

# **Council Meeting – 3 October 2017**

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

### **1. Taunton Garden Town**

- 1.1 Taunton's status as the only new Garden Town in the South West was the focus of a visit to the County Town on 11 July 2017 by the President of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), Stephen Wilkinson.
- 1.2 Taunton was named as one of the nation's new Garden Towns by the Government earlier this year. Mr Wilkinson met the joint Planning Team, part of the One Team workforce shared through the successful partnership between Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council. The team, recently highly commended in national awards, organised a walking tour of Taunton plus a visit to Monkton Heathfield, one of the new Garden Communities.
- 1.3 Mr Wilkinson said, in the right places, new Garden Towns are part of the solution to the housing crisis. Taunton's Planners will be critical in ensuring infrastructure is delivered in a co-ordinated way. This is critical for the successful delivery of new development to create great places.
- 1.4 Mr Wilkinson also spent time with the joint Planning Team and said he was impressed to see first-hand how effectively Planning across Taunton Deane and West Somerset is being managed by a single team. He said their hard work, professionalism and success is reflected in their achievements – gaining Garden Town status for Taunton, steering two development plans through the adoption process and delivering new housing development supported by a Master Plan at Monkton Heathfield. Their successful, collaborative approach is to be commended.
- 1.5 The RTPI represents over 24,000 members worldwide and shapes planning policy, raises professional standards and are the only body in the UK to confer Chartered status to planners, the highest professional qualification.
- 1.6 May I put on record our thanks to the team and our appreciation for making our bid successful and offer our congratulations for being highly commended in the National Awards. No mean feat.

### **2. Visit to Taunton by John Glen MP, Minister for Tourism and Heritage**

- 2.1 On 14 August, John Glen MP, Minister for Heritage and Tourism enjoyed a whistle-stop tour of Taunton. The Minister was impressed with the County Town and its plans for the future.

- 2.2 The visit also included a tour of Hestercombe and a meeting with Arts Taunton. It offered the chance to show the Minister at first-hand what Taunton, the South West's first Garden Town has to offer. The Minister fully supported the need to plan and invest for the future and commended Taunton Deane on its proactive stance. He was particularly impressed by our Visitor Centre, its business focus and role in serving the wider community in its relatively new location. At The Brewhouse Theatre, the Minister learned of the ambitious plans for the arts centre and the Coal Orchard regeneration.
- 2.3 The Minister was most helpful in signposting potential funding sources which he recognised would be needed. He did urge us to keep in touch and to watch for announcements as they come. In his tour of the town centre, Mr Glen was briefed on the public realm enhancement and parking improvements, including pay on exit. It was a very positive meeting.

### **3. Transformation**

- 3.1 Our Transformation Team is now in place and, with support from our partners, is working hard to implement the vision for change we all agreed last year. The team have initially focussed on the key elements of programme planning and are now getting into activity in their areas - as evidenced by their update to our JPAG Forum in September 2017.
- 3.2 I encourage all Councillors to attend our next 'Making A Difference' Session on 10 October 2017 where we will hear more about the important "process redesign" work. This is fundamental to getting things right for our customers and I am sure you will want to get involved, so please come along and find out more.
- 3.3 Another key focus for the team has been the procurement and evaluation of bids for our technology. It is essential we make sure we have the right technology partner, one who can work with us to support us in delivering our ambition for our place and our organisations. We hope to be able to share the outcomes from this in the next month or so. I would like to thank all those involved, including Member colleagues from the Member Working Group in this very thorough evaluation process which will help us make sure we end up with the right partner.
- 3.4 Work is well underway on developing our HR Approach and associated support and training for staff. One of the first areas we have launched is some behavioural training around the "Customer". Councillors are encouraged to attend this as it is being rolled out across our organisation - the dates have been circulated to you already. The feedback from staff who have attended has been very positive and I am looking forward to joining in one of the sessions. I hope many Councillors will do their best to attend.
- 3.5 We have recently undertaken a Change Readiness Questionnaire for staff which will help ensure the support we give as we progress our Transformation programme is making a difference.

- 3.6 I must thank all our staff for their “let’s get on with it” approach to the decant of areas of The Deane House. I have been really impressed by everyone’s ability to shift to working in a very different and flexible way in such a quick timescale. Well done to the team driving this and to all who have been affected by the changes. The first floor of The Deane House (excluding the John Meikle Room/Committee rooms – now being used to accommodate relocated staff) is clear and ready for building works to commence in late October.
- 3.7 Moorland House (Creechbarrow Road development) is now complete and we hope that staff can start working from here at the end of September.
- 3.8 Early work has begun - with funding from the Local Government Association Productivity Expert Programme – to develop our approach to our commercial ambitions. More on this to come.
- 3.9 Regarding our submission to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to create a New Council for our area – we await his decision.

#### **4. Hinkley Housing Zone including Taunton Garden Town – Bid to the Government’s Housing Infrastructure Fund**

- 4.1 I am delighted to report that close partnership working between Somerset County Council (SCC), Taunton Deane Borough Council, West Somerset Council and Sedgemoor District Council has resulted in an expression of interest for ‘Forward Funding’ being submitted by SCC under the Government’s Housing Infrastructure Fund, administered by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).
- 4.2 This Council has already allocated substantial New Homes Bonus funding (£16,600,000) to support the delivery of key infrastructure and was also one of the first authorities in the country to implement the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). However, these funding streams in themselves are not sufficient to deliver the critical infrastructure required to support and accelerate our commitment to housing and economic growth.
- 4.3 The Housing Infrastructure Fund offers a critical opportunity to assist the local authorities in mitigating the housing impacts of Hinkley Point C and delivering the Taunton Garden Town vision by ensuring the timely delivery of infrastructure to unlock key housing sites within the area. It is also an excellent opportunity to address concerns expressed by our communities about the capacity of existing infrastructure – such as roads, schools, public transport, green spaces and flood alleviation assets – to support further growth.
- 4.4 The ‘Forward Fund’ expression of interest seeks a total of £83,000,000 to deliver nearly 18,000 homes across Taunton and Bridgwater. Key infrastructure in Taunton, for which funding is sought, includes the Toneway Corridor improvements, Phase 1 of a Bus Rapid Transit scheme from

Monkton Heathfield to the Town Centre, an outer relief road for Monkton Heathfield and new schools for Comeytrowe, Staplegrove and Monkton Heathfield.

- 4.5 In addition to the Forward Fund expression of interest submitted by Somerset County Council, this Council has submitted a bid to the 'Marginal Viability' (MV) fund – also part of the Housing Infrastructure Fund. The MV fund is a smaller pot of money that is designed to enable 'the last piece' of infrastructure needed to unlock major housing delivery. Our bid was for £7,200,000 towards the Staplegrove Spine Road and will enable the delivery of 1,600 homes and access to the planned new school.
- 4.6 Competition for the Housing Infrastructure Fund (both Forward Fund and MV pots) is expected to be fierce. Forward funding expressions of interest will be assessed by the HCA through the Autumn period and those authorities that make the initial 'cut' will be invited to have further discussions in early 2018. Decisions are anticipated in spring 2018, although firm dates are not yet known. The timetable for MV bids is expected to be shorter, and we hope to learn the outcome by the end of December 2017.

## **5. Merchant Navy Day – 1 September 2017**

- 5.1 Taunton Deane Borough Council showed its support for the Merchant Navy with a flag raising ceremony at The Deane House at 11.00 am on 1 September. The Red Ensign was raised by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Catherine Herbert, alongside representatives from the Merchant Navy Association, 40 Commando Royal Marines, 675 Rifles Squadron, the Army Air Corps, Councillors and officers. The event was held to mark Merchant Navy Day that has been celebrated on 3 September every year since 2000 to raise public awareness of the UK's continuing dependence on seafarers and remember their sacrifices, salute their courage and support their future.
- 5.2 The work of the Merchant Service during World War One led King George V to decree in 1928 that they should be known as the 'Merchant Navy'. By the end of the Second World War more than 4,700 British ships had been sunk and more than 35,000 Merchant Seamen had lost their lives.
- 5.3 Merchant Navy Day honours the brave men and women who kept Great Britain going during both World Wars and celebrates our dependence on modern day Merchant Seafarers who are responsible for 95% of the UK's imports, including much of the food we eat, most of the fuel we burn and virtually all the products and goods we take for granted.

## **6. Council Meetings**

- 6.1 Most of Taunton Deane Borough Council's Committee meetings are now being held at the Brittons Ash Community Centre, Bridgwater Road, Taunton, with the exception of Planning Committee which is being held in the Main Hall of the new West Monkton Primary School (alongside the Brittons Ash Community Centre).

Full Council meetings will be held at Shire Hall, Shuttern, Taunton. This change has been put in place while the refurbishment of The Deane House takes place. The venues in West Monkton have parking available nearby and are served by the 21/21A First Bus service which operates into the evening.

## **7. Celebrating Pip's Park**

- 7.1 A new sign has been erected to celebrate the Taunton Green Space named in honour of one of the town's champions. Sadly, the glass sign put up at the entrance to Pip's Park was vandalised but a new, sturdy, stainless steel sign is now in place, complete with the poem that appeared on the original. The new sign was designed, made and fitted by Will Shakspeare, of Shakspeare Glass who had created the original.
- 7.2 Pip's Park – named in honour of the late Pip Youngman – is the riverside park that provides welcome communal space for new flats and the offices at the Firepool site. It is one of a network of Green Spaces throughout Taunton – the South West's first Garden Town. It is proving popular with staff at the Viridor offices and residents of the newly-built apartments as it provides space to walk the dog, to meet or simply to sit and enjoy.
- 7.3 The poem that features on the sign at the park's entrance was written by Pip Youngman who was not just a poet but a noted inventor as well as one of Taunton's greatest champions. He inspired one of Taunton's more unusual waterside walks, the Space Walk, along the Bridgwater-Taunton Canal which still gives walkers huge enjoyment. It is a true scale model of the solar system running along the canal, centred on the sun at Maunsell Lock. The walk uses the 14-mile towpath to display a model of the sun and its planets in their proportionally correct sizes and distances apart. He used the scale of 530 million to one to give an idea of the vast distances between planets. Unusually for a solar system model, there are two sets of planets with the sun at the centre, allowing walkers to follow the trail from Pluto, near The Brewhouse Theatre in Taunton, to the sun at Maunsell Lock, encountering planets along the way. The "other" Pluto is Bridgwater.
- 7.4 Pip was also a staunch supporter of plans to regenerate and revitalise the town centre bringing the river and waterways back into focus. I am delighted to see that sign back in place. Pip Youngman was inspirational and shared our vision to regenerate the town and put the river back at the heart of Taunton.
- 7.5 It is a fitting tribute to Pip, as a brilliant inventor and designer but also a great champion of Taunton. I believe that Pip would be truly supportive of the plans and aspirations currently being considered by the River Tone Task and Finish Group to create an attractive waterside environment.

## **8. Broadband Upgrade**

- 8.1 The next 16 Somerset communities to benefit from high speed Broadband have been announced. They are among the 21 in Somerset and Devon to be

connected in the latest phase of the Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) Broadband rollout, being delivered by its new partner, Gigaclear. It is a key milestone for the local government-led Broadband programme which has already provided 278,000 homes and businesses with superfast Broadband access and overall a total of 320,000 with improved Broadband access.

- 8.2 Gigaclear are carrying out pre-construction survey work and are building a new pure fibre network that will connect direct to homes and businesses with the capability to deliver speeds of up to 1000Mbps. Work to lay new cables is due to start in November 2017, initially providing almost 9,000 homes and businesses with access to the ultrafast network by February 2018.
- 8.3 The first Somerset communities to benefit from this latest phase of CDS are: Rooksbridge, Lympsham, Brean, Weare, Crickham, Ashill, Roundham, Merriott, Over Stratton, Dowlish Ford, Isle Abbots, Corfe, Blagdon Hill, Buckland St Mary, Bradford on Tone, and Wadeford. They have been selected based on their location near existing connections to main Broadband networks. Local information and demonstration events will be held in all of the areas where the roll-out has been announced. Communities not in the initial wave of connection will be kept informed as the programme is updated.

## **9. Visit to Conquest Centre**

- 9.1 I recently visited the Conquest Centre and was delighted to do so. The Centre is a leading Somerset Charity dedicated to providing a range of equine activities for adults and children with a wide range of abilities. The Centre is open six days a week following academic term times, offering coaching for disabled and able-bodied clients. All activities are delivered by qualified instructors with specialist expertise in working with people with disabilities, behavioural difficulties and emotional problems and are supported by a team of specially trained volunteers.
- 9.2 Conquest began its journey in 1965. Today it provides around 220 activity sessions a week for adults and children with disabilities and additional needs, as well as catering for families/carers, volunteers and public riders. Their services are used by local clubs and associations, disability support groups, care homes, schools and Community Payback.
- 9.3 There is a cafe on-site which is open to the whole community and run by its trainees with additional needs, offering them the opportunity to gain work and life skills. There is also a sensory room and outdoor play and picnic area.
- 9.4 Conquest is a major attraction throughout the year, with over 30,000 visitors per year and we must remember that this fantastic charitable facility is solely funded by voluntary contributions on income generation from services provided. They are not in receipt of any public subsidy so do need donations to keep this invaluable service going.

## **10. Nexus 25 – Draft Local Development Order**

- 10.1 The Statutory Consultation on the Draft Local Development Order (LDO) took place between the 20 July and 30 August 2017, a period of six weeks (two weeks longer than the statutory requirement of at least 28 days). There were some 43 responses to the consultation exercise. The scope of the statutory consultation did not include issues such as whether or not it is appropriate to use an LDO for the site and whether or not this site is the most appropriate compared with any other locations, it is concerned essentially with what the LDO should consist of and how it should be worded.
- 10.2 Issues raised in response included concerns around the Transport Appraisal, Travel Plan and treatment of remaining Environment Agency issues through conditions. As a result, it was decided to delay reporting the results of the public consultation to the Community Scrutiny Committee until the formal comments of Somerset County Council (SCC), as Highways Authority and the Environment Agency are received.
- 10.3 It is now intended to report the matter to the scrutiny meeting on 17 October 2017 before progressing to Full Council. This change in timetable should have little or no impact upon the overall timescale for the final adoption of the LDO as this will have to await the decision of SCC in relation to the Junction 25 planning application.

## **11. A358 Upgrade – Current Position**

- 11.1 Highways England (HE) have advised the Council and interested parties that, following the comments they received during the consultation earlier this year, they intend to undertake an additional 'supplementary consultation' in the Autumn.
- 11.2 We are led to believe that the supplementary consultation will offer options for the route of the upgraded A358 between West Hatch and the M5 at Taunton. We are also led to believe that some additional material will be presented in relation to those options. The consultation period is likely to be six weeks long.
- 11.3 HE have advised that they will hold consultation events in parish/community halls along the route in an attempt to ensure as many people as possible can attend. We also understand that they are making increased efforts to engage with hard-to-reach groups.
- 11.4 I welcome these steps and await the detailed proposals. We will, of course, prepare a comprehensive response, given the strategic importance of the improvements to the A358. Once timings of the consultation are clearer and the material is examined, as before, officers will prepare a draft response which will be debated prior to our response being sent.

Councillor John Williams

# **Council Meeting – 3 October 2017**

## **Report of Councillor Roger Habgood – Planning Policy and Transportation**

### **1. Planning Policy**

- 1.1 Work on the review of the evidence base to support local Planning Policy continues.

### **2. Garden Town Strategy and Plan**

- 2.1 A Members' Briefing regarding the Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy is currently being arranged for mid-October 2017. Details to follow shortly.
- 2.2 The strategy will help to identify future projects key to realising the aims of our new Garden Town status.

### **3. Junction 25 Local Development Order (LDO)**

- 3.1 The formal consultation on the LDO for the Strategic Employment Site took place in July / August 2017.
- 3.2 A total of 43 responses were received together with comments from Somerset County Council (SCC), the Highways Agency (HA) and the Environment Agency (EA) and these will now be reported to the Community Scrutiny Committee in October before Full Council's consent to approve the LDO.
- 3.3 The final making of the LDO is dependent on planning permission for the M5 Junction 25 Improvement Scheme being in place.

### **4. Mid Devon Local Plan**

- 4.1 Mid Devon District Council submitted its Local Plan Review 2013 - 2033 to The Planning Inspectorate on 31 March 2017, for examination into the legal compliance and soundness of the Plan.
- 4.2 Taunton Deane Borough Council responded earlier in the year to the proposals for a large allocation at Junction 27 anchored by 14,000 sqm of retail floorspace. Concerns were expressed about the compliance of such a proposal with National Planning Policy and its potential impact on Wellington and Taunton Town Centres.



- 4.3 The Secretary of State appointed Mr Paul Griffiths BSc (Hons) BArch IHBC to conduct the examination and to report to the Council in due course.
- 4.4 Following feedback from respondents Mid Devon District Council has chosen to review the sustainability impact of their plans.

## **5. Neighbourhood Plans**

- 5.1 Ann Skippers Bsc MRTPI has been appointed to examine the West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Development Plan. It is expected that the examination will be completed by the end of November 2017. Potentially therefore a referendum could be called in early 2018.
- 5.2 The Council continues to support the Creech St. Michael and Ruishton and Thornfalcon Neighbourhood Plans.

## **6. Major Planning**

### **Staplegrove**

- 6.1 In response to the deferral of both applications at the recent Planning Committee meeting, discussions with the developers have recommenced.

### **Comeytrove/Trull Garden Community**

- 6.2 A viability case has been submitted which is currently being scrutinised and is under discussion with the developers.

### **Firepool**

- 6.3 The outstanding quality development discussions are continuing with the developer regarding car parking and a small number of other transport related issues.

### **Housing Objectively Assessed Need (OAN)**

- 6.4 Members may wish to note that the Government has recently increased the housing numbers for Taunton Deane.
- 6.5 The OAN consultation is currently being considered by officers. The OAN consultation document also proposes a further increase in planning fees.

### **Planning Appeal**

- 6.6 The Council continues to defend an appeal regarding the proposed development of land at Bagley Road, Wellington. In essence the five year land supply is being challenged at Public Inquiry.

## **7. Variable Message Signage and Pay on Exit**

- 7.1 The contract for the supply and installation of this signage has been let. The signs will be installed during the winter period in readiness for the Pay on Exit Car Park improvements in the New Year.

## **8. A358 Upgrade**

- 8.1 The Highways England (HE) supplementary consultation is welcomed. The Council awaits details and will of course be drawing up a response.

Councillor Roger Habgood

# **Council Meeting – 3 October 2017**

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

### **1. Parks and Open Spaces**

- 1.1 Vivary Park has had a glorious summer with great bandstand concerts, the Flower show and hundreds of families all enjoying the beautiful setting.
- 1.2 We await the results of the South West in Bloom Competition after a positive sunny judging day in July. We now look forward to some maintenance works such as the dredging of the lake and replacing of the ropes around the rose garden.

### **2. Community Leisure**

- 2.1 We have recently welcomed back Steve Hughes to run the leisure procurement for us as Alison North's skills have been utilised as part of the Transformation Project.
- 2.2 Steve brings a depth of knowledge about Taunton Deane and our facilities along with now extensive experience of working with other delivery partners across the country.

### **3. GLL (Taunton Deane)**

#### **Wacky Wednesdays in Wellington**

- 3.1 Over the summer holidays GLL delivered four events in and around Wellington as part of the Wellington ONE Team Community Partnership with Taunton Deane Borough Council, Knightstone, GetSet and other local agencies. Three events were held at Longforth Farm, Wellington Monument and Rockwell Green. Due to wet weather the fourth event was held at Wellington Sports Centre and had a 'Beach and Pool Party' theme. 148 children and parents attended and some of the activities included paddling pools, smoothie bikes and sandpits.

#### **Pride in Priorswood**

- 3.2 GLL Community Foundation supported Pride in Priorswood's Spacehive campaign this summer, with a cash donation and staff time to support the event. The event was well attended, with numbers in excess of 400 each Tuesday during the holidays. GLL staff encouraged young people and their families to participate in a variety of sports and physical activities, including table tennis, volleyball, football, treasure hunts, games, etc.

### **Kids Swim for a Quid**

- 3.3 Taunton Pool and Blackbrook Leisure Centre and Spa provided slots across the week where children could swim for just £1. There was a great uptake of this offer at both centres.

### **Council Swim Project**

- 3.4 Over the summer months GLL supported 221 people to have free swimming as part of the Council's Free Swim voucher scheme which sees GetSet workers and the ONE Teams providing low income families with opportunities to swim for free over the summer holidays. 94 adults and 127 children in total across Taunton and Wellington took up the vouchers from June to August.

### **National Play Day**

- 3.5 National Play Day was held at Wellsprings Leisure Centre on Wednesday, 2 August 2017. The whole afternoon's activities were dedicated to celebrating this national event. Unfortunately, due to bad weather, the majority of the activities were held indoors, with bouncy castles, games, arts and crafts, den building, etc. Strategically placed gazebos gave the children the opportunity to go outside and toast marshmallows on an open fire. There was also a planned visit by the Somerset and Devon Fire Brigade Service.

### **Discovery Trail**

- 3.6 GLL joined many local organisations in North Taunton by providing an activity at Wellsprings Leisure Centre on Thursday, 9 August 2017. The aim of the trail was for families to visit outdoor spaces in North Taunton and take part in an activity. On completion all participants received a stamp for their card. Refreshments and awards were provided and 50 children and parents took part.

Councillor Catherine Herbert

# Council Meeting – 3 October 2017

## Report of Councillor Richard Parrish – Corporate Resources

### 1. Corporate Services

#### Transformation Programme Technology

- 1.1 Transformation Programme Technology Procurement of the 'Universal Transaction Portal' (UTP) software to enable the delivery of the new operating model is underway.
- 1.2 The UTP needs to provide for things such as integration with back office systems to enable end-to-end self-service, the easy configuration of processes to support Business Process Re-engineering, easy to use intuitive software, remote access, access via smart devices, live performance data etc.
- 1.3 This is a critical procurement so we have a large team of officers and Members involved in this process which is progressing well. Key phases have been as follows:-
  - o Early June 2017 – Invitation to tender issued to 20+ suppliers on the G-Cloud;
  - o Mid July – Six bids received;
  - o Mid July to early August – Evaluation of written bids;
  - o Mid August – Bidder demonstrations;
  - o September – Reference site visits; and
  - o Target to conclude the process and make a decision w/c 25 September

#### Telephony Rollout (Smart Phones & 8x8)

- 1.4 8x8 is a web based telephony system which is replacing the existing Deane House (DH) and West Somerset House (WSH) phone systems currently in use.
- 1.5 The rollout is progressing to plan and priorities are being driven by The Deane House accommodation moves. It is the intention to complete the rollouts across both sites by the New Year.
- 1.6 Existing mobile phones are being upgraded to smart phones to enable agile working. Smart phones allow easy access to e-mail, calendars, contacts etc. plus the 8x8 App to link direct lines to smart phones.
- 1.7 We are also trialling new Mobile Device Management (MDM) software to enable even greater access via smart phones and tablets.

## **ICT Priorities and Resourcing**

- 1.8 There is a huge current demand on the ICT Service, both transformation and business as usual. Officers are currently reviewing all work requests, suggesting prioritisation and identifying the resource required to deliver them. This is a necessary and pragmatic approach at a time of significant change which has my support.
- 1.9 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) are new European Regulations scheduled to come into force from May 2018.
- 1.10 Key changes include the right to be forgotten, positive consent being required, removal of the fee for subject access requests, significant increase in the fines for Data Protection breaches, general tightening up of procedures and expectations. It is therefore essential that we are prepared for these changes.
- 1.11 We are currently identifying any specific changes we need to make and evolving an appropriate project plan to achieve this. Attendance at a number of seminars and courses to gain knowledge on how to approach this is being undertaken.

## **Facilities Management**

- 1.12 Members will be aware that the team are heavily involved in supporting The Deane House accommodation moves. Member sessions have been held to view plans and design features and Members have been invited to view the new office equipment in situ in the John Meikle Room.

## **Customer Contact Service – Taunton Deane**

- 1.13 This service is scheduled to return to Taunton Deane's direct management on 1 December 2017. Officers are working with Somerset County Council to ensure the smooth transition of the service which is currently underway.

## **2. Electoral Services**

- 2.1 All Election Accounts for the Police and Crime Commissioners Election and the European Union Referendum have been signed off and full reimbursement of costs have been received from HM Government in this regard.
- 2.2 In response to the initial mail out for the Electoral Register canvass, a 60% return has been received. Reminders have been sent out and will be followed up by personal visits if necessary in time for the new Electoral Register to be published on 1 December 2017.
- 2.3 A Wellington Town Council by-election is to be held on 19 or 26 October 2017. At the time of writing this report the date has yet to be confirmed.

### **3. Revenues and Benefits**

- 3.1 Consultation on options for our Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme in 2018/2019 ended on 27 August 2017. Public participation in the consultation was significantly improved on the number of responses obtained from last year when only 78 residents submitted their views. This year we obtained 372 replies with participation from every parish as well as the unparished areas.
- 3.2 This will allow Members to have greater confidence in the results from consultation when deciding any revision to the scheme for 2018/2019.
- 3.3 A report will be presented to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 12 October 2017. This will reflect the views we have received as well as considering the financial implications and equality impact of each of the proposed options.
- 3.4 Council Tax collection at the end of August 2017 was 52.95% - slightly under our target of 53.00%. In accordance with the policy approved by Members, we have imposed 17 penalties, each of £70, to residents who have failed to inform us of changes affecting their entitlement to a Council Tax discount for 2017/2018.
- 3.5 Business Rate Collection at 47.97% is behind of our target of 50.40% but officers are confident that we will achieve the target for 2017/2018 by 31 March 2018.
- 3.6 We are performing well in speed of benefit processing for 2017/2018 with the average time to reassess benefit under seven days from when the customer tells us of a change in their circumstances. We are working out new claims on average within 21 days of the date they are submitted.

### **4. HR and Organisational Development**

#### **Payroll and HR System**

- 4.1 Officers have been working on system guides and developing the systems this quarter. We will shortly be launching a pilot with a group of staff to trial the on-line recording of absence, expenses and overtime.

#### **Building Services and Open Spaces**

- 4.2 Managers are being supported in individual meetings with their staff to discuss performance, conduct and training and development. This information will provide baseline data which will be used to tailor the staff development plan for each service.
- 4.3 We have also been working with UNISON to provide Men's Mental Health training to these services.

## **Accommodation Move**

- 4.4 A 'Working Flexibly Guide' has been produced with Health and Safety to support the accommodation moves in The Deane House. We have also supported staff through the move, addressing any individual concerns and ensuring that everyone has the equipment they need to do their job. The HR Team themselves have relocated to the top floor of The Deane House.

## **Trade Union Act 2016**

- 4.5 We have been negotiating with UNISON on a process to record facilities time as we now have a legal duty to publish this data annually from 31 March 2018. We have also held discussions regarding a service level agreement to cover the cost of UNISON membership deductions made through the payroll.

## **Transformation**

- 4.6 The team has been supporting this project and two employees will shortly join the Transformation Team to lead the HR workstream on recruitment and job evaluation. This will involve some minor restructuring of other duties within the remainder of the team.
- 4.7 We have also finalised the successful extraction of SAP payroll data and payslips for the last 10 years prior to the SAP system being closed.

## **5. The Mayoralty and Democratic Services**

- 5.1 Andrew Randall has taken on additional duties which now sees him stepping up to act, initially for the next six months, as formal deputy for Richard Bryant. I am sure Members will join with me in congratulating him on his career advancement which is well deserved.
- 5.2 The team have also ensured that the Brittons Ash Community Centre is now the established location for Taunton Deane's Committee meetings due to the refurbishment works taking place to the The Deane House. Members have already been informed.
- 5.3 Initial meetings have been held with the supplier of the Modern.gov system which will be a key piece of transformation technology and which will improve the way we collate reports and agendas for committees and will eventually lead to a largely paperless report process.
- 5.4 The team continues to provide support for the Mayor's functions and activities.

## **6. Procurement Team**



- 6.1 The Procurement Team continue to provide support across a wide range of projects and business as usual activity.
- 6.2 The team is also providing procurement design, support and advice to the Unified Transaction Portal project to support Transformation. This complex procurement is currently in the evaluation stage. Other strategic projects include the North Taunton Master Planning, Firepool development, Seaward Way and Leisure Contracts.
- 6.3 Invitations to tender have been issued for:-
- Professional Services – Coal Orchard Development; and
  - The Mental Health Support Service.

Tenders that have either been recently awarded or are currently being evaluated include - The Tonedale Regeneration Strategy, New Vehicles and a Vehicles Management Solution.

- 6.4 Current areas of focus for the team include:-
- (a) Continued working with the Property Team to plan and support major procurement projects, including implementing Taunton Deane's use of the Devon and Somerset approved contractors list (SLOAC);
  - (b) Similarly working with the Housing Enabling and Development Team to support major projects;
  - (c) Developing tenders for several projects in the Planning/Economic Development areas;
  - (d) The review of cleaning provision across the whole of Taunton Deane/West Somerset; and
  - (e) The Procurement Team is also providing interim support to South Somerset District Council on a part time basis – notably the procurement of new Cremators and input into their commercial activities. Other operational and transactional activity continues as usual.

## **7. Finance**

### **Medium Term Financial Plan / Budget**

- 7.1 The Budget Setting process has started for 2018/2019 and we are firstly looking to our outturn position for 2016/2017 to see if there are any ongoing underspends we can feed into the 2018/2019 as easy wins. We are also reviewing our Earmarked Reserves, as we do every year, to see if they are truly committed or if we can bring those funds back to General Reserves. These workstreams are nearly complete.

## **Fees and Charges**

- 7.2 As part of the Budget process our Fees and Charges are being reviewed to ensure that charging is appropriate and at least covering costs. Some areas have statutory fee levels; others we simply aim to cover the direct costs and others, such as pre-planning advice we offer as a service for which we can recognise a profit.

## **New Finance and Payroll System**

- 7.3 Officers continue to embed the new Finance and Payroll systems and to help users get the most from its functionality.

## **Projects**

- 7.4 We are making progress with many potential capital projects and now have a Project Accountant on the team who will bring a strengthened commercial viewpoint to our financial analyses by undertaking in depth analyses.
- 7.5 The Chancellor has announced that the Autumn Budget 2017 will take place on 22 November 2017. We await the detail to evaluate any effect that the Budget may have for the Council.

Councillor Richard Parrish

# Council Meeting – 3 October 2017

## Report of Councillor Mrs Jane Warmington - Community Leadership

*THINK DIFFERENTLY, DO DIFFERENTLY ~ The strategic vision for Taunton Deane's most disadvantaged areas is that residents lives will improve significantly and that these priority areas will look better, feel safer and in the future place a more proportionate demand on public services. These services are already being delivered differently in our urban areas through co-ordinated, frontline, problem-solving, multiagency one teams providing early help and aiming to be based together in the area they serve. Rural parishes with more scattered communities are being helped to access services through community centres and local village agents who identify, signpost and support isolated residents to get the help they need. Urban priority areas need excellent education and health facilities within them if we are to build independence, resilience and raise aspirations in individuals, families and communities, to sustain improvements and reduce the need and costs of interventions in the future.*

### 1. Somerset West Lottery Update

- 1.1 The number of weekly lottery tickets most sold on line through the dedicated website [www.somersetwestlottery.co.uk](http://www.somersetwestlottery.co.uk) is now over 700. This could raise over £50,000 a year for the 93 Good Causes now registered. These include the Community Fund which will be added to the Taunton Deane small grants pot administered by the Somerset Community Foundation and presided over by the Council's Grants Panel.

### 2. Somerset One Team Coordinator

- 2.1 We would like to welcome Andy Lloyd who has been appointed as the Somerset-wide One Team Coordinator initially for two years after a successful partnership bid to the Police and Crime Commissioner. Andy is based at County Hall with Lucy Macready (who leads on Community Safety which now sits within Public Health).
- 2.2 Andy's appointment will support fledgling and more established One Teams across Somerset. This includes regular Coordinators' meetings, representing One Teams at Partnership meetings, helping to establish best practice, reporting on successful initiatives and much more.
- 2.3 Andy has recently retired from Avon and Somerset Police working in South Somerset across Neighbourhood Policing. He comes with a great deal of experience which includes working with other partner agencies and is really pleased to be working across the Somerset One Teams.

### 3. Halcon One Team Coordinator

- 3.1 We would also like to welcome Rich Shadrack also recently retired from the Police who has joined the Halcon One Team as Interim Coordinator. The Halcon One Team has been without a coordinator since April and although staff across the partners have worked hard to cover this, the coordinator role (and project support

officer) are essential to make the most of supporting frontline staff from different agencies to work together most effectively.

- 3.1 Rich comes highly recommended and keen to be directly involved with our first and longest running One Team in Halcon, Taunton.

#### **4. Legal Highs Education Programme**

- 4.1 This programme has been delivered by Stand Against Violence (SAV) on the Council's behalf and they were asked to deliver an educational programme to schools in Taunton Deane to tackle social issues of Legal Highs (as they were then) within the context of other related issues such as violence and promoting good citizenship.
- 4.2 Unfortunately the use and abuse of Legal Highs (now 'illegal highs' under new legislation or New Psychoactive Substances to give them their correct name) are only a small part of the larger picture of drug and alcohol abuse and general deteriorating behaviour in society. It is important to tackle the contributing factors together to be realistic and be as effective as possible.
- 4.3 SAV have done this by increasing knowledge of the various issues, focusing on the fact that young people have a choice and for each choice there are consequences. They want young people to realise for themselves that they need to avoid the negative social impact and dangers associated with Legal Highs and stay safe.
- 4.4 SAV adapted their tried and tested techniques and included the topic of Legal Highs using their experienced and skilled teaching workforce in age appropriate workshops. They offered these to twenty Primary and Middle Schools, six Secondary Schools and one Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). In the eighteen schools where these have been delivered so far, they have demonstrated improved attitudes towards Legal Highs and the associated risk factors involved.
- 4.5 There were a number of barriers to delivering the programme though, with some schools not responding, or accepting the offer of workshops and then finding it difficult to fit this into their timetable.
- 4.6 So far a total of 1,315 young people have been reached at six secondary schools; 480 pupils at eleven primary schools; and four pupils at one PRU - a total of 1,799. The table lists the eighteen schools where the programme has been successfully delivered and those which will be approached again.
- 4.7 Feedback from the schools is that 95% of all young people report that they now have a better understanding of what a Legal High is, and the same percentage report they now understand the consequences of taking Legal Highs and alcohol.
- 4.8 SAV would like to continue these workshops to reach all the schools in Taunton Deane and will contact those again which have yet to engage and hope that they will be able to deliver these within the next academic year.

Delivered		Not yet delivered	
Secondary and PRU	Primary	Secondary	Primary
Taunton Academy	Parkfield Primary	Courtfields Community School	Holway Park
Bishop Foxes	Creech St Micheal		Holy Trinity
Discovery PRU	West Monkton Primary		Cotford St Luke
Heathfield School	Bishops Hull Primary		St James
Kingsmead School	Norton Fitzwarren Primary		Halcon
The Castle School	Churchstanton Primary		St John's
	Priorswood Primary		Blackbrook
	Bishops Hull Primary		Rockwell Green
	St Georges Primary		Wellsprings
	Lyngford Park Primary		St Andrew's
	Bishops Henderson Primary		North Town
	Oake and Nynehead		Beech Grove

4.9 Due to the generosity of others SAV have worked with on this project, they have only spent £12,080 of the total £30,000 grant. We would like them to continue to engage with the remaining schools and will talk to SAV about the future of any remaining funding.

## 5. Bath Spa Evaluation of Taunton Deane One Teams

5.1 Two and a half years ago Bath Spa University's Department of Criminology were commissioned by One Team Partners to undertake an evaluation of Taunton Deane's One Teams as part of the Police Innovation Fund award. Professor Allyson Macvean and Researcher Charlotte Read undertook this work and are the authors of the report.

5.2 The report they produced found that 'This evaluation provides evidence that the One Team philosophy 'Think Differently; Do Differently' is extremely successful in achieving its aims....It seeks to innovate through creative initiatives that enable the community as part of the solution. The achievements that make up this success have been powerfully articulated by the community members themselves, whose voices and sentiments are echoed throughout this report.....Managers need to acknowledge that effective collaborative working is challenging, and while it may

produce thorny issues that need to be grappled with, this in and of itself, is an indicator of the complexities of both partnership working and the social problems that the One Teams are dealing with.'

- 5.3 'What makes the One Team different and sets it apart from other partnership initiatives, is a real commitment to enable and work with the communities in identifying the real causes that impact on their quality of life and developing a range of solutions that only a truly collaborative approach can deliver. This tactic was harder and deeper than traditional partnership approaches and required a greater level of trust, commitment and longevity; all the elements that previous research tells us contribute to the success of partnership working.'
- 5.4 'The research team was also asked to consider the social return on investment for the One Teams.....utilising the New Economy Manchester Model, a number of significant savings in social and fiscal benefits have been identified. For example, this evaluation suggests that the public value benefit of savings in the reduction of crime within the One Team area for the year January to December 2015 was £1,067,612.'
- 5.5 'While these benefits have important implications for long term cost savings for the organisations involved with the One Teams, the greatest social gains are overwhelmingly made within the communities that the One Teams serve. Members of the community become engaged in taking responsibility to ensure that it becomes a safe secure and pleasant area in which residents can lead fulfilling and meaningful lives.'
- 5.6 The report details twenty key findings and fifteen recommendations some of which are in place or already planned as the interim findings came through. Others will be discussed with partners following the initial presentation by Bath Spa to the Taunton Deane Strategic Partnership just over a week ago. We look forward to digesting the findings, and over the coming months developing and implementing the recommendations.
- 5.7 An e-copy of the report is available for Councillors who may have heard some of the findings reported on BBC Somerset on the morning of Friday, 22 September 2017.
- 5.8 The heartwarming responses from the community both within the report and from those interviewed in Halcon by the BBC were wonderful and the greatest possible endorsement of this innovative approach. We are indebted to a hard working Police Sergeant, Andy Murphy QPM who designed this award-winning model in order to change people's lives for the better.

## **6. Community Activities over the Summer**

- 6.1 Community Groups, Community Centres, Taunton Deane's three One Teams, Parishes, Churches, Sports Clubs and others, have filled Taunton Deane with activities over the summer with thousands taking part. We could have had better weather as is often the case but it did not stop most being able to go along to something local to them with lots of others and have fun.

6.2 The energy, enthusiasm, time and effort put in by all those organising events is wonderful. It is one of the things which makes Taunton Deane such a lovely place to live in.

Councillor Jane Warmington

# **Council Meeting – 3 October 2017**

## **Report of Councillor Terry Beale – Housing Services**

### **1. Deane Housing Development**

#### **Woolaways**

- 1.1 The Council has a number of Woolaway houses, dating back to the 1950s. Woolaway construction was a popular post-war housing option as the homes could be built quickly and so help address the national housing shortage. They are categorised as “non- traditional” in construction in that they are made up of concrete columns, beams and panels.
- 1.2 It is now known that Woolaway houses, can suffer deterioration in the structure that affects their life span and the Government universally designated these houses as defective in the Housing Defects Act 1984.
- 1.3 The Council has been awarded Government funding to consult with residents who live in the area, specifically those streets with ageing Woolaway properties. This funding will help pay for experts to work with the Council and the community on technical aspects of the “masterplan” phase that is likely to take 12-18 months. A masterplan creates a blueprint for the future and so the involvement of residents is key to its success.
- 1.4 By far the largest concentration of these homes are in the North Taunton Area and it was decided to begin in that location. The consultation was launched on the 21 September 2017 and initially took the form of a letter to all residents - both tenants and home owners - in the pertinent area and also residents in the immediate vicinity. The first step is to bring the community together to hear about the project and, importantly, to invite them to get involved from the very start.
- 1.5 We have set up a drop in centre in Rochester Road where residents can speak to members of the team and a leaflet has been delivered with all the relevant contact details.
- 1.6 A resident engagement event is being hosted on 4 October 2017 at St Peters Church Hall, Eastwick Road between 1030 and 1900 where information about Woolaways will be provided along with opportunities on how the community can engage in the process. This will be followed up by a personal engagement with each resident affected by the scheme.
- 1.7 An experienced project team has been established to work with the community to bring forward this exciting, yet challenging opportunity for North Taunton.

#### **Weavers Arms, Rockwell Green, Wellington**

- 1.8 The redevelopment scheme is progressing well. It is anticipated that the first completed units will be handed over by end of the year. Three of the nine decants



have elected to return to the development.

- 1.9 A Diversifying Tenure briefing was presented to the Tenants Forum and the Tenant Services Management Board to provide details on the opportunities and mechanisms to broaden Taunton Deane's tenure choice from solely social rent.

## **12 Moorland Close, Taunton**

- 1.10 The developers 'DR Jones Limited' are on site and refurbishment is going well to convert the property into three one bedroom flats and flexible community space on the ground floor.

## **Laxton Road, Taunton and Oake**

- 1.11 We are still examining the best way to move these sites forward.

## **Affordable Housing**

- 1.12 Despite the continuing challenges to deliver affordable housing it is anticipated that delivery in 2017/2018 will be in the region of 200 which will be on target for the year. There are also 78 units being developed by Knightstone at Parmin Close, Taunton (66 Extra Care and 12 Learning Disabilities) and these have an anticipated completion date of March 2018.

## **2. Welfare Reform**

### **Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP)**

- 2.1 We continue to award DHP and there are many reasons why DHP's have been awarded to Council tenants. Some of these include rent shortfall due to the 'Bedroom Tax', low income families and help with arrears or rent.
- 2.2 We will continue to provide help and support to those tenants who need it to claim DHP and also any other Benefits they may be entitled to.

### **Universal Credit (UC)**

- 2.3 UC is fast becoming business as usual now but it continues to be a challenge for both ourselves and for some of our tenants.
- 2.4 There are still however a number of concerns. There does not seem to be any urgency within UC to resolve issues that our tenants face with their claims which we would only assume will get worse with the roll out continuing but now at a much faster pace. They also do not seem to have made any real progress with getting claims right for the first assessment period.
- 2.5 We have also had tenants fail the habitual residency test, and have then had to appeal the decision which has been taking a very long time and is not an easy process especially for those who do not have English as their first language.
- 2.6 Officers are working very hard with colleagues at UC to resolve these matters and

it must be said many other authorities have the same issues. UC are sympathetic with our plight and progress is being made.

### **3. Deane Helpline (DHL)**

- 3.1 The Deane Helpline has managed the Emergency Out of Hours maintenance services on behalf of Aster Properties who cover large area of the south, for the last couple of years. Aster have been very pleased with the service and recommended us to GreenSquare Housing Association.
- 3.2 We are now delighted to have won the GreenSquare Out of Hours maintenance contract and their properties are in Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and Oxford. We are now actively looking for other opportunities within the market place.
- 3.3 DHL recently had its accreditation audit for its Technology Enabled Care (TSA) accreditation and are pleased to announce DHL passed all six modules for Monitoring, Response, Referral, Installation, Telecare Plan and Service Tailoring. No Improvement Observations or Corrective Actions were required. I congratulate them on this fine achievement.
- 3.4 DHL works in partnership with Adult Social Services to deliver the Safe @ Home service. This service is designed to help early discharge from hospital, whereby Social Workers refer clients to have an urgent lifeline installed within 24 hours of discharge. This was noted by the author of the accreditation report:-

*“Deane Helpline continue to cooperate with Social Services for hospital patient discharge. Through their Safe @ Home scheme they are able to provide an alarm within 24 hours throughout the year.”*

### **4. Review of the Somerset Strategic Housing Framework**

- 4.1 The consultation ended on the 30 September 2017 and It is hoped to have a draft document available in the Autumn with the draft County-wide housing priorities. However with the current work streams across Taunton Deane and within other Authorities it may be into the New Year before this is ready.
- 4.2 In addition, another work stream is about to commence to examine ways of integrating health and housing services. This is quite a time consuming project and will be discussed in more detail at a later date.

### **5. Wyndham Road Wiveliscombe**

- 5.1 In this location there is a large block of flats which were built many years ago. In February 2017 it was reported by residents that there are many problems due in part to the age of the building and also the behaviour of some of the residents. These issues include rendering flaking off, exposed rods, dislodged wires, blocked guttering and drains and many others. The work required was complex and time consuming and needed major scaffolding and repairs.

- 5.2 I am delighted to report that apart from a few minor issues the work has now been completed and the building has been transformed. Included in the work was increased lighting, increased fire retardant within the doors and internal decorations including flooring and doors.
- 5.3 This is an excellent example of cooperation across the piste with the local residents working with officers from many areas, from Estate Management to Anti-social Behaviour, from Deane Housing to Deane Property Services.
- 5.4 I congratulate and thank all those involved for a job well done!!

## **6. And Finally....**

- 6.1 The work of the Council is complex and wide ranging and none more than now when there are a large number of projects both within the Authority and emanating from Government. The officers work tirelessly, often long hours to deliver on these projects and they are often the subject of criticism and derision.
- 6.2 I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the officers for their superb work and their continued dedication and loyalty to the work of Taunton Deane Borough Council. It is difficult to single people out but on this occasion I want to particularly thank Jo Humble and her team who have been working extremely hard on a large number of projects always with a smile and good disposition. In particular, the way members of the team led by Rachel Searle have put together the consultation for North Taunton is outstanding!!

Councillor Terry Beale

# **Council Meeting – 3 October 2017**

## **Report of Councillor Patrick Berry – Environmental Services**

### **1. Environmental Health**

#### **Food Safety**

- 1.1 The department plans to introduce a charge for a rescore visit under the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme from January 2018 – a report is under preparation. Taunton Deane had 20 requests for rescore visits last year. The planned charge will be £122.50 with no limit on the number of visits a business can request.
- 1.2 The team would also like to offer a service where copies of the Safer Food : Better Business pack can be printed and also offer an advisory visit as a package – this is under evaluation.
- 1.3 Officers working in Food Safety are continuing with inspections. As the end of Quarter 3 looms, officers are very busy with routine visits, rescore requests, revisits and inspections to new businesses.

#### **Health and Safety**

- 1.4 A prosecution case against one of the leading retailers in Taunton is due to have an initial hearing under a district judge in October 2017.
- 1.5 Tattoo Project - Questionnaires are to be sent out to both Tattoo premises and body piercers in order to update our IT system with correct details. A proforma is currently being designed for use on advisory visits – this will also include CSE (Child sexual exploitation) information.

#### **Environmental Protection**

- 1.6 There are a number of current enforcement cases in Wellington involving noise and overgrown gardens – one garden, is currently being cleared by Deane DLO after enforcement action.
- 1.7 Following complaints of odours from Hammets Wharf, officers are working with a restaurant and the cricket club.

#### **Private Water Supplies**

- 1.8 New consultations on private water supply regulations are underway. We have two experienced officers in this area who both sit on the Somerset Water Group and will input into the consultation on behalf of all local authorities in Somerset. The changes should be minor and not affect the service that we are able to offer.

## **Safety Advisory Group - Events**

- 1.9 A Debrief was held to cover recent events including events held on Castle Green, Taunton where some issues with traffic management were encountered. Events coming up include Wellington Carnival, Taunton Carnival, and Food Fayres. The group is currently working towards Christmas events in the Taunton Town Centre.

## **2. Licensing**

### **Performance**

- 2.1 The team completed 99.3% of all applications within 14 days between the 1 April and 30 June 2017; 4.3% above the service target. For July and August the total is 99.6%, with only one application out of 228 being processed beyond 14 days.

### **Appeal against decision**

- 2.2 One taxi driver appealed to Taunton Magistrate's Court following the revocation of his Hackney Carriage/private hire vehicle drivers licence by the Licensing Sub-Committee on the 31 January 2017. This followed an investigation into a complaint about this driver's standard of driving and behaviour, some of which had been captured on a video camera fitted to the dash board of a lorry. The appeal was heard at Taunton Magistrate's Court on the 19 June 2017. The Magistrates upheld the original decision made by the Licensing Sub-Committee and awarded the Licensing Authority half of its costs.

### **Complaint against decision**

- 2.3 The mother of a girl, who was unwell in a taxi, had to pay the soiling charge and complained to Licensing about the way the taxi driver handled the incident and also the actual value of the soiling charge. Following an investigation by a Licensing Officer, it was concluded that there was no case to answer against the driver.
- 2.4 The mother subsequently complained about investigation outcome to the Licensing Manager, but the complaint was not upheld on the grounds that the investigation had been conducted thoroughly and the Council's taxi fares and charges were lawful and reasonable.

### **Cap on taxi Numbers?**

- 2.5 The Licensing Committee will be asked on Thursday, 28 September 2017 to decide whether TDBC should limit the number of taxis operating in the district. Following complaints from some drivers about there being too many taxis, the Licensing Service carried out an Unmet Demand Survey and consulted with licensed taxi drivers and the public. Having reviewed the results, the Licensing Manager is recommending that no limit or cap be imposed,

principally on the grounds that it would restrict competition and the growth of business.

### **Taunton Town Centre Licence**

- 2.6 Officers have granted an application made by the Economic Development Section to refresh the Alcohol and Entertainment Licence it holds for open spaces in Taunton Town Centre.
- 2.7 The licence was originally held by the Taunton Town Centre Company before its demise and was transferred to the Council. However it has been in need of an update to help it better achieve its aims and also promote the various licensing objectives laid down in the Licensing Act 2003.

### **3. Street Sweeping and Toilet Cleaning**

- 3.1 Idverde continues to maintain standards and joint inspections with Open Spaces management are progressing well. The action taken to address bird fouling under the railway bridge in Station Road, Taunton and in the Cornhill area in Wellington remain successful with residents and business owners pleased with the results.
- 3.2 The infrared motion activated cameras provided by Idverde have been installed at a number of locations and although no offenders have been identified their deterrent value has been noticeable. These cameras are installed for a short period and then moved to prevent fly tippers being able to plan ahead.
- 3.3 Open Spaces will be launching Taunton Deane's involvement with the national Chewing Gum Action Group's campaign this week with all Taunton and Wellington Town Centre bins displaying eye catching vinyl posters and a number of other displays around the towns.

### **4. Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP)**

- 4.1 The SWP has recruited a new Managing Director - Mickey Green - who replaces the partnership's long standing Managing Director, Steve Read, who left to take up a Director role with West Sussex Council.
- 4.2 Mickey brings a wealth of experience from his current role with Somerset County Council, and previous roles with the Department of Communities and Local Government and as a chartered accountant with KPMG.
- 4.3 The press release announcing the new appointment was picked up widely, including in the Somerset County Gazette
- 4.4 **Landfill Fires** : Somerset has suffered from two significant fires at landfill sites in recent months - one at Dimmer and one at Walpole. Aside from the health and safety risks, this sort of incident invariably leads to site closures

which can disrupt collection vehicles, which need to travel further to alternative sites.

- 4.5 The causes of fires of this kind are difficult to pinpoint, but most likely causes are hot ash from barbecues put in wheeled bins, unwrapped broken glass which can act as magnifying glass, or compacting lithium ion batteries (as found in mobile phones, tablets and e- cigarettes).
- 4.6 SWP have worked with Viridor (the landfill contractor) and the fire service to promote safe disposal options and this will continue. While the switch to Waste Transfer Stations (scheduled for 2020) will not necessarily reduce frequency of fires, they will be easier to control.
- 4.7 **Driver Shortages** : This, along with fires, will be included in the SWP Risk Update for the Board meeting on the 29 September 2017. Taunton Deane in particular is seeing a squeeze on driver numbers, in a trend expected to continue for some years to come.
- 4.8 The shortage is driven by a number of factors - including increased (and relatively expensive) new qualification requirements; competition from Hinkley C build; Brexit and weakness of the £ reducing the attractiveness of the UK as an employment base (between 5% and 10% of current drivers are from EU countries).
- 4.9 SWP are initiating a joint working party with Kier (the collection contractor and their recruitment suppliers) to develop short term recruitment solutions, including taking vehicles and recruiters into town centres in Somerset as pop up recruitment fairs.
- 4.10 In the longer term we need to address training/apprenticeship opportunities and try to attract a wider range of people into the role. We encourage members of all partner authorities to signpost people looking for work (CPC qualified drivers especially but loaders too) to SWP, who can then provide them with contact details of their local depots.

## 5. Cemetery and Crematorium

- 5.1 The service is performing to target with cremation numbers and income. We are about to move to a more locally managed ground maintenance service which should give greater flexibility and allow other services to be sold to the public through these in house employees.
- 5.2 Full Council will be considering an investment report which we hope will be supported giving more choice to the public and enhance the longevity of the facilities and the general appearance of the cemeteries.

Councillor Patrick Berry

# Council Meeting – 3 October 2017

## Report of Councillor Mark Edwards - Economic Development, Asset Management, Arts and Culture and Tourism

### Section 1 : Business Development

#### Digital Taunton

- 1.1 Digital Taunton is a business led group, comprising Taunton business leaders who recognise the importance of the digital economy to achieving high value growth and economic development in Taunton. Over the past six months the group has made significant progress in drawing together a cohort of digital businesses and in identifying a clear purpose. Jeremy Hyams, CEO of the Claims Consortium Group, has been appointed as the group's Chairman, supported by the Council, and sitting alongside the UK Hydrographic Office, WPA, Foot Anstey, and some of Taunton's leading providers and users of digital services and infrastructure.
- 1.2 The purpose of the group is to ensure that Taunton builds a community of successful and thriving businesses operating in the digital economy, supported by a workforce with world-class skills, space and infrastructure suited to their growth needs and a culture of collaboration.
- 1.3 The creation of this community will result in the availability of digital economy roles which will be highly attractive to school leavers who will choose to remain in Taunton thus increasing the technology skill pool. Micro businesses will flourish and blossom, the wider business community will prosper and ultimately future proof. Taunton will become the desired location for businesses with digital aspirations and companies will relocate from other counties or cities to be part of the thriving culture.
- 1.4 The strategy is simple - through the creation of the right environment we can facilitate and encourage collaboration and innovation. The group will then work with local businesses to set up mentoring and leadership programmes to nurture and coach the micro businesses attracted to the new environment. Whilst doing this, it will engage with the wider business community through networking and seminars to demonstrate the value and importance of creating a digital strategy to transform their businesses whilst working closely with the local micro businesses. Once the standard has been set, businesses from other areas will see Taunton as the only logical place to base their future operations.
- 1.5 The group has identified a number of key projects that will progress its aims, including the development of suitable workspace and the provision of a workforce with a strong set of digital skills. Over forthcoming months the



group will build the community, make good progress in delivering the key projects and raise Taunton's profile as a first class digital business location.

### **Events to support small businesses**

- 1.6 **Somerset Business Start-up day** was held at The Glass Box, Taunton on Wednesday, 13 September 2017. 15 start up and young businesses attended and heard from statutory and regulatory services, financial organisations, cyber security firms and advisory bodies to advise them about starting a business. The event was part funded by the Council as part of the *Get Business: Get Digital* programme, which is being delivered by Cosmic across part of the County.
- 1.7 **Somerset Soup.** Soups are an innovative crowd funding event that bring people together to raise small-scale investment to kick-start new businesses or ideas. Held at the Creative Innovation Centre in Taunton on 20 September 2017, the soup event attracted 36 people to network and vote on their favourite entrepreneur.
- 1.8 The event was sponsored by TDA, Albert Goodman and the Somerset Chamber of Commerce. The winner was a firm called 'Timepix', which is from Somerton, and which geo-locate historical photos against modern (and historic) maps in a progressive web app, making photo collections easy to explore on desktops and 'walkable' using mobile devices.

### **Connecting Devon and Somerset**

- 1.9 I am pleased to report that the communities of Corfe, Blagdon Hill, Buckland St Mary, and Bradford on Tone will be connected to superfast broadband in the latest phase of the Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) rollout. The villages are among 21 across the two counties that have been selected for this round of the £62,250,000 rollout based on their location near to existing connections to main broadband networks.
- 1.10 The biggest public-funded broadband programme in England is supported by funding from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, the EU's European Regional Development Fund, the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership and local authorities across the region including Taunton Deane Borough Council.

### **Visit by the Tourism and Heritage Minister**

- 1.11 The Council's plans for the future were commended by the Tourism and Heritage Minister John Glen MP during a recent tour of Taunton.
- 1.12 The Minister saw at first-hand what Taunton, the South West's first Garden Town, has to offer. He was able to learn about regeneration including the ambitious plans for the Coal Orchard, and he was briefed on the public realm enhancement and parking improvements, including pay on exit parking.
- 1.13 The Minister fully supported the need to plan and invest for the future and was

impressed with our proactive stance even identifying potential funding sources which he recognised would be needed.

- 1.14 It was a timely reminder to us all of what has been achieved in Taunton and a boost to all of us working towards that which is still to come.

### **Taunton Deane Economic Review**

- 1.15 The Business Development Service has recently produced an Economic Review of Taunton Deane, which considers productivity levels and economic wealth, economic and social inclusion, and growth sectors within Taunton Deane. Copies of the document will be inserted into Members' pigeon holes.

### **Taunton Deane Business Directory**

- 1.16 The Business Development Team has also recently commissioned the production of a new Business Directory for Taunton Deane. The attractive publication was produced by a national publisher - Burrows Communications - on the Council's behalf, and was funded mainly through the sale of advertising to local firms. The Council received 2,000 copies of the publication, which have been distributed via local companies, libraries and business meeting places. Copies of the document will also be inserted into Members' pigeon holes.
- 1.17 As part of the deal, Burrows Communications also produced an extensive on-line business directory for the area. Called 'Its-local' the database can be accessed from the Council's website or on [www.taunton.uk.com](http://www.taunton.uk.com).

### **Impact of BREXIT on the Agricultural and Construction Sectors**

- 1.18 The Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has recently issued two reports considering the likely economic impact of the UK's planned departure from the European Union (EU). Focussing on the agriculture and construction industries the two reports draw on extensive consultation with the business community regionally.
- 1.19 The Overview of the Agricultural Industry in the Heart of the South West presents a briefing on the value of the industry to the LEP area's economy, the importance of the Common Agricultural Policy and case studies of imports and exports within the milk, beef, and cereal sectors. The report concludes that leaving the EU poses a risk to those businesses in the agriculture sector that currently export to the EU.
- 1.20 Brexit and Construction in the Heart of the South West considers the state of the sector currently in the area and the prospects faced by departure from the EU. It notes that the construction sector – both house building and larger economic infrastructure projects – is closely linked to the overall health of the economy, as a key enabler of economic growth. It concludes that, while there are unlikely to be short term impacts, over the longer term impacts may occur if private investment in infrastructure falls with investor confidence, and if

public investment currently funded by EU funds is not fully replaced by the Government.

- 1.21 Both reports were produced by Plymouth City Council on behalf of the Brexit Resilience and Opportunities Group. They can be downloaded from the Business Development pages of the Council's website.

## **Section 2 : Events, Place, Retail Marketing and Visitor Centre**

### **Events Marketing**

- 2.1 The new online events portal has now gone live with a soft launch earlier this month (<http://eventspaces.tauntondeane.gov.uk>). The new portal will enable event organisers to book any of our 25 open spaces across Taunton Deane, subject to the relevant approvals. Managed by the Business Development Marketing Team the new portal aims to make the event booking process more seamless and encourage more events to take place. Craig Stone from the Business Development Team will be happy to take any Members through the new site. A briefing for Members of the Taunton Events Group on this new system will take place later this autumn.
- 2.2 New events welcomed to the area in recent months include: –
- Fake Festivals in Longrun Meadow on 29 July 2017;
  - Flavours of the World in Castle Green from 21 to 23 September 2017; and
  - Feast in Castle Green on 30 September and 1 October 2017.

### **Place and Retail Marketing**

- 2.3 Regular liaison continues to take place with retailers in Taunton Town Centre, this includes individual account management and joint meetings, the last of which was attended by the Police.
- 2.4 Chris Bowditch has now finished his placement year as Town Centre Marketing Assistant and has been replaced by Georgie Lane who will continue the day to day liaison with businesses, producing content for e-newsletters, social media and the web.
- 2.5 Taunton, Wellington and Wiveliscombe continue to be promoted through open wi-fi, the destination website and social media platforms.

Visit Taunton has – Facebook: 8,395 likes  
Instagram: 1,300 followers  
Twitter: 6,500 followers

Visit Welly – Facebook: 800 likes  
Visit Wivey – Facebook: 650 likes

New literature produced:-

- The Deano (providing ideas for the School Holidays);
- An updated Food and Drink leaflet for Taunton; and

- A new Street Traders flyer for Taunton Town Centre.

### **Visitor Centre**

- 2.6 The Visitor Centre continues to actively support all Marketing activities providing content for all platforms, in addition to welcoming many visitors to the office.
- 2.7 Bookings continue to remain healthy for the banner and rotunda space in the town centre with a number of flash sales proving very popular.
- 2.8 Promotional space bookings continue to grow with a good mixture of charity, local and national businesses using the spaces available in Fore Street and High Street, Taunton.
- 2.9 The Cards for Good Causes Charity Christmas Card Shop re-opens on 6 October 2017.
- 2.10 Throughput into the Market House (which has now been open for over two years) continue to remain healthy with an increasing number of overseas visitors using our services.

## **Section 3 : Strategic Regeneration Projects**

### **Coal Orchard Redevelopment, Taunton**

- 3.1 The outline planning application for a mixed use scheme on the southern element of the site received conditional approval at planning committee on 21 June 2017. We now need to develop the reserved matters application for the site and will seek to submit this at the earliest opportunity. There is further consultation and development work to do though with a range of interested parties.
- 3.2 We are currently procuring the professional services team necessary to deliver the Council's chosen development option. This will enable us to move forward the development process over the coming months.
- 3.3 We are progressing The Brewhouse element of this redevelopment scoping out further detail on timescales and the funding approach. In recognition of the positive nature of this project the Theatres Trust has asked us to speak at their annual conference on 17 October 2017 about the place-making nature of the project.

### **Lisieux Way site, Taunton**

- 3.4 The Executive has recommended the Council to consolidate its ownerships of the land at Lisieux Way Business Park in Taunton, as representatives have reached an agreement with Thales to acquire all its' interests that will support economic growth, by retaining local jobs, securing new employment opportunities and attracting new businesses to this strategic employment site.

- 3.5 The acquisition of Lisieux Way and planned refurbishment of buildings is the first stage of a more comprehensive regeneration project, aligned with Taunton Deane's Corporate Plan (2017-2018) Key Themes and priorities within the Taunton Growth Prospectus - Delivering the economic vision for our County Town.
- 3.6 Proposals will take forward essential refurbishment plans of buildings, ensuring maintenance and upgrades are carried out and the professional project team will assess potential development and long-term investment opportunities for this strategic employment site.
- 3.7 There are substantial strategic benefits of retaining important hi-tech occupiers in Taunton. Under the Council's ownership, plans for refurbishment and upgrade of utility supplies requested by existing occupier (South West Pathology Services) can be coordinated with the relocation within the site of a specialist firm, such as Novanta (GSI Exotec) that has its own bespoke major investment plans for its new premises.
- 3.8 Historic plans indicated some sections of the site might be able to accommodate other suitable uses, therefore a professional team will support Council officers on the refurbishment and delivery of works scheduled and feasibility studies for the next stage of the process which would involve an option review and master-planning expertise, to assess potential opportunities.

## **Section 4 : Asset Management**

### **Cheddon Road, Taunton**

- 4.1 I am delighted to report that we have completed on the sale of 277 Cheddon Road, Taunton (former Park Keeper's Bungalow) to 5 Rivers Childcare Limited.

### **New Taunton Deane Borough Council Asset Strategy**

- 4.2 There has been a significant piece of work progressed valuating and assessing all Taunton Deane property assets to assess net present value and the 30 years costs to produce an accurate and up to date Asset Register.
- 4.3 This will directly lead to the proposals for a new Asset Strategy. The provisional timetable is as follows:- Draft strategy presented to myself on 23 October then, once confirmed, onwards to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on the 16 November, the Executive on 29 November and Full Council on 12 December 2017.

Councillor Mark Edwards