canon Street Car Park, Taunton and reinstatement of car park spaces has been delayed due to the necessity of compliance with Ancient Monument regulations.

Councillor Norman Cavill

# Council Meeting – 10 April 2012

## Report of Councillor Ken Hayward – Environmental Services

### 1. Environmental Health

#### Somerset - Flexible Warrant Scheme

- 1.1 The scheme evolved out of the Workwell scheme introduced by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to increase partnership working between Local Authorities and the HSE. However, following various HSE restructures, a new Government and changing priorities, the HSE have now pulled out of the scheme and have left it to Local Authorities (LA's) should they wish to progress with the scheme.
- 1.2 The objective of the scheme is to:-
  - increase the flexibility and responsiveness of health and safety regulators to situations of significant risk;
  - increase communication between health and safety regulators;
  - facilitate the collective use of resources.
- 1.3 Nominated officers from the five Somerset LA's that form the Somerset Health Safety and Food Group will be authorised under the scheme to carry out health and safety enforcement in other Somerset LA areas, for example an EHO from Sedgemoor District Council could be called to assist with the initial stages of a fatal accident occurring in Taunton Deane.
- 1.4 The launch of the scheme took place in the John Meikle Room on 28 March 2012 with officers from all five Somerset Authorities attending. The morning involved various presentations and a training session.

#### Prosecution

- 1.5 The case against Bridge Charcoal Grill was heard in Magistrates Court on 23 March 2012 for four food offences on two separate occasions. The owner pleaded guilty to all four offences and was fined £2500 for the first two offences, £3000 for the next two offences with costs of £1190 plus victim surcharge of £15 totalling £6705.
- 1.6 Officers had worked with the owners of the business following previous visits to help them to improve hygiene standards, however following the latest food hygiene inspection, standards had failed to improve and officers had no further option other than to progress enforcement action. It has taken almost a year to bring this case to Court and a considerable amount of work by the case officer and Legal Services.

#### Other Matters

- 1.7 The Council is currently considering an application for the Cosmo Festival to be repeated at Taunton Race Course over the weekend of the Queen's Jubilee. The licence application is being heard before the Licensing Sub Committee on 4 April 2012.
- 1.8 A Building Act Notice has been served on the owner of an overflowing septic tank/soakaway system in the Wellington area. It appears that the soakaway has failed and a new one needs to be built together with a new pumping system. Environmental Health have served a new notice requiring the tank to be emptied every three days as an interim measure. Works on a more permanent solution were required to be carried out by Friday, 30 March. At the time of writing this report it is not known if the works have been carried out, but together with officers I am closely monitoring the situation.
- 1.9 The Blackdown Hills Cheese Company has been granted full approval to produce dairy products.

#### Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI).

- 1.10 The annual return was completed on time – the first full return under the new Private Water Supply Regulations.
- 1.11 Taunton Deane has been selected by the DWI to trial and evaluate the new Risk Assessment tool before it is launched nationally this summer. The Council has extensive experience in risk assessing private water supplies and a selection of local supplies was visited in conjunction with a DWI inspector to trial the new risk assessment tool. The trial has enabled Taunton Deane to directly contribute to the development and improvement of this new risk assessment tool and will be participating in presenting the tool in London at the CIEH this summer.
- 1.12 Fly tipping continues to be a problem. As the months go by I am more and more convinced that the problem has little to do with any change of opening hours at the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC). The nature of some of the incidents, and their locations (often out in the country) lead me to believe that the perpetrators have absolutely no intention of going anywhere near any HWRC. I have therefore launched a campaign to try and eradicate the problem or at least to reverse the trend. We have printed more signs - to be allocated with the assistance from Deane DLO to tipping hot spots. We have also made a feature of the issue in the Deane Despatch.
- 1.13 Festival of Light – Nights of Light was held in Somerset Square on Thursday, 22 March from 18:00 – 20:00. The event is the first to be held in Somerset Square. The event involved a jazz band parading up and down the River Tone on the Future Perfect Boat before moving on land. There were fire jugglers and a piece of art outside The Brewhouse. It is estimated around 150 – 200 people attended the event.
- 1.14 The Licensing Team have attended multi agency meetings regarding the Elton John concert which is to be held at Somerset County Cricket Club on the 3 June 2012. The concert will be covered by the premises licence held by the Cricket Club.

- 1.15 The Licensing Team continues to strengthen links with partner agencies and work with them to assist people in holding appropriate events and activities within Taunton Deane. Currently the team is working to increase the opportunities within Taunton for street trading particularly within areas of public open space such as Goodland Gardens and Somerset Square. Application numbers are steady with an increase in Licensing Act applications which we anticipate may be for businesses preparing for this summer's events – the Olympic Torch and the Jubilee.

## **2. Climate Change / Carbon Management**

### **Toyota Prius registered as a taxi**

- 2.1 A Toyota Prius has been registered for use as a taxi in the Taunton Deane area. The Prius is fitted with an electric and a petrol engine and can achieve up to 70 miles per gallon.
- 2.2 The Toyota Prius has lesser harmful CO<sub>2</sub>, nitrogen oxide and soot emissions than a petrol or diesel car of similar size. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are 104g/km and nitrogen oxide are ten-times than that of a standard petrol car. Experience has shown that when used as a taxi the Prius can save up to 10 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per year which means it emits only half as much CO<sub>2</sub> as a comparable diesel car.
- 2.3 Experience with the Prius will be reported back to the Taxi Forum for other companies to follow the good example.

### **Recycled Paper to be used for office printing**

- 2.4 Theme Managers at Taunton Deane have agreed to corporately move from virgin paper (currently used) to using recycled paper for office printing. The recycled paper carries a small premium (of 15%) however this can be negated if staff are encouraged and shown how to consume less paper. Paul Harding – in his capacity as a Green Champion – has produced some printing tips and posters for this purpose. Volunteers within the themes will pass these on to help spread the word.
- 2.5 The additional costs for recycled paper are £1.80 per box. The Council uses about 1200 boxes per year. Carbon savings are 2.4 kg/CO<sub>2</sub> per box. This means that for an additional cost of about £2,000 per year – that can be offset through staff making paper savings – the Council will reduce its annual carbon emissions by 14 tonnes. This is equivalent to the annual carbon emissions of more than two average houses per year (6 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> per house average).

### **Progress update on solar PV installation on Taunton Pool**

- 2.6 Installation of 36kW solar PV array on Taunton Pool is due this summer. A time line for the project has been drawn up to ensure the project is delivered on time.

By 16 March deadline, 25 companies had submitted an Expression of Interest to do the job. Officers from Taunton Deane and Southwest One have produced

a tender shortlist from those submissions. The tender was released on 30 March 2012.

### **Draft Carbon Management Plan for 2012/13**

- 2.7 The Draft CMP will be finalised at the next Carbon Management Steering Group on 5 April 2012. To be adopted by Executive in April / May.

### **New boilers for Blackbrook Pavilion**

- 2.8 The boilers at Blackbrook Pavilion need replacement in 2012/2013. Options to be considered include:-
- Replacing like-for-like (i.e. old gas boilers with new gas boiler);
  - Replacing old boilers with a combination of gas boilers and solar thermal panels;
  - Replacing old boilers with CHP (Combined Heat and Power) plant;
  - Replacing old boilers with biomass boiler

Over the next weeks we will ask companies for quotes on the above options and will prepare a business case.

### **Progress on Climate Change and Local Resilience Strategy**

- 2.9 Some progress has been made on benchmarking of actions in the Taunton Deane area : The Transport Working Group is operational; other working groups are about to be set up. A Workshop organised by Transition Taunton on 24 March will bring together local voluntary groups. The deadline for benchmarking phase is June 2012.

### **LEAF (TDBC cooperating with Transition Taunton)**

- 2.10 Transition Taunton and Deane Energy Savers run a project with the aim to increase the uptake of loft and cavity wall insulation in Taunton. Transition Taunton will use about £60,000 Government funding that they have won for this. The Council assists them by acting as their banker. We have not had any feedback from Transition on the success of the project yet, but I hope to bring a verbal update to Full Council.

## **3. Waste Management**

- 3.1 The Somerset Waste Board met on 30 March 2012. It approved the Annual Internal Audit Plan for 2012-2013, and the Waste Prevention Strategy for Somerset 2012-2013. Regards the latter, the main purpose of the Partnership continues to be to help bring about behaviour change with the aim of reducing the amount of waste arisings in Somerset – the Waste Hierarchy:





With Landfill tax rising from £40 to £48 per tonne from 1 April 2012, it is imperative that we divert as much as possible away from landfill.

## **Value Added Tax**

- 3.2 Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs (HMRC) has ruled that VAT is chargeable on the gate charges the Partnership has imposed at four of its HWRC's. However, there will be no increase in the £2 charge as it was set to accommodate VAT should it be ruled chargeable. However it does bring additional pressure on balancing the disposal budget. Although a new budgetary imposition, it is probably not insurmountable for 2012/2013, provided that the volume forecasts are broadly borne out.
- 3.3 The HMRC has further ruled that the contributions that Partners make into the Somerset Waste Partnership are not deemed a VATable supply, where previously it was assumed to be VATable. This ruling will potentially have wide-reaching financial repercussions in relation to the District Council VAT Partial Exemption Calculations.
- 3.4 This is a complex issue, and it was clear from officers at the meeting that the extent to which this may affect District Councils for this and other partnerships is open to interpretation, and so think that it would be inappropriate for me to try to explain the implications in this report. Financial Officers in each of the District Authorities are aware of the issue and are looking closely at exactly how it might affect us. Once they have digested the information they will no doubt share it with us all.

## **4. Deane DLO Update**

I am aware that Members do not normally get to see the DLO Staff Newsletter, and so the following is largely taken from that publication.

### **Voids Team Creation**

- 4.1 Since the creation of the area working model we have been undergoing continuous reviews to identify practices that are working well and those that can be improved.
- 4.2 As part of the continuous improvement of DLO services we are now in a position to implement a dedicated voids team managed by Roy Porter. This team will bring together many of the skills needed to deliver the voids property

repairs in order to reduce the amount of days properties are vacant. This reduction is a particular priority of the Housing Client and one where we can make a real difference to those in need of Council housing.

- 4.3 The DLO has worked hard to improve the turn around times and this effort is already bearing fruit; the creation of a dedicated team will allow further improvements and help us sustain a high quality service. Currently the voids turn around time for Taunton Deane is just over 18 days, this is a vast improvement from the 32 days that was being taken earlier in the financial year. Through an independent survey this figure now places us amongst the top 25% nationally.
- 4.4 The creation of this team will see some existing staff move from their current Area into this team; those affected have been contacted separately. The go live date for this team is 1March 2012.

### **BT Fleet Updates**

- 4.5 The transfer of our fleet maintenance has been a general success. There are some areas where improvements are required and we are working with BT to make appropriate alterations to the service. They have increased their staffing at the Priorswood site, Taunton to accommodate the increased workload that we are providing.
- 4.6 This also links with the upcoming leased fleet replacement programme which has now been approved for 2012/2013. The younger the vehicles are within the fleet the more fuel efficient they are likely to be and the less they will be prone to breakdown.

### **Uniform**

- 4.7 A preferred supplier has now been selected for the workforce uniform. This followed an intensive procurement process which did cause some delays beyond the expected timetable. We are moving to a new colour for all staff in order to represent a new start for the DLO. The uniform colour will consist of black trousers and grey shirts/sweatshirts. The selected uniform style is not dissimilar to the current uniform.
- 4.8 We will shortly be using samples to "size" all employees; once this has been completed there will be a roll out of all uniform over a tight period. All employees will be required to wear the uniform that is provided as it not only demonstrates our brand to tenants, ensuring their security when allowing trades staff into their homes, but also identifies us to external businesses, partners and other potential customers.
- 4.9 As part of the uniform roll out there will be an audit of staff identification (ID) cards. As a professional organisation all staff will be expected to display their ID cards; if their role determines that it is not safe for them to be displayed they must still be carried at all times.

### **Depot Relocation**

- 4.10 We are in the process of identifying the size requirements of any new depot and are being challenged to reduce the amount of equipment and materials that we hold in storage. It stands to reason that the smaller the size we can achieve the less it will cost. Currently there is not a great deal of suitable alternative property on the market, but we are being open minded in considering all possible options and for the time being the search will continue.
- 4.11 Councillors John Williams, Norman Cavill and I are shortly meeting with officers to see how this relocation process, which is an essential part of the DLO Transformation Project, can be moved forward.

### **IT software**

- 4.12 A project team has recently been set up to identify a suitable IT system to replace the system currently being used at the depot. This system will allow for automated transfer of jobs directly to employees using a device such as a smart phone or PDA. Whilst this automation will not be suitable for all work areas, the new job creation software will. The aim of this is to get a better understanding of our workload and analysis of our performance.
- 4.13 A series of 10 workshops is taking place in order to gather information on current working practices and to look at ways of improving manual administration systems that are already in place. Visits are also taking place to view systems that are being suggested in order to find an IT company that can provide what we need within the budget that is available.

### **Waste Transfer Station**

- 4.14 As part of our commitment to review all processes, and as a result of difficulties in relocation opportunities, we have decided to remove the waste transfer station from the depot. In practice this means that all waste will now go directly to the Viridor site in Priorswood from 1 April onwards.

### **Vehicle Tracking**

- 4.15 Since the implementation of vehicle tracking we have been able to look more closely at the way our fleet is used. This has allowed us to reduce the number of vehicles in our fleet quite considerably. We do not have information on fuel use for a before and after comparison yet, but our expectation is that this will have reduced not only due to fewer vehicles being operated but also due to changes in driver behaviour.

### **Summary**

- 4.16 Overall the DLO is in a much better position having completed a number of the key elements of the transformation plan and, perhaps most importantly, demonstrated that keeping the DLO in-house is proving to be a good decision.
- 4.17 We are still waiting for the final out-turn figures, but I am delighted to tell Members that we are well ahead of projected savings. Well done to everyone!

Councillor Ken Hayward



# Council Meeting - 10 April 2012

## Report of Councillor Mrs Catherine Herbert – Sports, Parks and Leisure

### 1. Parks

- 1.1 I think you will all agree that the parks have been looking glorious in the beautiful sunshine we have had lately. No doubt it will be snowing by the time you read this!
- 1.2 I was pleased to support Wellington and District Sports Federation and Wellington Action Group for Dogs with the installation of signs reinforcing the dog ban at Wellington Playing field. The field is widely used by numerous local adult and junior sports teams and it is important that the field is kept clean.

### 2. Community Leisure and Play

- 2.1 I thought I would take this opportunity to share with you all the schemes we have helped in the last 12 months with our Capital Grant Schemes.

**Capital Grant Scheme awarded this financial year and ongoing from previous years for community halls and sports clubs. Budget £46,000 per annum.**

| Project                      | TDBC Grant | Project Cost | Project Description  | Leverage excluding applicants own funds |
|------------------------------|------------|--------------|--|---|
| Stoke St Mary Village Hall   | £4,165.    | £12,500      | Insulation, energy efficient lighting and double glazed window to replay louvre window | £6,000                                  |
| Bishops Lydeard Village Hall | £10,000    | £30,000      | Kitchen extension  | £14,000                                 |
| Ash Priors Village Hall      | £7,500     | £40,000      | Creation of car park to stop parking on narrow lane                                    | £24,400                                 |
| Fitzhead Tithe Barn          | £6,660     | £26,643      | Roof upgrade and insulation  | £13,483                                 |
| West Bagborough Village Hall | £28,750    | £115,000     | Extension and refurbishment  | £62,110                                 |
| Langford Budville Village    | £35,000    | £560,000     | A hall for the village which did not have  | £414,855                                |

|                         |          |          |                        |          |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|------------------------|----------|
| Hall                    |          |          | one                    |          |
| Wiveliscombe Rugby Club | £24,750  | £75,000  | Extension              | £32,616  |
| Milverton Village Hall  | £3,310   | £10,029  | New boiler and heating | £3,360   |
| Taunton Bowling Club    | £10,000  | £103,000 | Disabled access        | £22,000  |
| Total                   | £130,135 | £972,172 |                        | £592,824 |

**Capital Grant Schemes awarded this financial year and ongoing from previous years for the Parish Play Area Grant Scheme. Budget £20,000 per annum.**

| Project           | TDBC Grant | Project Cost | Project Description   | Leverage excluding applicants own funds |
|-------------------|------------|--------------|---|---|
| Ruishton          | £3,492     | £8,777       | New swings  | £2,785                                  |
| West Buckland     | £3,448     | £7,178       | New slide   | Balance met in full by Parish Council   |
| Otterford         | £2,634     | £5,268       | Grass safety matting  | Balance met in full by Parish Council   |
| Stawley           | £2,175     | £4,350       | Hard surfaced area for youth and young children's play area | Balance from own funds                  |
| Norton Fitzwarren | £768       | £1,555       | BMX track   | £537                                    |
| Total             | £12,517    | £27,128      |   | £3,322                                  |

### **3. Tone Leisure (Taunton Deane) Limited Activities**

#### **Community, Sports and Health Development**

3.1 Tone continues to work hard to develop a number of community outreach programmes:-

#### **Health Development**

3.2 Older People

3.2.1 Tone held a Seated Badminton session at Parmin Close Active Living Centre (ALC), Taunton for approximately 15 participants.

- 3.2.2 The Falls Instructors have completed six months of Falls Prevention at Abbeyfield in Taunton and Lodge Close sheltered housing in Wellington.
- 3.2.3 Tone has launched a new Falls Prevention class to start in Priorswood in April to follow on from the six months Tone have run at Abbeyfield and Lodge Close. Tone gave mini health MOTs at Parmin Close, Staplegrove, Rockwell Green, Wellington and Oake ALCs and approximately 36 participants have taken advantage of this offer.
- 3.2.4 Tone has trained 15 new volunteers to deliver Flexercise in homes and ALCs and they are all now actively delivering Flexercise.
- 3.3 Children's Centres
  - 3.3.1 James Quirk continues to deliver sessions at The Hollies Children's Centre, Taunton that incorporate The Hollies, Acorns and Hillside Children's Centres.
  - 3.3.2 Tone are continuing to promote signposting services in the district, including sexual health and smoking cessation to the young parents in all three Children's Centres that Tone is working with.
- 3.4 Weight Management
  - 3.4.1 The Community Pounds project in Priorswood, Taunton is going very well with approximately 50 people signed up and taking part in various physical activity opportunities and weight loss. Tone have delivered a community weight management programme that saw six people lose a cumulative total of 17kg in six weeks. The success of this has encouraged Tone to launch another weight management course in North Taunton in April.
- 3.5 NHS Health Checks
  - 3.5.1 Tone is working closely in partnership with Victoria Gate Surgery, Taunton to promote the activities that Tone offer through Health Checks and to offer Halcon residents NHS Health Checks on a fortnightly basis in the community. These Health Checks are also being offered on a fortnightly basis to the residents of Priorswood.
- 3.6 Deprived Communities Work
  - 3.6.1 The Development Team attended the opening of the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) and play area next to ASDA in March 2012 and delivered basketball and hockey sessions for the youngsters. Tone are working with the Police to deliver a football and activity day in Hamilton Park, Taunton in May.
- 3.7 Sportivate
  - 3.7.1 Tone Leisure is currently delivering sports projects for 14-25 year olds that will encourage long term access to physical activity. Sportivate funding is enabling the cost of sessions to be reduced and on some

sessions participants attending regularly can claim vouchers to be used for further physical activity within Tone.

- 3.7.2 In conjunction with SASP (Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership), Sportivate are funding a ONE membership offer where young people can purchase one month's membership and get a second month free. This enables young people to have access to a wide range of sports and fitness opportunities, including swimming, golf, fitness classes, gym sessions, climbing and racquet sports.
- 3.7.3 PING (an innovative form of table tennis) is continuing to run at Wellsprings Leisure Centre, Taunton with Climbing, Feel Good Factory sessions, and Cardio-Tennis running at Blackbrook Pavilion, Taunton after Easter.

## **Facility News**

### **3.8 Taunton Pool**

- 3.8.1 After months of planning and working alongside Taunton Deane Borough Council, Tone are pleased to announce that the lift service is back in action. Renovation took just under a month and the lift is now in full operation.
- 3.8.2 Birthday Parties have been highly successful at Taunton Pool and many children (and adults) seem to be enjoying this facility. Both Sea Scooters and Water Walkers have become popular and, with the support of Food 4 You, Tone has been able to offer 'TONE' party bags to help replenish the energy used in the water.

### **3.9 Wellington Sports Centre**

- 3.9.1 The Sports Hall floor was resealed on 19 March 2012 and Tone have already received positive feedback from regular teams and block bookers.
- 3.9.2 The Z3 Lottery funded project is now into its third year of the project and Tone have secured an additional 'out of session' schools booking that will continue to operate until the end of the summer term.
- 3.9.3 The centre also delivered another great Roller Fever session in February 2012, with some fantastic feedback. Tone will continue to offer additional sessions throughout the year. The next fun packed evening has already been booked for July.
- 3.9.4 No Strings Badminton sessions are due to be launched at the beginning of May after the successful recruitment of an innovative Co-ordinator.

### **3.10 Blackbrook Pavilion**

- 3.10.1 Blackbrook Pavilion is hosting a number of large sporting events over the next four months; the first took place on Sunday, 25 March - the Sport Relief Mile, with well over 500 people taking part. Other events coming up include 'Run 4 Amy' on Saturday, 16 June and a schools Olympic Sports Day for over 800 local children.



3.10.2 Blackbrook have had continued response to Mini Madness: a Bouncy Castle and Craft session for children under school age. Tone have two sessions a week with over 30 children attending each one. It has given parents an opportunity to meet other parents and encourage their children to interact with others.

### 3.11 Tennis Centre

3.11.1 Tone are currently operating a coaching programme at three satellite clubs, Wellington, Taunton Vale and Wiveliscombe. In the summer term there are provisional plans to operate in two additional clubs around Taunton.

3.11.2 In addition, Tone are currently running two after school clubs at St. George's and Trinity, Taunton with plans to go into another three primary schools in the summer term.

3.11.3 All the outreach programmes act as starting points for children and adults to try tennis and they also feed into the programme at Taunton Tennis Club if they want to develop their tennis further.

### 3.12 Wellsprings Leisure Centre

3.12.1 Functional fitness is coming to Wellsprings Leisure Centre. Tone have continued to invest in its facilities with a new, modern and inspiring functional fitness area located on the first floor. This will allow a number of small group sessions and enable members to participate in sessions like Kettlebell to ViPR. An open weekend has been scheduled for after the Easter holidays.

3.12.2 Wellsprings Leisure Centre has linked with the Rugby Football Union to bring Touch Rugby to local community venues. Wellsprings is one of only two leisure centres selected in the South West to run these regular sessions. The sessions start on Wednesday, 18 April 2012 at 6 pm and are open to everyone over the age of 16.

### 3.13 Events

- Jimmy Carr is coming to Wellsprings in November and ticket sales are strong, with nearly 40% of available seats already purchased.
- Robin Windsor and Kristina Rihanoff from the BBC's Strictly Come Dancing have been booked for Tone's Strictly Dance event at the end of June 2012.

Councillor Catherine Herbert.