

Council Meeting – 17 July 2012

Report of Councillor John Williams – Leader of the Council

1. Great Events for Taunton Deane

- 1.1 We had the wonderful event of the Olympic Torch Relay passing through the Deane with a stopover in Taunton and the excellent show that went with it staged in the County Cricket Ground. We must not forget the wide array of street events which turned it into a “whole day” event which was an enormous attraction for many to visit Taunton. All in all a very successful day and a credit to all involved in its organisation.
- 1.2 On the same day as the Torch Relay we hosted a lunch time reception with the South Korean Ambassador and many business people who already trade with South Korea and wish to improve links, or those that want open up new markets. South Korea is a booming market so we welcomed the opportunity to show the Ambassador what Taunton Deane and Somerset have to offer.
- 1.3 The reception was well received and it clearly illustrated the importance of South Korea as a trading partner to many businesses already but also reinforced the need to further enhance and improve our trading prospects with such a successful Country. We have now established contacts with the Ambassadors office in London so we may assist any businesses wishing to trade with South Korea to make direct contact with a trade attaché. I would also express my thanks to Jeremy Browne MP and Councillor Farbahi for their help in facilitating this meeting but also sincere thanks to our own officers who rose to the occasion, with all else going on, they still managed to organise and coordinate an excellent reception for the Ambassador at the wonderful venue of Hestercombe House.
- 1.3 Following shortly after this, spread over a four day holiday weekend, were the Diamond Jubilee celebrations and what a celebration this was! The effort that went into organising such diverse but wonderful events is a credit to our community and we can be proud of them. A truly memorable occasion and deserved celebration for our Queen in recognition of her long and excellent service to the Country and Commonwealth. Thank you to all those involved and for the enormous effort put in to ensure it was so successful.
- 1.4 Also happening in Taunton at this time was the hugely popular Elton John concert staged at the Somerset County Cricket Ground.

Thousand's attended and despite the foul weather it was a thoroughly enjoyed by many. All credit to Sir Elton John who I understand had cancelled his previous three concerts due to illness but he braved the Somerset weather to entertain in Taunton and all credit to the audience for staying the course to enjoy a great performance.

2. Taunton BID Ballot Process

- 2.1 The result of this was unknown when I wrote my last report but of course since then we know that it failed to receive sufficient support from retailers and business rate payers, albeit by a small margin. This in my view has potentially serious implications for the economic vitality of Taunton, particularly the town centre. The present BID programme and funding runs out in September so leaving uncertainty of how the Christmas lights and usual festivities will be funded. Events and seasonal initiatives form an essential part of attracting shoppers and visitors to the town at this crucial time for traders.
- 2.2 In my last report I did say that as a Council we did not have the finance or resources to step in and fill the undoubted gap that will be left by the cessation of BID funding. We will work with the Town Centre Company as much as we are able but in reality this will not be much more than a facilitating role for traders and the Town Centre Company to deliver Christmas events and festivities on a self help basis.
- 2.3 To demonstrate the value of town centre events can I say how impressed I was by the Family Fun Day, an organised event in the High Street by the Town Centre Company over the Diamond Jubilee weekend. It was absolutely packed with people and it was a thoroughly enjoyable event especially bearing in mind the number of Jubilee events that would have been occurring that day. The success of the day was borne out by an increase of 13% in footfall through the Orchard Centre. A big thank you to the Town Centre Company staff for putting on such a popular event, it achieved its aim of increasing footfall for the traders and providing fun for the many visitors.

3. Project Taunton

- 3.1 Firepool - the Viridor building is now complete and handed over, fitting out is in progress and should be complete by September to receive the 100 staff already based in Taunton but increasing fairly quickly to 120 as staff are brought back from other UK offices to this new, prestigious headquarters.
- 3.2 Northern Inner Distributor Road - this is an absolutely key element of the development of Firepool, the CPO enquiry has been held and the County Council can now only await the deliberations of DFT and the Minister. The funding is in place so they still hope to be on site this

year subject to the results of the Enquiry but I am assured they are ready to move quickly in the event of receiving a positive result.

- 3.3 Also a key element of development is the new Boulevard coupled with the redevelopment of the railway station so the main access and egress from the station is at platform level leading straight out into the Boulevard rather than low level under the bridges. These are two separate elements of the project but the Project Taunton team are working hard to coordinate and facilitate delivery. It will be an enormous improvement for the experience of the train visitor to Taunton and we must do all possible to deliver this improvement.
- 3.4 Later this month sees the official opening of Waterside House, a development of 108 residences, mainly affordable or shared equity, led by Knightstone Housing which is a great development and boost to our much needed affordable housing stock.
- 3.5 On the old East Goods Yard around Waterside House a private developer has been granted planning permission for 204 dwellings and work is scheduled to start shortly. This should be a particularly attractive development leading down to the towpath of the Canal and provide much needed housing in a sustainable location to meet the demand that exists.

4. Broadband Enhancement

- 4.1 I am pleased to confirm that the necessary upgrade of the telephone infrastructure has been completed in Taunton and we have met with BT/Openreach to agree an “awareness campaign” so that our community is actually made aware of what is available and where. The present roll out covers Taunton exchange only so the “where” is very important to get across so we do not build expectations where it does not exist but take maximum advantage of what is available.
- 4.2 Since the last meeting progress has been made by the County Council under the “Connecting Devon and Somerset” programme as follows:
 - National Broadband Suppliers Framework was established as scheduled May 2012;
 - Award of Devon and Somerset Broadband Contract is on track for September 2012;
 - This will allow work to start and schedule of works announced January/February 2013; and
 - Superfast Broadband to 85% of the area by 2015.

It is anticipated 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.

- 4.3 This is a very important development programme for the rural areas and it is great the County Council have so far kept it on track despite very difficult times.

5. Police and Crime Panels

- 5.1 These have to be set up in readiness to scrutinise the activities of the new Police and Crime Commissioners due to be elected in November 2012. An interim panel consisting of the Leaders of each Council in the Avon and Somerset Police Authority area has been meeting to decide the constitution of the Shadow Panel Members who have to be notified to the Home Office this month.
- 5.2 The Panel has to be a minimum of eight elected Members and two independent persons up to a maximum of 20, 18 elected Members and two independent persons.
- 5.3 When constituting the panel regard must be paid to political proportionality and ratio of numbers in each community to the number of representatives on the panel. These two factors are not necessarily compatible so it is a case of finding a compromise rather than a hard and fast rule.
- 5.4 Members formed the original panel being one County and five Districts for Somerset and four Unitary/City Councils. To ensure better representation for the more populous City and Unitary Councils agreement was reached that each Unitary/City Council would be allowed two representatives so addressing in part the population issue. The concern expressed by Bristol was that Somerset County would have six Members as opposed to four for the Unitaries. Hence the agreement of the panel to increase the panel size by four elected Members so addressing in part the concerns of Bristol, the final size of Panel therefore becomes 14 elected Members and two independent persons.
- 5.5 By agreement Bristol City Council has been appointed as the “host authority” to set up and service the Police and crime Panel.

6. Core Strategy

- 6.1 This has now progressed and all Members should be aware that we have received the final recommendations from the Inspector which is for adoption of the plan subject to the agreed modifications being incorporated.
- 6.2 My sincere congratulations to officers and Members who have worked so hard to deliver what is now recognised as a sound plan. All the more credible because the preparatory work was carried out in advance of the National Planning Policy Framework but our plan is judged to be compliant with the new legislation. When formally

adopted we will be one of the first authorities to have an NPPF compliant Local Plan, that is a tremendous achievement and again my congratulations to all involved.

- 6.3 It would not be right if I did not pay credit to the great contribution of Ralph Willoughby-Foster in the preparation of the Core Strategy and the necessary background information. Thanks to him for all he has done.

7. Welfare Reform and Housing Benefit Changes

- 7.1 The enormity of the changes proposed by Central Government I do not believe are understood by very many of us. We have had the opportunity to attend Members Briefings and I know Officers have visited individual Groups but I do believe we have to do more to ensure members and our community, particularly those most affected, have a much greater understanding of the difficulties we will have to face. As a headline figure that can easily be understood it is estimated that the total lost benefit income annually from 2014 onwards in Somerset alone will be in the order of £150 million. Remember this is the annual figure for lost benefits and it will have a huge impact on our community.
- 7.2 Changes have already occurred in January and April this year but more are due April and concluding in October 2013 when many existing benefits are encompassed by the "Universal Credits". This one credit will replace some of the current benefits. As a Council we are working with all Councils across Somerset to understand and prepare for these changes but I believe more needs to be done with Members. This to ensure we all grasp the significance of the new welfare benefits system so we are best able to help our community through what will undoubtedly be a difficult time.

8. Economic Development, Taunton Deane

- 8.1.1 With the agreement of the Inspector to our Core Strategy I believe we need to move forward and be proactive in the development of new areas of employment land. We already have this under consideration and will need to work with our Local Enterprise Partnership and the Homes and Communities Agency to see what funding is available to support our aspirations. From preliminary discussions as long as we can demonstrate job creation and economic development then applications are given more favourable consideration.
- 8.1.2 It is important we ensure the large employment site, Bathpool to Langaller, is quickly brought forward for development so we have sites available for local expansion, inward investment and to offer companies associated with the major development of Hinkley Point.

8.1.3 With employment land in our yet to be adopted Local Plan, land at Chelston and the Firepool site we are at last achieving a selection of locations which are strategically located near the motorway network and mainline railways. We now need to build upon this by promotion and advertisement to ensure would be investors are well aware of what we have to offer. That will be a challenge in these difficult times but we are strategically located and Taunton Deane is a great place to live, work and play. We must use those strengths to sell ourselves as a location.

Councillor John Williams
Leader of the Council

Council Meeting – 17 July 2012

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

1. Parks

- 1.1 The weather certainly has a lot to answer for. Much of the work planned in the parks has been severely delayed by the persistent rain we have been experiencing. The team has been playing catch up and has only just finished planting out the bedding as I write this report. The permanent planting outside The Deane House is now also in place and will establish itself over the next few weeks.
- 1.2 Earlier in the year we sowed two trial beds of wildflower planting, one on Chestnut Drive and one in Victoria Park, Taunton. These have also suffered with the rain but are now beginning to give a taste of the rainbow of colours that wildflowers can display.
- 1.3 I cannot avoid the situation with the highways grass cutting and I know it has been causing us all a lot of concern. The plan agreed with Somerset County Council was severely affected by the poor weather making it impossible to start the cutting of the verges (or indeed most of our other grass cutting responsibilities). The route was started as soon as practically possible with staff volunteering to work weekends and bank holidays to try and get the job done. Unfortunately as soon as the team caught up, the task has again been delayed by rain. The team continues to work tirelessly to carry out this work to their normal high standard.
- 1.4 I am sorry to report that we are still having issues with the pump at the play area in Vivary Park. The supplier has given us instructions which has resulted in a temporary fix, but I am not happy with the pump as it is obviously not fit for purpose. I have instructed the Parks Department to request Legal to be become involved to either get a replacement from the original supplier or our money back and we will work with the landscape architect to get a suitable replacement. In the meantime if the pump fails again then the Park Ranger will be filling the troughs with water as often as possible to enable the water play feature to be used by the children.
- 1.5 We would like to welcome a new Friends group - Friends of Hamilton Park, Taunton is now established and I attended their first community consultation event a few weeks ago. They gathered ideas from those who dropped in and we look forward to working with them to protect and support Hamilton Park for its wide variety of users.

- 1.6 Britain in Bloom judging is taking place on the 12 July 2012 and then the National judging on 30 July. I would like to thank the Taunton in Bloom Committee, Deane DLO, our sponsors and all the volunteers who help throughout the year to make the floral displays, parks, allotments, schools and town centre ready for the competition. It has to be said though that this effort is done by a very few people and the committee struggle to get new members, so if you or anyone else you may know would be interested in getting involved then it would be much appreciated.

2. Community Leisure and Play

- 2.1 We now have tenders in for the upgrade of the playground at Wellington Recreation Ground. Working with Barnardos, the local children let their imaginations go wild. I am sure we will not have achieved some of their more extreme ideas, but it will not be long before they have an improved play / sports area to occupy them.
- 2.2 The specialist reports are now in and officers are pulling the information together ready to present options on the swimming pool project to scrutiny in August 2012.

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 Leisure has launched Ping, which gives participants the opportunities to play Ping (table tennis) without the need for specific table tennis equipment. This game can even be played on the kitchen table! Also seated Basketball has been launched in partnership with Basketball England.
- 3.3 NHS Health Checks
- 3.3.1 Tone created a partnership with the medical staff at Victoria Gate Surgery and Warwick House Surgery to increase the numbers of residents in Halcon taking up the offer of a NHS Health Check.
- 3.4 Deprived Wards
- 3.4.1 Priorswood successfully ran the Community Pounds project from October 2011-April 2012, with huge success and this project is continuing with extra funding from NHS Somerset. A similar project is being set up in Halcon by Tone and NHS Somerset, in partnership with the Link Centre.

- 3.4.2 Rush Hockey has been launched by Tone in Priorswood to try and incentivise the younger girls into participating in more physical activity.
- 3.5 Back on the Bike - Cycling Initiative for Older Adults
 - 3.5.1 In May Tone secured funding from NHS Somerset Public Health Directorate to develop and provide an initiative that would help older adults who have not cycled recently to gain skills and confidence to start cycling again. Tone is working in partnership with DC Cycleworks to provide the four session courses on Sunday mornings during July in Taunton.
- 3.6 Walking for Health
 - 3.6.1 Tone's Walk Well Communications Volunteer has developed a dedicated website for Tone's Walking for Health schemes, which was launched in May. The website address is <http://www.walkwellwithtone.btck.co.uk>
- 3.7 Sportivate
 - 3.7.1 Tone has had considerable success with its Sportivate Project (Sport England funding through SASP) set up to encourage 14-25 year olds to be retained in sports or physical activity. Starting in April 2012, Tone has now sold over 140 ONE memberships in Taunton Deane for young people to purchase, enabling them to participate in a wide range of sporting activities including fitness, classes, racquet sports, golf and swimming.

Facility News

- 3.8 Taunton Pool
 - 3.8.1 Swimathon - On 28 and 29 April 2012, Taunton Pool hosted their annual Swimathon event. 80 people swam either 1 mile (48 lengths), 2.5K (75 lengths), 5K (150 lengths) or Team 5K over the weekend. This year's Swimathon was in aid of either Sport Relief or Marie Curie Cancer Care.
 - 3.8.2 Two regular customers swam from 12:00-20:00 and between them recorded 1,116 lengths (Neil York 572/Alison Lowbridge 544) totalling over 37K, almost 23 miles. The total amount raised to date is £6,456, beating last year's amount by £400.
 - 3.8.3 In June Taunton Deane Borough Council installed PV onto the roof of Taunton Pool, designed to generate up to 30,000 Kwh of electricity; one-tenth of the site's annual consumption. The PV and Solion System went live on 22 June, 2012. The unit has generated 986.96 Kw of electricity to date.
- 3.9 Wellington Sports Centre
 - 3.9.1 The Z3 (kids gym) project is now in its final year. The facility is averaging over 450 visits per month. In order to increase the current footfall the team have agreed to offer the facility free of charge over the summer holidays.

3.9.2 No Strings Badminton has been launched in partnership with Badminton England offering 2 sessions per week where customers can turn up and play with the help of a co-ordinator.

3.10 Taunton Tennis Centre

3.10.1 Taunton Tennis Club is now operating two new outreach tennis coaching courses at Elms Tennis Club and Stoke St. Gregory Tennis Club, which expands the club's outreach programme to five club sites and three primary schools.

3.10.2 The Tennis Club's performance programme has just received notification that they have been successful in receiving Performance Centre status for 2012/2013. The award comes with £13,000 of funding to develop the best performing players and Tone is continuing to develop links with Taunton School to progress towards High Performance status.

3.11 Wellsprings Leisure Centre

3.11.1 An agreement was reached in May between Wyvern Nursery, Tone Leisure and Taunton Deane Borough Council to accommodate the nursery in the leisure centre on a permanent basis. This facility was successfully relocated from the Taunton Academy site and opened to its customers in June.

3.11.2 Tone Leisure supported and hosted the Taunton Academy's first music festival on 23 June 2012. Approximately 1,500 people enjoyed a variety of music including the soprano Belinda Evans, teen boy band FTW and Glenn Tilbrook from Squeeze.

3.12 Vivary Golf Course/High Ropes

3.12.1 Vivary Golf Course has been impacted by the wettest April-June on record. With the course closed for a week in April this not only impacted Tone's golf business but also the construction of the new High Ropes course. However, despite the weather the High Ropes course partially opened on the Jubilee weekend and has now been fully completed with the official opening taking place on Friday, 13 July 2012. Feedback on the course to date has been very positive and Tone is confident business will grow and develop over the coming weeks and months.

Councillor Catherine Herbert

Council Meeting – 17 July 2012

Report of Councillor Mrs Jean Adkins – Housing Services

1. Housing Property Services

- 1.1 I am happy to report that the post of Property Manager (Maintenance) has been filled and welcome Steve Esau. Please note that all queries regarding maintenance should be addressed to him rather than Tim Haynes, who has moved over to Contracts.
- 1.2 The new Voids Team, which deals with voids exclusively as part of the restructure, has been driving down the turnaround time for re-letting.

2. Affordable Housing Development Partnership and Open Day

- 2.1 This is now up and running with 5 main partners:-
 - Yarlington Housing Group;
 - Devon and Cornwall Housing;
 - Knightstone Housing Association;
 - Magna West Somerset; and
 - Somer (which has just announced a change of name and will be known as Curo – latin for “I care”, in future).
- 2.2 Each partner has had a one-to-one meeting with the Council and will meet as a group quarterly. The partnership meetings are also attended by Asad Butt from the Homes and Community Agency (HCA).
- 2.3 I was unable to attend the first meeting, but the second had useful briefings from Nick Bryant on the Core Strategy and CIL and Ian Franklin on Project Taunton, as well as updates from partners and the HCA.
- 2.4 All partners had stalls at the Open Day and found this a useful networking opportunity. Held at the Long Room at the County Cricket Ground again, this was attended by over 400 people. Thank you to all involved in organising this popular event.

3. Affordable Housing Target

- 3.1 The 2011/2012 target of 200 completions was exceeded by 18. This is a significant achievement in view of the slow-down in housebuilding and shows that it would be futile to rely on delivery of affordable

housing through planning only, as a large number of these were provided by RSLs and through regeneration.

- 3.2 The target for 2012/2013 remains at 200, based on homes already in the “pipeline”. These are from two regeneration schemes at Victoria Gate and Ruskin Close as well as developments such as Kinglake, Bishops Hull, Silk Meadows, Staplegrove and Rylands Nursery, Rockwell Green which are currently under construction.
- 3.3 These are not all social rent or “affordable rent” units, as some shared ownership homes are currently being marketed at Waterside and Silk Meadows.

4. Estates Team and Anti-social Behaviour (ASB)

- 4.1 The new ASB Officer is now in post, following Steven Clarke’s move to the Tenant Services Team as Development Officer. A warm welcome to Tony Knight, who has a background in Policing.
- 4.2 A report was taken to the Tenants’ Services Management Board on the proposed ASB Strategy 2012-2015, which is a living document to be reviewed annually and reflects the Respect Charter.
- 4.3 The aims are:-
 - To demonstrate leadership and commitment to dealing effectively with reports of ASB;
 - To provide an accessible and accountable service for all tenants;
 - Taking swift action to protect tenants and communities from ASB;
 - To adopt a supportive approach to working with victims and witnesses; and
 - To encourage individual and community responsibility from our tenants and support the development of sustainable communities.

5. Tenants Services Management Board (TSMB)

- 5.1 A successful election was held for membership of the TSMB following the issue of a striking Information Pack, which I am sure helped to stimulate interest. There were 12 candidates for the 10 seats and a “turnout” of around 30%. (The composition of the Board is 10 tenants and 2 Members, the latter being appointed).
- 5.2 I congratulate the successful candidates and welcome them to the Board, especially the new members. I thank all the candidates for taking part in this democratic process and making an election possible.

5.3 At the first meeting, Dustyn Etherington was re-elected Chairman. My thanks to him and the other returning members for their continuing commitment.

6. Tenants' and Leaseholders Open Day

6.1 The TSMB received a report on the feedback from this event, held on 23 April 2012. Attendance was up from the previous year (123 against 100). I apologise for being unable to attend due to ill health and note respondents' comments that they would like to see more Councillors attending.

7. Jubilee Gardens, Priorswood Place, Taunton

7.1 Congratulations to those who worked so hard to enable the Jubilee Garden to be opened at the Jubilee Bank Holiday weekend by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Somerset. It was well attended, the weather held and the food was delicious!

Councillor Mrs Jean Adkins

Council Meeting - 17 July 2012

Report of Councillor Mrs Vivienne Stock-Williams - Corporate Resources

1. Customer Contact Centre

Customer Contact Award

- 1.1 SWOne Customer Contact entered the South West Contact Centre Awards again this year – this time in two categories: People Development and Best Public Sector Contact Centre. These awards are hotly contested and prized by both private and public sector companies with Contact Centres in the South West, and are judged by industry experts.
- 1.2 The team were delighted in May 2012 to be informed that they had been short-listed for both categories. They attended an awards ceremony on Thursday, 28 June 2012 at Marriott Bristol, where the winners were announced. Unfortunately, they were pipped at the post by LV= for the People Development Award, but won the award for Best Public Sector Contact Centre.
- 1.3 This award acknowledges the professionalism and dedication of the service and team, and recognises the excellence of their delivery. In addition, by being short-listed for the People Development Award with private sector companies LV= and Screwfix, it is recognised that SWOne Customer Contact fully understands, and places an importance on, the people on the ground doing the job.

Staff Development

- 1.4 The people development programme continues within the service, with eight members of the team recently signing up to undertake NCHE certification in Customer Excellence. One of the Team Leaders is about to join the SWOne Inspiring Leaders Programme. In addition, approximately 20 people have shown interest in undertaking the NVQs recently announced by SWOne in partnership with Intec. Staff are working with SWCCF on building stage 2 of the Contact Centre's own internal Customer Service Excellence programme which was rolled out last year.
- 1.5 In May 2012, the second annual team day event was held. These sessions are on consecutive days, when half the service gathers each day in the JMR to undertake service updates, training activities and information sharing sessions. This year, each team was asked to present – in their own way – what their part of the service did. Each presentation was very different and provided a fun yet informative look

at what the service delivers. Louise Dance, from the Client Team, attended all day one and most of day two in support of the service. She was impressed by the level of work and effort which the teams had made in preparing for the days. Her level of understanding of the work undertaken within Customer Contact was vastly increased by attending the sessions and Louise is now working with the rest of the Client Team and the Leads on further interaction with Managers and their services.

Service Delivery

- 1.6 SWOne Contact Centre's technology development programme continues. They will shortly be in a position to finalise the system which will then be procured to improve resilience. SWOne is also investing in a new e-learning programme to build on the staff development programme. This will be installed by the end of July 2012. It will then be possible to begin building bespoke programmes for SAP CRM and other systems the Contact Centre uses. This will enable the team to train in a new and innovative way.

Statistical Information – April & May 2012:

Service Line	Reporting Authority	KPI No	Performance Measure	Frequency of Reporting	2012/2013 Target	Apr-12	May-12
Customer Contact	TDBC	1	% of calls answered in 20 secs	Monthly	80%	80.28%	82.90%
Customer Contact	TDBC	2	% of calls resolved at first point of contact	Monthly	91%	97.67%	93.59%
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%	3.84%	3.94%

- 1.7 During April and May, a total of 6,918 enquiries were dealt with at The Deane House Main, Housing and Planning Receptions. During this period, 4,064 people visited Wellington Community Office – 2,387 to make enquiries including TIC and 1,677 to make a payment through the kiosk. Staff also dealt with 655 letter and email enquiries during this time.
- 1.8 There were no complaints about the service.

2. Corporate and Client Services

Staff

- 2.1 On 1 June 2012, changes were made to the team as part of the Theme reshuffle. These changes involved the Corporate Performance function (and Dan Webb) moving to the Strategy Team, and the Civil Contingencies and Parking Functions (and John Lewis) moving into the team. The team name has changed to 'Corporate and Client Services' to reflect these changes.
- 2.2 Also on 1 June, Ian Bowman replaced Fiona Capstick as Chief Executive of SWOne. Ian has a background in contract/partnership management. Members of the team have been meeting with Ian in conjunction with the other SWOne partners to bring him up to speed regarding SW One and to agree priorities for the future. Taunton Deane Members will have the opportunity to meet with Ian in July, when he will attend the Corporate Scrutiny Committee to co-present the regular Southwest One update report.

Civil Contingencies

- 2.3 There are no issues to report. The Civil Contingencies Officer was heavily involved in the preparations for the Olympic Torch event, which ran smoothly.

Client Team

- 2.4 The majority of the Service Development Plans (SDP's) and Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) have been signed-off and agreed with SWOne. The Client Team are closely monitoring progress against these KPI's and SDP's for the SWOne services in relation to the new financial year.
- 2.5 In general, services within SWOne continue to function well. However, the Client Team are continuing to work with SWOne to progress service improvements in the ICT and Finance services. They will shortly be implementing an 'ICT Forum'. Senior managers from both Taunton Deane and the Southwest One ICT Service will attend, with a view to developing a robust ICT Strategy for the Council.
- 2.6 The Client Team are continuing to monitor the impact that the changes Somerset County Council has made to their SWOne services are having upon service delivery to Taunton Deane. To date, any impact has been minimal and service delivery to the Council appears unaffected.
- 2.7 The team continue to work closely with Tone Leisure to monitor service delivery and to progress individual issues. The construction of the High Ropes activity is now completed and will be formally opened on 13 July 2012 by the Mayor. They also continue to work closely with the Strategy Team in relation to the Swimming Pool project.

Parking

- 2.8 The new Civil Parking Enforcement Partnership successfully went live on 11 June 2012. Our enforcement staff transferred under TUPE to the new contractor on that date. To date, this transfer has gone smoothly and, whilst there have been minor teething problems, solutions have been quickly identified and implemented. The key challenge now is to implement mechanisms to ensure the effective contract management (clienting) of the new partnership, together with the delivery of the parking functions the Council has retained.

Private Sector Housing Partnership

- 2.9 From April 2012, the Corporate and Client Services Team took over responsibility from the Strategy Team for client monitoring of the Private Sector Housing Partnership (PSHP). The focus since April has been on understanding what the PSHP does and on building relationships with the Partnership Manager. This exercise is progressing well and there are no significant issues to report.

Procurement

- 2.10 The shortfall in delivered savings through the Procurement Transformation Project remains a significant concern and issue for the Authority. However, the Client Team are monitoring the position closely and ensuring that regular reports are being made to Members by the Strategic Procurement Service (SPS). Progress is, however, being made.

Retained Finance & Corporate Insurance

- 2.11 The Retained Finance Officer continues to focus on maintaining day-to-day delivery of the retained finance functions and in providing support to the S151 Officer.
- 2.12 The insurance function is currently being provided for Taunton Deane by Somerset County Council's Insurance Team, as our Insurance Officer is on maternity leave. This arrangement continues to work well.
- 2.13 The Strategic Finance Officer has been involved with the review of the Annual Governance Statement that has been approved by the Corporate Governance Committee and will be included in Taunton Deane's accounts for 2011/2012. She has also updated the SAP controls report. Work has started on the new Financial Procedure Rules.

Retained HR

- 2.14 Recently, a revised lease car and car allowance policy has been issued for consultation with staff and UNISON. A report will be taken to Corporate Scrutiny on 19 July 2012.
- 2.15 The proposals for the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) 2014 have been issued. These are being considered and communicated to staff
- 2.16 The assessment and evaluation of the Employee Assistance Programme tenders is being completed. Discussions are taking place with Southwest One HR on the development of a Wellbeing and Sickness Action Plan
- 2.17 The Retained HR Officers continues to provide support to the Client Team in monitoring the SWOne contract.

SAP Re-launch and Patching

- 2.18 The key elements of the system have been launched and are working.
- 2.19 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: these are currently with SWOne 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.
- 2.20 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 SWOne 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 the Council reviews its overtime policy as part of the budget savings project, as our rules will need to be programmed into SAP.

Corporate Projects

The Deane House Project

- 2.21 Responsibility for Project sponsorship and management for the The Deane House Project rests within the team. Currently, they are in the process of identifying the viability of accommodating the Police within The Deane House. A Business Case is being developed which will be brought to Members later in the summer.

Halcon Project

- 2.22 The team continues to provide project management support for the Halcon Project.

Welfare Benefits

- 2.23 The team continues to project manage, from the Authority's perspective, the implementation of the changes required as a result of the forthcoming reforms to the Welfare Benefits system. Initially, this will involve the replacement in 2013 of the existing Council Tax Benefit scheme with a new Council Tax Support scheme. The project is progressing well and regular updates are made to the Members Change Steering Group.

Corporate Performance

Staff

- 2.24 The Corporate Performance function has now moved within Theme 1 from the Performance and Client Team to the Strategy Team (now called 'Strategy and Performance').

3. Corporate Performance

- 3.1 The Quarter 4 corporate performance report has recently been through the Corporate Scrutiny and Executive cycle. Quarter 1 (April – June) will be reported in August – September 2012.

Corporate Governance

- 3.2 The Corporate Governance Action Plan was reported to the Corporate Governance Committee on 25 June 2012. This report provided an update on the progress of the improvement actions recommended by the Audit Commission last year.

Service Planning

- 3.3 Taunton Deane's approach to service planning has been the subject of a recent audit review. The auditor offered '*Reasonable Assurance*' with no major issues identified. 2012/2013 Service Plans will be monitored by Theme Managers and by CMT at quarterly performance review meetings. Theme/Service performance scorecards are being developed to support this monitoring and review process.

Growth Strategic Delivery Plan

- 3.4 The Corporate Performance Lead has been working with the Strategic Director (Growth) and new 'Economic Development and Regeneration' Team (including Project Taunton) to develop a new Growth Strategic Delivery Plan. He will provide support with Performance, Risk and Project Management

Corporate Change Programme

- 3.5 The Council's Corporate Change Programme is to be overseen by the Strategy and Performance team. Formal Change Programme management will commence in September 2012, reporting to a new 'Results Management Team' on a monthly basis.

4. Legal and Democratic Services

Corporate Support Unit

- 4.1 Unfortunately, Beckie Staddon decided after a couple of days that her new job with the Corporate Support Unit was not for her, so she handed in her notice. The process of recruiting is now underway and interviews are scheduled to take place during the week commencing 23 July 2012.
- 4.2 The team have now moved offices and are settled in the Directors suite. Walls have come down and new offices created to optimise the space.

Land Charges

- 4.3 The input of historical data is now almost completed, with only three more files to be put onto the system.
- 4.4 The Monitoring Officer has had a conversation with SWOne regarding the implementation of the Public Access Module. A schedule is currently being drawn up detailing what initially needs to be done with timescales attached. Once that is completed, the service will be reviewed to ascertain what the impacts of the module will be and future needs.
- 4.5 Members will recall that it was reported in November 2011 that there had been several claims made against this Authority to re-pay the search fees of personal search agents. On the advice of our legal representatives, the Council entered into standstill agreements with the claimants. This meant that all claims could eventually be dealt with simultaneously. Taunton Deane has paid into a fighting fund through the LGA and is being represented by Bevan Brittan.
- 4.6 Negotiations between the LGA and the Government are continuing. A further case management conference is scheduled for October 2012.

Legal Services Shared Services Report

- 4.7 An initial report has been prepared by the Legal Service Managers for the individual Authorities. All have agreed that each work stream will be sponsored by a Monitoring Officer, who will be responsible for pulling the work together.

- 4.8 A slight delay has occurred in this work due to the implementation of the new Standards regime; but it will be re-starting this month following Full Council approval by the participating Authorities.

Localism Act

- 4.9 As Members will be aware, regulations have now been issued regarding Disclosable Pecuniary Interests. A report went to the Corporate Governance Committee on 25 June 2012, with decisions needing to be made at Full Council on 17 July relating to changes in the Standards regime. The very short time-scales, and paucity of Government guidance, have resulted in a heavy workload for the Monitoring Officer in order to get the relevant parts of the legislation in place by the deadline date. The impact of these changes will be kept under review by the Monitoring Officer.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Governance

- 4.10 The Monitoring Officer will be working with Tim Burton to set up a Governance Board. The purpose of the Board will be to decide how the CIL monies will be spent and to ensure that governance arrangements are in place to reduce the risk of challenge.
- 4.11 In addition, an increase in Section 106 Agreements is expected between January and March of next year. It will, therefore, be necessary to recruit a locum in order to assist with this, as that capacity does not currently exist in-house. The funding for this temporary post can be allocated from future CIL payments.

5. Revenues and Benefits

Council Tax and Business Rates

- 5.1 During 2011/2012, the team collected 98.34% of Council Tax due for 2011/2012, the best in-year collection performance to date. Collection does not stop at the end of the financial year, but continues for as long as it is cost-effective. By 31 March 2012, staff had collected 99.42% of the Council Tax payable from 1 April 1993 up to 31 March 2011. The service achieved similar success in Business Rates collection, recovering 99.22% of the amount due for 2011/12. This compares with the previous best in-year performance of 99.01% in 2010/2011.

Customer Forum

- 5.2 In continuing their work to improve services based on customer needs, the next Customer Forum will be at The Deane House on 10 July 2012. Feedback from the "Letter Improvement Project" has been very positive and we are grateful to those members of the public who gave up their time

to help us. Customer satisfaction surveys are now underway and the results will be reported to Members in the future.

Staff

- 5.3 The Revenues and Benefits Service has submitted bids for the Institute of Rating, Revenues & Valuation (IRRV) Annual Team Awards. We are awaiting news as to whether they have been shortlisted.

Council Tax Support Scheme

- 5.4 Work on the localised Council Tax Support Scheme, to be implemented in April 2013, continues. A report will be going to Corporate Scrutiny on 19 July 2012 detailing this scheme and recommending the basic principles of the scheme for public consultation. Members will NOT be asked to approve or adopt the scheme in July – this is purely the transition for consultation.

Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams

Council Meeting – 17 July 2012

Report of Councillor Mark Edwards - Planning, Transportation and Communications

1. Core Strategy

- 1.1 The Inspector has concluded that the plan is sound and can be adopted subject to the minor modifications advertised by the Council between March and June of this year.
- 1.2 We are all in receipt of the final report and this allows for the Council's Community Scrutiny Committee to consider an item on adoption of the Plan on 23 July 2012. Beyond this, the plan will then need to go to Executive and Full Council prior to adoption.
- 1.3 I wish to thank everyone involved in the Core Strategy for their hard work not only where there minimal changes to the final draft we are also one of the first authorities in the Country that will have an adopted Core Strategy which is in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

2. Planning Policy and Strategy Resource

- 2.1 Following the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework in March 2012 the Government formalised its intention to replace the suite of Development Plans, known as the 'Local Development Framework' (LDF) with a single 'Local Plan'.
- 2.2 The Council's current Local Development Scheme indicates that a 'Site Allocation and Development Management' Development Plan Document will be produced after completion of the Core Strategy. Commencement of this Plan was programmed to commence during summer 2012 with adoption around spring 2014.
- 2.3 It is unlikely that the Core Strategy would require a review so soon after adoption and therefore this Plan could be simply 'rolled-up' into a future 'Local Plan' incorporating further (smaller) site allocations in Taunton and Wellington as well as in smaller rural centre's across Taunton Deane (including those for gypsies and travellers). It will also include development management policies as well as a review (where necessary) of the Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP).
- 2.4 The adoption of the Core Strategy therefore certainly does not mean any reduction in the workload of the Planning Policy Team. The recent National Planning Policy Framework reinforces the need to get plans in place quickly and in the absence of the above work being undertaken speedily, would significantly increase the risk of developments that the

Council would not wish to see come forward being allowed on appeal.

- 2.5 In addition the Council will need to progress work on master planning of urban extensions at Monkton Heathfield, Comeytrove and Staplegrove, implement the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and provide necessary support to the Neighbourhood Planning process.
- 2.6 In recognition of this increased planning policy workload, short term opportunities to supplement resource in this area are currently being explored, whilst a more thorough review will take place to ensure that we have adequate capacity to deliver the Local Development Scheme on time. This will be informed by the outcome of the review of the Council's Corporate Business Plan.

3. Neighbourhood Planning

- 3.1 The first Neighbourhood Plan Forum met in June to discuss the way forward for the three initial areas, which had been awarded front-runner status.
- 3.2 In the next couple of weeks we will have a page on the Council's website on Neighbourhood Planning. There will be some information on what is a Neighbourhood Plan and the current areas producing Neighbourhood Plans. The web page will host the maps and letters submitted to the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) as well as items for consultation as required. It will also contain links to the regulations, legislation, guides and advice by bodies such as the RTPI, Planning Aid and CPRE.
- 3.3 Recognition of Front Runners - The Taunton Deane Borough Council Local Development Framework (LDF) Steering Group has formally recognised and approved your Neighbourhood Planning groups.
- 3.4 New Proposed Neighbourhood Plans - We have also received confirmation from Stoke St Gregory Parish Council and Milverton Parish Council that they are going to produce Neighbourhood Plans. They will be writing to us to formally asking the Council to recognise and approve their request to produce Neighbourhood Plans, which we will publicise and put on the new Neighbourhood Plan page of our web site when it is active. They will also be invited to join the Neighbourhood Plan Forum so that they can learn and understand from the plans that have already started.

4. Community Infrastructure Levy

- 4.1 Consultation commenced on the CIL Draft Preliminary Charging Schedule on 29th June 2012. This consultation runs for four weeks and invites comments on the validity of the approach taken to CIL and the

proposed charges set out.

- 4.2 The CIL charges are based upon extensive viability testing (for which a separate report is available on our website).

5. Planning Reforms

- 5.1 Whilst this report was being prepared further details were emerging from DCLG with regard to some further changes to the planning system to make it more streamlined and effective. I have listed a few of the points being raised and more detail will be circulated as it becomes available.
- 5.2 There are proposals to make it easier to reuse agricultural buildings, retail and commercial units and offices and warehouses without the need for planning applications to support business growth this will be subject to a consultation shortly.
- 5.3 There are proposals to cut out unnecessary information in the planning application process to speed it up again a consultation will be taking place.
- 5.4 Supporting Planning guidance will also be reviewed to reflect the NPPF.
- 5.5. Planning fees will be up rated to more fairly reflect their cost and reduce the burden on the ordinary council taxpayer. This being an issue that I have already assessed is necessary for us to deliver the growth required in Taunton Deane and will need to progress as soon as we are able to.

6. Planning Applications

- 6.1 The first six months of 2012 have seen a significant rise in the number of planning applications being submitted. So far, almost 700 applications have been registered this year whereas it was 600 for the previous year. We have also noticed a corresponding increase in the number of customer interactions and comments received on those applications.
- 6.2 There are a number of controversial applications, which are generating a significant amount of representations received including a request to vary a Section 52 Agreement at Creedwell Orchard, as well as the application for residential development at Killams.
- 6.3 The Public Inquiry against the refusal of planning permission for Fox's Meadow at Milverton Road, Wellington is due to commence on 19 July 2012 and is expected to last eight days. Another appeal has been received against the refusal of planning permission for residential development at Maidenbrook has recently been received and this will

be the third time that the site has gone to appeal. The Public Inquiry is likely to take place in October this year

7. Heritage

- 7.1 Tone Works - planning applications and related listed building applications, have been approved, which will see the redevelopment of the Grease Works for low cost housing. The latter is conditional on a dowry being transferred to ensure the appropriate repairs to building envelopes, to the Grade 2 * listed buildings north of the River Tone and facilitate the remodeling of the Dye Works, to provide a much needed weaving operation for Fox Brothers.
- 7.2 Sandhill Park - the temporary roof is now in place following the extensive fire. Detailed discussions with regards its repair, conversion and a revised enabling development to the north, have been continuing and new applications are expected to be submitted, as indeed was the case immediately before the fire! Clearly the fire has meant that certain aspects have needed to be revisited and the housing market has changed since the earlier approved scheme for the enabling aspect of the proposals.

8. Parking County-wide Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) Project

- 8.1 On Monday, 11 June 2012 the Somerset County-wide Civil Parking Enforcement Project finally became a reality after several years planning between the County Council and the five Districts.
- 8.2 This means responsibility for all matters relating to on-street parking (residents' parking schemes, charged bays, yellow lines etc) moves across to the Highway Management Team at County Hall. Following a recruitment process they have appointed Jon Pallett as County Parking Manager and Heide Gill as his Administrative Assistant. I am sure all Councillors wish them well as they take all their experiences forward for the benefit of the rest of the county area.
- 8.3 The County Council has appointed NSL Services as its enforcement and notice-processing contractor. All our Civil Enforcement Officers and Seniors are TUPEing across to NSL. Most of you will have seen the brand new maroon uniforms instead of the familiar green. They have had a high profile presence on the streets and in the car parks over the last twelve years, attracting the best and worst of reactions from the motoring public. They have shown however that proper parking enforcement leads to good traffic management. I am personally proud of what they have achieved and am confident service levels will continue.
- 8.4 Taunton Deane still owns and is responsible for its car parks, including strategy and setting charges. We still get the money, from both

machines and penalties. We pay the County Council (not NSL) for the enforcement and follow-up activities.

- 8.5 John Lewis has moved to the slightly different role of being the Client Officer for the County Council contract, and has joined the Corporate Client Team under Richard Sealy so you still contact John Lewis with regards any issues relating to the Car Parks.

9. Communications

- 9.1 The Olympic Torch Relay dominated communications activities throughout May, before, during and after the event.
- 9.2 Numerous press releases were issued in the run-up to the Relay and we were able to work closely with the Somerset County Gazette and BBC Somerset to get the messages across, particularly in the week before the Relay arrived.
- 9.3 An advance briefing was held for the media on the Saturday before the Torch arrived, hosted by the Council and organised by LOCOG – the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games.
- 9.4 On the day the event was extensively covered by local, regional and national media – and, due to the arrival of our celebrity Torchbearer, by the international media. Coverage was universally positive with some great pictures appearing online, on air and in print.
- 9.5 Following the event, Taunton Deane was asked to attend a communications summit in London, organised by the Department for Transport, to share what we had learned from our experiences. This led to follow-up contact from other local authorities hosting the Torch in June and July.
- 9.6 Other communications activities have involved working with the Friends of Longrun Meadow to promote their hard work, with Project Taunton on regeneration news including new signage for Taunton and the completion of the Viridor building at Firepool.
- 9.7 I wish to formally thank everyone involved in the Olympic Torch from officers, elected Members and the many and varied organisations large and small that played their part. It was a truly wonderful event, one to remember. It is very difficult to name everyone that I would like to thank but I do feel I should certainly mention David Evans whose vision I shared as soon as the opportunity arose and whose enthusiasm and motivation inspired so many to be involved from within our own organisation. I would therefore like to formally pass my thanks to David for his efforts.

And for those that ask why Will.i.am in Taunton, I say why not, it certainly added an extra dimension to the most wonderful day and the international publicity that Taunton has gained has been beyond

anything we could ever have imagined. I am personally looking forward to his next visit!

Councillor Mark Edwards

Council Meeting - 17 July 2012

Report of Councillor Jane Warmington - Community Leadership

1. Police and Crime Panel (PCP)

- 1.1 In brief, the PCPs are being set up alongside the new Police Commissioners in each of the police forces across the country. Their purpose is to hold the Commissioner to account on behalf of the public and act as a monitor. Voting for Police Commissioners is taking place on 15 November 2012.
- 1.2 The interim PCP has its inaugural meeting later this month. It has been agreed that the unitary authorities should have two representatives each and the districts and the county one each, plus two independent members, totalling sixteen (with an upper limit of twenty).
- 1.3 The Leader's Report goes into the above in more detail.

2. Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Panel

- 2.1 The first meeting of the Grants Panel is on Wednesday 18 July 2012 and is made up of both members and supporting officers -three Portfolio Holders (Community Leadership, Economic Development and Housing), two shadow Portfolio Holders and one Labour/Independent.
- 2.2 Councillors Jean Adkins, Norman Cavill, Richard Lees, Libby Lisgo, Fran Smith and Jane Warmington with Debbie Arscott, Steve Boland, Martha Prangnell, Lisa Redston and Dan Webb.
- 2.3 It is envisaged the Grants Panel may need to meet several times early on to establish how it operates before settling into a pattern.

3. Health and Wellbeing

- 3.1 The draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy has been agreed and will be out to consultation shortly. Its three priorities are:-
 - Create an environment that supports people to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing;
 - Families and communities are resilient; and
 - Somerset people are able to live independently for as long as possible.
- 3.2 The intention is for local district areas to agree their health and wellbeing focus for the year using the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) agreed between partners and local providers.
- 3.3 It is sensible that this is managed through the Taunton Deane Partnership as many of the issues align well with the Priority Areas Strategy and Troubled/ Vulnerable Families workstream.

4. The Community Right to Challenge (Localism Act 2011)

- 4.1 The Community Right to Challenge (CRTC) came into effect on 27 June 2012 and is contained

within part 5 of the Localism Act (Nov 2011) – Community Empowerment.

- 4.2 The CRTC is intended to allow communities to take over or help provide local services they believe they can run differently and better. It places on local authorities the duty to consider and respond to such 'challenges'. For example this might be the street cleaning/ grass cutting in their parish.
- 4.3 The challenge, to be submitted as a written expression of interest, must come from a 'relevant body' and be for a 'relevant service'.
- 4.4 One concern is that despite the aim being to empower local groups, as it acts as a trigger for an open procurement process, the result may be a national or even international firm taking over services previously supplied by the local authority and of interest to local community groups.
- 4.5 The CRTC does not appear to prevent groups making informal approaches to discuss the option of taking over or helping run local services (as has happened in the past). This would enable a dialogue to identify any areas of mutual benefit without the complex procurement procedure.
- 4.6 The CRTC should perhaps be seen as a last resort and unnecessary where there are good links between the authority and the relevant groups.
- 4.7 The starting point of any discussion should therefore be to establish the reason for the approach; is the community group/ parish concerned keen to take on service delivery and capable of doing so, or is it more simply that they have concerns about the current service, for example the roads are not being swept the day that is most helpful. If the latter, it may be that a review of the service is required.
- 4.8 The stance TDBC has taken is on the website: on the Services tab
<http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/irj/public/services/directory/service?rid=/wpccontent/Sites/TDBC/Web%20Pages/Services/Services/Community%20Right%20to%20Challenge>

5. Priority Areas Strategy (Taunton Deane Partnership)

- 5.1 This Strategy is the action plan and is the culmination of a thorough consultation and appraisal involving the communities concerned and all partners organisations. It covers the next five years and demonstrates the Taunton Deane Partnership's ongoing commitment to tackling some tough entrenched problems.
- 5.2 It is a multi-agency approach that seeks to tackle pockets of deprivation which exist in parts of the Borough by working together, sharing information and resources.
- 5.3 Prioritising what really matters to the community, avoiding waste and duplication and focusing on those things that will bring about lasting change. The Strategy is very much intended to be a 'living document' and it will be refreshed periodically by the Partnership. It is anticipated that new projects and work streams will be added regularly and partners will have the ongoing opportunity to put forward projects that they would like included.
- 5.4 Financial pressures on both public and voluntary sector organisations, with forced budget cuts mean significant changes to the services they deliver. Many of the most vulnerable residents already face the challenge of unemployment and changes to their benefits entitlement.

- 5.5 These challenges make the need for a co-ordinated and joined up approach all the more important and the work of the Priority Areas Strategy very timely.
- 5.6 The Strategy is deliberately short and to the point. I commend it to Members.
- 5.7 Village Agents Project
- 5.7.1 Recently appointed Village Agents offer a signposting service to support people living in rural areas across Somerset to bridge the gap between the local community and the statutory or voluntary organisations which offer help or support. Two agents were appointed in Taunton Deane at the end of June (covering a cluster of villages around Creech St Michael and Stoke St Gregory) www.somersettrcc.org.uk. Lead - Katherine Armstrong, Community Council for Somerset.
- 5.8 Community Clean Up Days
- 5.8.1 These improve the look of the local area by getting volunteers to clear public spaces. Residents are also given the opportunity to clear rubbish out of their homes and gardens.
- 5.8.2 These are underway again with a core team of volunteers from Halcon with support from Deane DLO (local PCSOs and other occasional volunteers may also be involved).
- 5.8.3 There is a programme of eight visits over the summer and so far four have taken place filling eight enormous skips (Robin Close and Smithy in Bishops Hull, Howard Road in Wellington and Outer Circle in Taunton).
- 5.8.4 The next visits are to Greenway in Bishops Lydeard, Wyndhams in Wiveliscombe, Beadon, Valley and Moorland Roads in Taunton and Creedwell Orchard in Milverton.
- 5.8.5 With good local support, the enthusiasm and determination of the volunteers and help from the DLO, these days make a big impact on the communities they visit.
- 5.9 Halcon Breakfast
- 5.9.1 Supporting the community to organise and run holiday breakfast clubs where vulnerable families are given the chance to have a healthy breakfast and encouraged to read, play games and take part in quizzes.
- 5.9.2 This starts on 23 July 2012 and is every Monday and Friday throughout the school holidays at Crossway Centre, Halcon from 10.30 am until 12.00 noon.
- 5.10 Community Activity Days
- 5.10.1 These very successful days organised out of the Link and Priorswood Community Centres are continuing this summer and encourage the community to organise and take part in local activities once a week during the school holidays.
- 5.10.2 Families come together, socialise and learn new skills. Residents will be asked to take on increased responsibility for organising these and to learn new skills in the process.
- 5.10.3 Activity days in Halcon are on a Thursday and in Priorswood on a Tuesday and usually run

from 10.30 am until around 3 pm.

Councillor Jane Warmington

Council Meeting - 17 July 2012

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

1. Keeping Members informed

1.1 The Torch Relay on 21 and 22 May 2012 was a major event and dominated the Economic Development Team's work for the 6 months preceding it. In spite of this Economic Development services were available and support was given to external parties when requested. We were unable to progress any new projects and services during this time.

1.2 Review of the Economic Development service

1.2.1 In April the team joined with Project Taunton staff to form the new Economic Development and Regeneration Team. This new team will coordinate the services available to businesses and, notably, design a better inward investment service with coordinated marketing and fulfilment elements.

1.2.2 One of the new team's first jobs has been to produce an Operational Plan for the service, led by Joy Wishlade. The future themes for Economic Development are likely to be the following:-

- I. Stimulating Business Growth and Investment;
- II. Ensuring a Skilled and Entrepreneurial workforce;
- III. Marketing the Borough to investors and visitors; and
- IV. Creating an attractive business environment.

1.3 Taunton Deane Economy Bulletin

1.3.1 The next Quarterly Economic Bulletin will be available at the end of July, when it will be circulated to all Members and business contacts and put on the Taunton Deane website. Any feedback from Members on the usefulness of the Bulletin is welcome.

1.3.2 The latest quarterly Job Seeker Allowance (JSA) figures will also be available at the end of July and circulated to Members, giving details of changes to claimant rates locally. The number of people claiming Jobseekers Allowance reduced in May but was up on the same period last year. The numbers of people claiming long term has noticeably increased from 2011.

1.4 Staffing Issues

1.4.1 The new team is currently recruiting for an Administration and Marketing

Apprentice to supply essential project and admin support. The person will be recruited through Somerset College.

2. Theme 1 Stimulating Business Growth and Investment

2.1 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 three months and currently being supported include:-

- EDF Energy
- Potential EDF supplier
- ARC Airstreams
- Mundy Veneer
- APR Design
- Rumwell Hall
- Paywood Lodges (Stapley)
- BT Openreach
- Lloyds TSB
- Debenhams
- MIND
- Stoke St Gregory Store

2.2 Business Events

Olympic Torch Relay

One of the primary justifications for supporting the Taunton stage of the Torch Relay was to attract visitors to the town and to encourage them to spend in town centre businesses. It is estimated that the event attracted around 30,000 visitors. Based on a spend per head of £20 (which is the rate accepted by other visitor destinations), the event would have stimulated expenditure in the region of £600,000.

The event also gave excellent profile for the Council, and during the year preceding the day itself presentations were delivered to hundreds of local businesses to inform them about the day and to give them advance notice of the disruption that they would likely incur.

Olympic Torch Relay Business Breakfast

The final act of the Taunton stage of the Olympic Torch Relay on the morning of Tuesday, 22 May 2012 was a business Breakfast at the County Ground,

delivered by the Economic Development team and funded in partnership with Lloyds TSB. The Olympic Sprinter, Jason Gardener MBE was the guest speaker and he provided an inspiring, motivational talk on what it takes to be a winner. 90 local businesses attended the event, which was an excellent networking opportunity and very positive feedback was received.

South Korean Ambassador Visit

A business event was held at Hestercombe House on 21 May 2012 at which the South Korean Ambassador was welcomed alongside 13 Taunton Deane business leaders and Korean students from Taunton School. The visit by the Ambassador was hosted by Jeremy Browne MP. The meeting was an opportunity to promote and consider investment opportunities for Korean businesses in Taunton Deane.

Business Start Up Events

The Economic Development Team supported events organised by the Somerset Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses aimed at assisting people intending to start their own business. The FSB event at Somerset College, called "Dare to Dream", was particularly successful, attracting around 45 pre-start ups. The Council took a stand at both events to highlight the support available from across the Council to new businesses.

2.3 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. Funding of £4000 has been given to Stoke St Gregory Stores which enhances our Business Grant of £2000. Through discussions with the LARC Managers none of the applications really impact on the Taunton Deane area too much.

2.4 Small Business Grant

Five applications were received asking for funding in 2012/2013, three of which are now being offered Business Grants.

2.5 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. A BIS panel meeting has recently been attended by 15 young people who all presented their business ideas. Members will recall that last year the initiative gave Taunton the accolade of being the Regional Winner of the UK Enterprising Town Competition.

3. Theme 3 Creating an Attractive Business Environment

3.1 Taunton Town Centre Company and BID Programme

The proposal for a second BID term, commencing at the end of the current term in September 2012, was rejected by businesses in the town centre at the end of March. Although 52% of business voted 'yes' they represented only 45% of the rateable value of all votes cast, so the proposal was unsuccessful.

Since the result of the ballot the Town Centre Company, which proposed the BID, has met with Lead Members and officers within the Council to agree a way forward. Extensive discussions have also been held with other organisations to identify the causes of the failure.

The Town Centre Company agreed at its meeting in June that it would work towards drafting a new BID proposal, although it did not put a specific timescale on that exercise. In all likelihood, however, the BID will be held in 2013. In the meanwhile the company will consult with businesses over the contents of the BID proposal.

3.2 Floodlighting

The Executive resolved in October 2011 to transfer floodlighting on third party properties to the property owners, with certain exceptions. Those owners have been written to, to assume ownership of the installations from 1 August 2012.

3.3 Portas Pilot bids

Bids were submitted at the end of March to the new Mary Portas Pilot Programme for Taunton and Wellington. Both were, however, unsuccessful but will be resubmitted in the second round. The first Taunton bid focused on the High Street, looking to increase year round activities and to encourage footfall all the way along the street. For the second round submission the bid will be extended to include the whole of the town centre.

The Wellington bid focuses on the opportunity to regenerate the Corn Hill and to reassert Wellington as a Food Town.

3.4 Marketing Taunton Deane to Investors

The Economic Development and Regeneration team is working with Fresh PR to design a new marketing programme for Taunton Deane to provide investment information to inward investors, existing businesses and new start ups. The programme will include a new website, PR material and an improved protocol for dealing with investment enquiries.

The new marketing programme will be launched over the Summer.

3.5 Town Centre signage

Installation of the new direction signs and tablets around the town is ongoing. The installation of the Castle Green signs will be take place nearer completion.

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

4.1 Visitor numbers and spend

4.1.1 The TIC played a key role in the visit of the Torch to Taunton acting as its public face and as a result was very busy during May dealing with over 2500 enquiries just on this topic alone.

4.1.2 Since the Torch, the TIC has had a successful Diamond Jubilee weekend and despite the current five week closure of the Library (for the installation of self-service technology) has kept busy dealing with tourists and Library customers.

4.1.3 Income wise, the poor weather has had a knock on to sales with a decrease in travel bookings especially day excursion trips.

4.2 Promotional activities.

4.2.1 The TIC took their services to the Town Centre on Torch Relay Day promoting the office and the town.

4.2.2 TIC staff will be promoting the Deane with other Somerset tourism partners at the Weymouth Bayside Festival during the Olympics in late July and early August.

4.3 Visit England Mystery Shopper results.

4.3.1 The TIC had its annual mystery shopper visit in March receiving a 96.77% score placing the centre within the top 10 TIC's in England.

4.3.2 This score would have been further improved with the presence of the new signage that is now installed around the town. The feedback form commented that "the staff were polite and efficient. There are genuinely no recommendations that I can make as I felt that my inquiry was dealt with effectively. The centre was welcoming, clean, tidy and staff were friendly."

4.4 New activities planned

4.4.1 The Tourist Information Lead is working with the team in the creation of a new Marketing Strategy for the Economic Development and Regeneration Unit.

- 4.4.2 A work placement student is joining the TIC for a week in July from Kingsmead Community School, Wiveliscombe to see how the centre operates.
- 4.4.3 The TIC Team continues to work closely with the Economic Development Unit, Licensing Section, Project Taunton, Somerset Tourism Association, Taunton Town Centre Company and other organisations to raise the profile of Taunton Deane.

5. Asset Management

- 5.1 The search continues for an appropriate site that would be of benefit to Deane DLO in relocation. A number have been considered, and more remain to be evaluated.
- 5.2 With the benefit of an Asset Management client representative in Taunton Deane, working with Southwest One is much more satisfactory, ensuring that our properties are actively managed, and assisting in co-ordinating and managing our Asset Plan.
- 5.3 The Asset Management Plan is being reviewed to see that it is fit for purpose.

Councillor Norman Cavill

Council Meeting – 17 July 2012

Report of Councillor Ken Hayward – Environmental Services

1. Environmental Health (EH)

Staffing

- 1.1 Catrin Brown has now returned to the EH Team following her excellent work with Economic Development as the Olympic Torch Event Safety Manager.
- 1.2 Interviews will be held on 12-13 July following the departure in 2011/2012 of four members of the team.
- 1.3 We have a vacancy for a District Environmental Health Officer for the Food, Health and Safety Team, and one for an Environmental Control Officer within the Environmental Protection Team. We have received 13 applicants for the District EHO job and 10 for the ECO. These have been whittled down and we will be interviewing six shortlisted candidates.
- 1.4 Scott Weetch has settled well into his new role. He tells me that he feels that the Management Team is coming together and that he has been able to have useful discussions on a number of issues. There is openness and honesty within the team and he is trying to ensure that the whole team benefits from this.

Policies

- 1.5 These are all being reviewed and updated. In a heavily legislated service, it is appropriate that we review, amend or archive accordingly. There are 56 policies, so this is somewhat time consuming.

Dog warden

- 1.6 The Council has a dog warden service which it contracts out in two parts; one for patrols, enforcement and collection of strays and one for kennelling. The larger contract is now ten years old and needs review and refresh. It is appropriate therefore to review the entire service, particularly in light of other marked changes within Environmental Health in recent times.
- 1.7 Following consultation with myself, Scott is looking at re-procurement of the service, and comparing that to the option of bringing it back in house so that the Council may understand which option provides the best package and at what cost.
- 1.8 We have sent out the invitation to tender and await results. Scott suspects that we will get limited responses. If that is the case, we need to look further about bringing this in house.

Prosecution for Health and Safety Offence

- 1.9 The case against Maliha was heard in Magistrates Court on 16 May 2012 for contravention of a health and safety prohibition notice relating to gas safety. The owner made a late guilty plea for the offence and was given a conditional discharge for 6 months and a contribution to costs of £1000.

Prosecution for Noise Nuisance Offence

- 1.10 The case against the occupier was heard on 29 June 2012 who pleaded guilty to two charges of non-compliance with a Noise Abatement Notice where noise from music was causing a nuisance to neighbours. The occupier was fined £250 for each offence, with costs of £450 and victim surcharge of £15 totalling £965.

Cautions

- 1.11 The Green Dragon Public House has accepted two Simple Cautions in May 2012 for food hygiene offences following inspections in 2011.

Public Health Funerals

- 1.12 The team has been dealing with a number of public health funerals over the past few weeks that have been very resource intensive.

Gulls

- 1.13 The Gull control programme has again been successful this year in the BID area of Taunton with 121 eggs removed over four planned visits.

Food Hygiene and Health and Safety Inspections

- 1.14 Despite greatly reduced staff numbers in EH, the team is still progressing through last financial year's food hygiene inspections and prioritising those with poor performing history.
- 1.15 Following recent HSE guidance about inspecting only the highest risk premises for health and safety of which Taunton only has a handful; the team will be developing project work based on types of premises that may pose a risk to health and safety. These may include premises where there is a national priority for asbestos, visitor attractions and beauty treatments but also local business of concern such as residential spa's with associated risk of legionella, tattooists and other invasive treatments.

Events

- 1.16 The team have been working with Licensing, organisers and local residents on a number of events in Taunton Deane including Cosmo, Strummer of Love, Buddhafield, One Big Weekend, on matters of health and safety, food safety and noise.

2. Climate Change / Carbon Management

Solar PV installation on Taunton Pool completed

- 2.1 An array of 146 solar PV (photovoltaic) panels, commissioned by Taunton Deane Borough Council, is now in place and already producing some 90kWh

each day for the pool's use – the average household consumers about 9kWh per day.

- 2.2 The array, fitted by Earth Elements Limited from Barnstaple who won the tender, cost around £70,000 and is funded from the Council's Climate Change budget. Taunton Deane will receive the Feed-in-Tariff (FIT) subsidy from Government plus an income from selling all electricity generated on to Tone Leisure at a discounted rate. Both elements could create an income of up to £10,000 per year over the 25 year lifetime of the array.
- 2.3 A large LCD visual display will be installed in the Pool's reception area to tell visitors about the solar panels' performance - the instantaneous electricity generation; the total energy generated since commission; and the total CO saved since commission. The array is anticipated to save about 18 tonnes of CO₂ per year.

Carbon Management and Energy Resilience Plan (CMERP) for 2012/2013 approved

- 2.4 A Plan for reducing carbon emissions from the Council's operations (buildings, equipment and fleet) during 2012/2013 was approved by the Executive on 20 June 2012. The Plan contains 41 actions that if fully implemented would produce carbon savings of around 300 tonnes of CO₂.
- 2.5 I have asked that The Plan be renamed as the Carbon Management and Energy Resilience Plan (CMERP) in order to strengthen the focus on the Council creating its own energy (as well as saving energy) in order to cushion the Authority against continuing increases in national fuel prices of around 10% pa.

Financial savings from reducing carbon emissions (2006/2007 – 2010/2011)

- 2.6 The Council's total energy bill for 2006/2007 was around £658,500. This figure included all of Taunton Deane's buildings (i.e. also The Deane House and leisure sites) and the fleet. Assuming a 10% increase in energy prices per year, this bill would have gone up to around £930,000 in 2010/2011, if the Authority had not done anything to reduce its energy consumption. The actual bill for 2010/2011 was around £810,000. This means that through investing in energy efficiency and changing working practices the Council and Tone Leisure have reduced their annual energy bill by £120,000 (or 15%) already over the past four years.
- 2.7 A breakdown of the bill / savings is Taunton Deane (70%) and Tone (30%). Of the total energy bill of £810,000 in 2010/2011, Tone's bill was £245,000 and the Council's £567,000.
- 2.8 A Monitoring Report with figures showing the carbon and financial savings made during 2011/2012 will be published by the end of July 2012.

Pay-as-you-save (PAYS) schemes for The Deane House and Leisure sites

- 2.9 Two companies did a presentation in April to Taunton Deane, Tone Leisure and Southwest One about potential PAYS schemes for improving the energy efficiency of The Deane House. Following on from this, one company

(Schneider Electric) was asked to produce more detailed proposals for The Deane House and Wellington Sports Centre, in advance of a survey covering all leisure sites.

- 2.10 Pay-As-You-Save generally means that all measures identified by the company would be installed at no upfront cost to the Council. The company pays the upfront cost and then recoups the costs through a rental charge on the equipment and installation costs. After the rental period the Council would own the equipment.
- 2.11 Actions identified in the initial high level report would reduce the energy consumption by 30% at The Deane House and 32% at Wellington Sports Centre, and produce annual energy savings of around £34,000 at The Deane House and nearly £38,000 at Wellington Sports Centre. The rental period would be seven years.
- 2.12 Once the company has surveyed the sites, they produce a business plan. Once the Council enters a contract with them, the savings identified on the business plan are guaranteed. This means that if the measures do not meet the guaranteed saving target, the company is obliged to write a cheque to cover the gap between actual and target consumption.
- 2.13 With the potential for significant savings and following discussion at the recent Carbon Management Steering Group, I have given the go ahead for Schneider Electric to carry out a full survey of the Tone Leisure sites. This will carry a relatively moderate cost of £3,000, which can be met out of the Carbon Management budget.

3. Waste Management

- 3.1 Members will have received a summary of the key issues covered at the Somerset Waste Board Meeting 29 June 2012. Forgive me for repeating this information here, but doing so brings it within the forum of Full Council, thus enabling Members to ask questions of that meeting should they wish so to do.

The headlines were:-

Progress update regarding the VAT issue

- 3.2 At previous Board meetings it has been reported that a ruling by HMRC in relation to the treatment for VAT purposes of the district authorities payments for waste collection was financially detrimental to the districts. As a result the Waste Board and the partner authorities have all written to the Prime Minister, other Ministers and local MP's to seek to have the HMRC's ruling reversed.
- 3.3 The Chairman reported to the meeting that he had a very recently received a letter from the Treasury to confirm that they will make changes to ensure that the districts are not financially penalised as a result of this ruling. This is good news.

Controlled Waste Regulations 2012

Village Halls & Community Centres

- 3.4 A proposal was put to the Board to standardise the practice across the County for the collection of waste from Village Halls/Community Centres and to bring it into line with legislation. This will require each district to either fund the costs of collection from their village halls/community centres or pass the costs on to those village halls/community centres.
- 3.5 The Board agreed to the proposal. We and the other districts will now have to notify the Partnership by 31 August 2012 whether we wish to bear the costs or pass them on.

Residential Homes

- 3.6 At the Board meeting on 30 March 2012 the Board agreed to a policy of charging residential homes for the disposal of household waste unless they are exempt. The Board received a report on the potential impacts of implementing such a policy, which are minimal (this potentially only affects six residential homes in Somerset, all of which are thought to be exempt).
- 3.7 The Board agreed that the policy be implemented.

Business Plan and Service Review Process

- 3.8 The Board was advised that Somerset County Council (SCC) intends to review the waste disposal elements of the Waste Partnership as part of the overall service review process they are currently undertaking.
- 3.9 It was recommended to the Board that the review process should be owned and driven by the Waste Board and that it would make sense to undertake an overall review of all services within the partnership as part of the normal annual business planning processes.
- 3.10 Following discussion it was agreed to endorse the proposal with an amendment to ensure that any recommendations for change would be put to all partners for approval.

Budget Outturn position 2011/12

- 3.11 The Board received a report detailing the outturn position for 2011/2012. Overall the partnership was under spent by £496,000. The under-spends will be returned to the partner authorities (Taunton Deane will receive £44,000), although the partnership has requested to retain £100,000 of the SCC under-spend. If agreed by SCC, this £100,000 will be used to enhance the services at recycling centres and to combat fly-tipping.

Cost Sharing Agreement

- 3.12 A report recommending minor adjustments to the cost sharing agreement was put to the Board. The cost sharing agreement is periodically reviewed and amended to ensure that the costing sharing arrangements between the partners remain reasonable and equitable.
- 3.13 Specifically the cost sharing mechanism is being amended to provide a fairer process for the sharing of weekly collection costs and recycling credits

between the partners. There is a minor detrimental financial impact for Taunton Deane from these changes, but this can easily be met within existing budgets. The changes, if accepted by the partner authorities, will be implemented from 1 October 2012.

- 3.14 The Board agreed to recommend the proposed changes to each partner authority.

Performance Monitoring Outturn Report 2011/2012

- 3.15 The Board received and noted a detailed performance report for 2011/2012.

- 3.16 The headline message is that all the key indicators have moved in a positive manner i.e.

- 4% reduction in household waste arisings;
- 5% reduction in residual waste per household;
- Minimal increase in recycling performance; and
- 4% reduction in municipal waste landfilled.

4. Deane DLO Update

- 4.1 The new uniform has arrived and is being rolled out for trades staff.

- 4.2 DLO outturn was better than expected even with the in year savings to clients being in excess of £800,000. This is excellent news, and I am sure Members will join me in thanking Chris Hall and his entire team for achieving this.

5. Crematorium

- 5.1 Providing the usual standard of cemeteries and crematorium grounds maintenance has proved difficult this year due to the poor weather conditions experienced. However the team are doing the very best they can in the circumstances.

- 5.2 Building works for the replacement of three cremators and the installation of mercury filtration equipment is due to start on the 19 July 2012, anticipated to take six to seven months to complete.

Councillor Ken Hayward